

**THE INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM
SCHOOLS IN EGYPT**

Submitted by

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**To the university of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor Philosophy in
Education (September, 2009)**

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Dedication

Dedicated to the memory of my father, Elshabrawy Ahmed Hassanein

May Allah be blessed with him and bestow him with mercy and forgiveness

Acknowledgment

This thesis would never have been completed without the love and support from many people. The ONE who is always remembered and present in the heart is Almighty God (Allah) who bestowed me with patience, perseverance and support, without which this work would never have been completed. So, first and foremost my thanks go to Almighty God (Allah) for all His endless blessings and favours. “O my Lord! So order me that I may be grateful for Thy favours, which thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may work the righteousness that will please Thee: And admit me, by Thy Grace, to the ranks of Thy righteous Servants” (27/19).

I would also like to acknowledge and extend my heartfelt gratitude to my first supervisor Dr Phil Bayliss for his support and encouragement which has made the completion of this project possible. I owe him a great deal of support, ideas exchange and inspiration. He has always been living the hints of this study with me. Likewise, my respect and thanks go to my second supervisor Dr Elias Avramidis for his encouragement, constructive feedback and for the critical eye that he always kept on my study. Also, I would like to thank Dr Ken Shaw for his kind encouragement and support during the early stages of my research. He has always been there to give advice, guidance and reflection.

Many individuals provided me with direct help through their reading of various drafts of the document or through assistance with the methodology. My great thanks and gratitude are due to Associate Professor Keith Postlethwaite and Dr Nasser Mansour for their help and critical comments about the statistical analysis of the questionnaire. My thanks also go to my friend Dr Hany Ibrahim for his critical comments about an early draft of my qualitative data analysis. Also, special thanks for all the teachers who participated in the study for their co-operation, patience and support during the data collection process. Thanks also are due to the technicians in the Research Support Unit for their help in the use of software programmes. A special thanks to all my friends and colleagues for their help and support.

My love and deepest gratitude should go to my big and small families. I am forever indebted to my father for all the sacrifices that he made from the day I was born until his very last breath. It is so sad to think that he is not able to cherish this wonderful moments. My love and deepest gratitude also go to my mother for all her love and prayers for me to go back successful. My special thanks and gratitude are due to my

wife and my children who suffered a lot and shared the ups and downs of this journey. Also, my love and deepest gratitude go to my brothers and sisters and their families for their enduring love as well as the faith they have in me. My greatest appreciation and gratitude are due to the Egyptian government for sponsoring me during the scholarship. I owe a lot to my country and I hope I can pay back some of this favour.

Abstract

Following an interpretive-constructivist research approach, this study aimed to explore the complexity of the inclusion of children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools in the Egyptian context, with a particular focus on teachers' attitudes towards this process. Specifically, the study aimed to investigate a) Egyptian teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusive education; b) the influences and experiences that shaped their attitudes; c) teachers' perceptions about barriers to inclusive education; d) teachers' perceptions about the changes required to put inclusion into practice in Egypt. A further significant aim of the study was to generate some insights from the findings which could be useful to understand inclusion policy in Egypt and to improve future planning and implementation.

The study adopted a multi-method design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods (questionnaire and interviews) for data collection in two phases. In phase one, 285 Egyptian teachers were selected randomly and responded to the questionnaire. In phase two, twelve teachers with diverse experiences were chosen purposely for conducting the interviews. Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The findings of the study suggest that Egyptian teachers tend to hold mildly favourable to favourable attitudes towards inclusion. However, uncertainty and concerns were also expressed about the lack of support, resources, training, time, curriculum and pedagogy, collaboration and social attitudes and beliefs about disability. Therefore, teachers in the current study supported the inclusion of certain categories of children with SEN rather than adopting a zero-rejection model of inclusion.

Also, the participating teachers adopted an interactive approach in their understanding of disability, which recognizes the interplay between the within-child factors and the environmental factors. Also, one of the main findings in the current study was teachers' conceptualization of children with SEN as different, regardless of their attitudes towards the inclusion process. Additionally, the findings showed that most teachers adopted a socio-cultural-religious discourse in their understanding of inclusion and disability; a discourse embedded in their religious commitment or at least in their interpretations of the religious values and principles. This discourse supports the calls for considering inclusion and SEN within a cultural model that takes into account the common values about disability in any given context which consequently will affect the educational provision in that context.

The findings also indicated that positive teaching experience and in-service training played a role in shaping positive attitudes. Moreover, the findings showed the significant role that the socio-cultural multilayered contexts played in shaping teachers' conceptualizations of inclusion and disability and their attitudes towards inclusion.

The findings also showed that barriers to inclusion can be categorized into four categories: structural-organizational, personal, interpersonal and socio-cultural barriers. All types of barriers were shown to be related, and they interacted together to affect teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion and the way inclusive practices can be developed.

Finally, teachers suggested several strategies like, building teachers' commitment, developing national inclusive educational policy and overcoming all the structural-organizational and the cultural barriers in order to put inclusion into practice. Additionally, the study has challenged the traditional and reductionist assumptions of change in the case of inclusion which is based mainly on providing resources. The study argued that unless educational change is tactically directed to the questioning of exclusionary thinking, inclusion will continue to constitute a rhetorical apparition within mainstream settings, with dreadful consequences for the education and welfare of disabled children.

Finally, the study ended with utilising its findings with the help of the previous literature to suggest some theoretical implications for developing the theory of inclusion and SEN/disability and attitudes, and providing a set of recommendations for policy, curriculum and pedagogy, teacher education and methodology. Areas for further research investigations are also suggested.

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CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One: Exploring the Gap

1.1 Introduction

The current study explores the complexity of the inclusion of children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools in the Egyptian context, with a particular focus on teachers' attitudes towards this process. I present my exploration in the form of a research journey. In this introductory chapter, I will recount the path, which Morse (1998) describes as self-reflection and critical self examination, that influenced my decision to study teachers and their thoughts and constructions of inclusion. However, working within the interpretative approach also meant that I was embarking on a journey of discovery as the study developed over time. Additionally, the aims of the study, the research questions, the research approach and significance of the study will be presented in this chapter. The chapter concludes by providing an overview of the thesis.

1.2 Background and rationale for the study

This study is a timely response to the current developments in the provision of educational services to children with SEN in the Egyptian context. Egypt, like many other developing countries, has put education at the top of its priorities during the last two decades. The state is concerned to mobilize its educational resources to support its policies for economic growth and development and there is a high demand for a formal and modern education from all people in Egyptian society. To achieve this, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has initiated several projects to achieve a sustainable and reliable educational system for all children.

More specifically, as the education of children with SEN is concerned, the MOE has attempted to develop special education provision and to move towards educating children with SEN in mainstream settings to cope with the worldwide surge towards inclusive education. In Egypt, special education (SE) is provided in special schools, special units attached to the mainstream education schools and, more recently, through inclusive settings in mainstream education schools. The demand for services for children with special needs at all levels in Egypt has increased as a result of the State's commitment to the Education For All (EFA) goals (UNESCO, 2000), creating an opportunity for a large number of children to enrol in existing general education schools and the state-owned special education schools (MOE, 2007).

In November 2007, the Egyptian MOE launched the National Strategy for Education Reform, with a special emphasis on the education of children with special needs. The main issues in this strategy regarding the education of children with special needs are related to access, quality, and system management. This strategy has paid more attention to providing education to children with SEN in mainstream settings as a means for achieving equality among all children. The strategy has put the *“provision for inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream general education schools”* (MOE, 2007, p. 324) as its top priority.

The strategy’s commitment towards inclusion is not surprising since the issue of inclusion is high on the educational reform agenda in different parts of the world. According to Winter (2006), the movement towards the inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream school settings has been formalised in many countries with the implementation of the recommendations of Salamanca Statement in 1994. There are many factors that help in achieving successful inclusion. In this regard, it has been argued that effective educational change requires not only the initiation of new policies and curricula, but the ability of teachers to cope with these changes (Fullan, 1991; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Hargreaves, Lieberman, Fullan, & Hopkins, 1998). Also, it is argued, teachers will have an essential role to play in the implementation of the inclusive education policy as they are responsible for implementing many of the changes necessary to put this policy into practice. Supporting this argument, Bailey (1995, p. 16) stated that *“unless teachers are enjoying positive, health-enhancing and productive emotional states and high motivation and commitment, and unless they have the skills and the drive to implement change programmes, inclusive education approaches will not be implemented wholeheartedly or effectively”*.

Additionally, teachers’ perceptions and attitudes about inclusion are very important because they underpin teachers’ professional practice. Many studies have investigated teachers’ perceptions and attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Monsen & Frederickson, 2003; Sadek & Sadek, 2000; Scruggs & Mastropieri 1996; Soodak, Podell & Lehman, 1998; Subban & Sharma 2006; Ward, Center & Bochner 1994). Despite of the importance of these studies, it has been noticed that little attention has been given to the complex ontologies of inclusion and SEN within attitudinal research.

Most of that research has been concerned with ascertaining the negative and positive aspects of attitudes with less concern about the problematic nature of inclusion and SEN

as social phenomena that should be studied within a framework that recognizes the complicated relationships between the personal and the social aspects of the phenomenon. The current study is based on the premise that Egyptian teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion are set within a cultural context different from many other contexts especially the western ones where inclusion is the prominent educational provision for children with SEN. Through the journey of the current thesis, the study attempts to problematize these issues so it may contribute in filling this gap. Additionally, and as will be explained in detail in chapter four, most of the previous research has been quantitative in nature. To address the complexity of the fuzzy concepts of inclusion, SEN, and attitudes, the current study will adopt a multi-method research design to obtain a clearer understanding of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, despite the importance of studying teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards any educational change, and despite the efforts made by the Egyptian MOE to improve educational provision to children with SEN, there is little evidence that any of these changes took teachers' voices into account. From my personal experience as a teacher and as a teacher educator I noticed that there is development in process in almost all aspects of education, but as yet no attention has been paid to teachers' thoughts and the way they conceptualize teaching and learning in general and the way they conceptualize inclusion in particular. Educational policies in Egypt have always taken a top-down approach based on a mistaken assumption that once in post, teachers have the potential to manipulate all kinds of new policies or teaching materials handed down to them from above, whatever the orientation these policies carry.

Moreover, the educational research context in Egypt, particularly in the field of SE, has been dominated by an interventionist research approach which emphasised mainly on evaluating certain methods or programmes or on preparing training programmes to support the academic and social development of children with different types of SEN (e.g. Alkashef, 1998; Alshakhs, 1992; Awwad, 2000; Elzayat, 1998; Refat, & Salah, 2000; Yousouf, 2000) or helping teachers to cope with the stress of working with children with SEN (e.g. Allwag, 2003). Also, most available Egyptian research related to teacher variables has been heavily focused upon teaching methods. It has mainly focused upon studying teacher observable behaviours or teachers' use of certain teaching methods apart from others. Very little attention has been given to teachers' values and attitudes, despite the fact that teachers draw upon their values and attitudes in their daily classroom teaching. However, most of the research allied to these

variables has been conducted in a “positivist” way suggesting programmes for training or testing training programmes. Additionally, almost no research currently exists in Egypt that, to the best knowledge of the researcher, has tried to explore and understand teachers’ constructions of and attitudes towards inclusion, their perceptions about barriers to the implementation of inclusion and their perceptions about the changes required to put inclusion into practice from the interpretative-constructivist point of view.

My intention in the current study is to gain a clearer understanding of all these issues within the Egyptian context to contribute to the international discourse of inclusion and SEN/disability. Having an understanding of teachers’ constructions of and attitudes towards inclusion, their perceptions about barriers to the implementation of inclusion and their perceptions about the changes required is assumed to be an important condition for improving pedagogical practices generally and inclusive practices particularly. I hope that gaining an understanding of inclusion from the teachers’ perspective will contribute to a more general understanding of the complexity of inclusion and SEN and an increase in teachers’ support for inclusion.

1.3 Aims of the study

The current study focuses on understanding the complexity of inclusive education; its theory, practice, barriers to implementation and change requirements. More specifically, the study is concerned with the inclusion of children with SEN in regular schools in the Egyptian context, with a particular focus on teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about this process. In this regard, the study aims to:

- Investigate Egyptian teachers’ understanding of inclusion.
- Investigate Egyptian teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion and factors influencing their attitudes.
- Explore Egyptian teachers’ perceptions about the barriers to inclusive education.
- Explore Egyptian teachers’ perceptions about the process of change.

A concluding significant aim is to gain insight into the feasibility of the inclusive education approach in teaching children with SEN in the Egyptian context. The insight gained from teachers’ responses would be significant in adjusting the current policies or formulating or creating new inclusive educational policies.

1.4 Research questions

Based on the research aims outlined above, the main research questions which guide the current study are:

1. What are Egyptian teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with SEN in regular schools?
2. What factors have shaped Egyptian teachers' attitudes towards inclusion?
3. What are Egyptian teachers' perceptions about the barriers to inclusive education?
4. What are Egyptian teachers' perceptions about the necessary changes to put inclusive education into practice?

Under the broad rubric of attitudes, the first question seeks to gain a better understanding of teachers' views about inclusion and to identify the range of beliefs, emotions and intentions held by teachers. These beliefs represent teachers' personal knowledge and their implicit theories about inclusive education and about children with SEN that serve as cognitive and affective maps which guide them in their daily interactions in their environment. The second research question aims to investigate how these attitudes have developed and to identify the possible factors that have affected teachers' attitudes. The third research question aims to identify a range of barriers that constrain the implementation of inclusion in Egypt. And finally, the fourth research question aims to identify any possible factors that could help in developing inclusive practices in Egypt.

1.5 Research approach

This study adopted a multi-method design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods in two phases. Being affected by the dominant research approach in Egypt, the positivist approach, and by my own educational research background rooted within the quantitative approach (Elshabrawy, 2003), I adopted the survey strategy in the first phase of the research with the hope that it can provide me with a wide and representative overview of teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion. In this phase, a total of 285 Egyptian teachers was selected randomly and responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaire, however, only gave me a snapshot of inclusion, which proved to be very limited in investigating such complex issues. Then, it became apparent to me that it would be necessary to locate these complicated issues of inclusion, SEN, and attitudes within a broader socio-cultural context adopting what Eiser (1994) called a "social constructivist" view of attitudes. In this view attitudes are considered to

be the product of the interaction between the personal and the social factors rather than a simple personal entity as represented by the questionnaire approach. Consequently, I decided to use the technique of interviews, to collect more sophisticated and in-depth data in the second phase (see Chapter 5). The maximum variation strategy was used to sample 12 teachers with diverse experiences. The insights gained from the qualitative study allowed a problematization of the key concepts underpinning the research, namely inclusion, SEN and attitudes, and demonstrated their context dependency. Such insights also highlighted some theoretical points regarding the complexity of inclusion and SEN, and challenged the globalized and technical approach of inclusion.

1.6 Significance of the study

The current study will make a significant contribution to the field of inclusion and attitudes in terms of theory and practice. Theoretically, the study carries the potential to add some insights to the international discourse of inclusion and to consider the complexity of such approach within the Egyptian context. Additionally, utilising a social-constructivist approach in understanding teachers' attitudes could illuminate the different personal and social aspects of attitudes rather than providing a simplistic view of attitudes as accepting or rejecting the policy. Furthermore, this approach pays attention to many different factors within the social milieu of teachers that might affect their understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion including the role of the social views about disability, religious values, school cultures, educational systems and structural and organizational constraints.

In terms of practice, the study will contribute to the development of the current policies of special education, educational research, teacher education and curriculum development in Egypt. The following expectations are some of the significant elements of the current study.

- The insights gained from the study carry the potential of reviewing or reformulating the current policies of special education. The findings of the study could provide the policymaker with some insights regarding teachers' understanding and commitment towards inclusion and therefore some directions for future change. This also could help the key policymakers to conceptualise and envision this future change in a way which is suitable to the Egyptian context.

- The study draws the attention of the policymaker in Egypt to the importance of attending to the social and cultural traditions of Egyptian society, especially the values enshrined in religion and tradition.
- Through illuminating the inclusion context, this study emphasizes that good intentions do not guarantee good results. Namely, the dictation of a particular philosophy or policy in itself does not induce any change in practice unless the implementers of this philosophy (teachers) are aware of it and able to assimilate it into their belief systems and make it their own.
- The study will provide some insights for regular and special teacher education in Egypt both at the pre-service and in-service levels. It is significant for teacher educators since it aims to provide an insight into the importance of exploring teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion and drawing upon their experiences.
- The findings of the study can shed light on the effectiveness of teacher training programmes and help to identify the pitfalls that teachers encounter during teaching experience especially when dealing with children with diverse needs.
- The study sets an example for further studies in education in terms of the potential and worth of using the interpretive-constructivist research framework in educational research in Egypt, especially for studying teacher-related variables. Thus, it can be a contribution since it explores teachers' constructs through what they say and do and not through what researchers and policymakers assume about them.
- In terms of research methodology, the study also offers a humble example in using a multi-method approach in research. It lays the ground for further research in Egypt in terms of using interviews and some other qualitative data collection methods.
- The study, in its attempt to explore Egyptian teachers' constructs of inclusion and SEN, aims to provide curriculum developers and designers with insight concerning the feasibility of particular curricula to children with SEN. This insight can be taken as a basis for the development and differentiation of curricula in the future and for rethinking the national curriculum.

1.7 Overview of the study

In accordance with the focus of this study, the thesis is organized into nine chapters including the current one. Chapter one presents the rationale for conducting the study and the research questions. In addition, the purpose of the study and the expected significance of the study are discussed.

Chapter Two presents the contextual background about Egyptian educational system. It also provides a general historical overview of special education, its aims and the current trials of educational reform in the field and some reflections on teacher education.

Chapter Three and Four present the theoretical background of the study. They provide a toolkit of theories and issues relevant to the interpretation of the field work results. Specifically, chapter Three provides a review of the theoretical models of understanding disability and SEN. The chapter also provides a historical review of the concept of inclusive education, its assumptions, rationale and implementation in a global context. And finally, the barriers to the process of inclusion and the changes required to achieve this process are presented in this chapter.

Chapter Four provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature that discusses the overall theoretical framework in studying teachers' attitudes, with particular reference to the one-component model and the three-component model. The chapter goes on to provide a detailed overview of the different factors associated with teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

Chapter Five outlines the research methodology. This includes an overview of the different research paradigms, followed by a rationale for adopting the interpretive-constructivist research paradigm in the study. The chapter then presents the methodology used in the study and gives the rationale for using different methods for data collection. In addition, it discusses issues of validity, reliability, trustworthiness, and the ethical considerations.

Chapters Six and Seven present the findings of the study. Chapter Six presents the findings of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the questionnaire responses. Focus is placed on how teachers responded to the attitudes scale and how they see the barriers facing inclusion. The findings of this chapter are matched against those obtained from the analysis of the interviews.

Chapter Seven reports on the results of the qualitative analysis of the interviews with twelve teachers sampled to define teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards

inclusion. Teachers' understanding of inclusion, understanding of SEN /disability, their general attitudes, their perceptions about professional development and their perspectives about barriers to inclusion and the supposed changes to put inclusion into practice are thematically presented in this chapter.

Chapter Eight consolidates the findings of the study through a discussion of the results with reference to previous literature. Finally, Chapter Nine presents the theoretical implications of the findings, which represent the contribution of the study, and poses recommendations for teacher education, curriculum development and educational research in the Egyptian context. This is followed by some suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER Two

Chapter Two: Context of the Study

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the context in which the study was carried out. It presents a brief profile of the country and addresses the Egyptian educational system. Emphasis will be given to the educational provision to children with SEN and the current trials of implementing inclusive education programmes. A further insight into pre-service and in-service teacher training is provided.

2.2 Country profile

The Arab Republic of Egypt is strategically located at the intersection of Europe, the north-east corner of Africa and western Asia. It is approximately one million square kilometres in size. The majority of its inhabitants are crowded into about 5% of the country's land area in the Delta region (north) and along the narrow Nile valley (south). Administratively, Egypt is divided into two regions, Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt, which in turn are broken down into 28 Governorates, each headed by a Governor appointed by the president.

The population of Egypt was estimated in 2009 as 83,082,869 according to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics in Egypt. Arabic is the official language of the state. Islam is the principal religion of the country, but the constitution allows freedom to worship in other religions.

2.3 Educational system in Egypt

The Egyptian constitution provides for free education at all levels of study. All Egyptians are entitled to free education at all level regardless of gender, geographic or socio-economic status (Abu Gazaleh, Bulbul, Hewala & Najim, 2004). The educational system is extremely centralized and hierarchical with the Ministry of Education at the top. The MOE is responsible for drawing up policies and overall plans, while regional governorates are held responsible for the implementation and supervision of these plans. According to Gahin (2001), the defining characteristics of the Egyptian educational system include: a linear unifying fashion, mechanistic learning and teaching methods, examination-driven instruction, politicization, red tape that hinders the achievement of the essential targets behind schooling, limited resources, and centralization. Additionally, Egyptian education has been characterized as teacher-centred, authoritarian and highly competitive. According to Idris (2004), the current formal

educational system with its organization, rules and order, curriculum, and strict selection process is not designed to meet the psychological and social needs of the children with SEN.

Historically, Al-Azhar Religious System was the main educational system in Egypt until 1800. Al-Azhar schools were known as *kattatib* where children were taught the basics of reading, writing and math, though the main task of many of these schools was to enable children to memorize the Quran (Razik & Zaher, 1992). Muhammad Ali, out of his aim to establish a European-style military, established the system of modern secular education in the early nineteenth century to provide technically-trained cadres for his civil administration and military. Thus, a dual system of education was established (Cook, 2000). The duality of the educational system remains to this day, however the systems have a very similar structure and both under the supervision of the government.

In terms of the current structure, the education system is divided into two systems; the secular system and the Al-Azhar Religious System. Additionally, there are private schools at all grade levels, although they do not constitute a separate system. They teach the state-approved curricula but are permitted to use additional textbooks. They differ considerably from one another in their goals and quality, as well as in the fees they charge.

2.3.1 The secular system

This system comprises two pre-university phases; the compulsory phase of basic education and the secondary phase. Basic education is further divided into two stages; primary and preparatory. Primary education covers ages from six to twelve. It used to be six years, but was arbitrarily reduced to five years in 1988, and changed to six years again in 1999. The preparatory phase is three years, for ages twelve to fifteen. The Secondary phase is divided into two departments; general and vocational (commercial, industrial, agricultural). This phase is three grades in the general department and varies from three to five in the vocational departments as shown in Figure (2.1).

Boys and girls are educated in mixed classes at the primary level, but they are separated at the preparatory and the secondary stage. However, some schools remain mixed especially in rural areas, where enrolments may not always be sufficient to justify the creation of separate schools for boys and girls. All aspects of the curriculum are the same for boys and girls save one: girls study home economics and boys take

agricultural/industrial studies. The curriculum for each grade is consistent from school to school nationally and rigidly enforced (Lloyd, Eltawila, Clark & Mensch, 2001). Students have the right to join university after this stage or to stop at this point and take the secondary school certificate.

University and higher and intermediate institutes				Parallel Al-Azhar Education system
Secondary stage	General secondary schools (age 15-18)	Vocational secondary schools (15-18/20)	Grade (10-12/14)	
Basic education	Preparatory stage (age 12-15)		(grades 7-9)	
	Primary stage (age 6-12)		Grade (1-6)	

Figure 2.1 Structure of Egyptian Education System (adapted from Mahrouse, 1994)

2.3.2 Al-Azhar system

Al-Azhar education system is supervised by the Supreme Council of the Al-Azhar Institution and is independent from the Ministry of Education. But the Al-Azhar Institution itself is placed under government supervision, and its educational system is actually supervised by the Egyptian Prime Minister. The Al-Azhar schools are named “Institutes” and include primary, preparatory, and secondary phases. All the students are Muslim, and males and females are separated in all phases after the primary stage. This system maintains the same three phases of the secular system schools but there are no vocational schools in this system. Al-Azhar students study mostly the same curriculum as their peers in the secular system, in addition to the religious curricula. The graduates of the Al-Azhar secondary schools are eligible to continue their studies at Al-Azhar University only.

2.4 Historical insights into SEN/disability in Egypt

In their review of the history of disability in Egypt, Shukrallah, Mostafa, Magdi & Abaza (1997) stated that the history of disability in Egypt has gone through two major stages. The first goes back as far as the early dawn of civilization during the Pharaonic era, around 5000 BC, into the Coptic era, then to the Islamic era. The final decline is estimated to be around the 16th century within the Ottoman regime. The second stage of development is the modern era which starts with the beginning of the 19th century.

The first stage is characterized by the development of numerous indigenous schools in the different areas of human services. The most prosperous time was that of the Islamic era. People with disabilities were highly honoured and respected and their needs were met based on the fundamental principle of equality in Islam (Ghaly, 2007). During that time, particularly from the 8th to 15th centuries, Egypt was an important scholastic centre through which civilizations were transported to the European shores in the Mediterranean basin. In the field of disability, there are many signs of interest. For example, Omar Bin Abd El-Aziz conducted a survey in the 8th century AD to identify disabled people and he provided a companion to each blind person and a helper to each crippled person who could not move around. Additionally, Al-Azhar mosque and Al-Azhar schools (*kattatib*) played a significant role in teaching many blind people (Othman, 1988). According to Ammar (1954), "*blind boys find in the Kuttab (singular of kattatib) a place where they can absorb themselves in learning the Quran, and it is mostly these blind boys who remain in the Kuttab until they finish memorizing the whole of it*" (pp. 212-213). However, the time from the 16th century to the beginning of the 19th, seems to have witnessed the dwindling of all the old institutions.

The second stage is characterized by importing the western schooling systems and models. These models became superimposed on existing infrastructures. In many instances, they were born divorced from the social and cultural indigenous structures of the society, as well as from peoples' needs (Shukrallah et al., 1997).

Most historians agree that the beginning of the modern era of Egyptian history starts in the 19th century with the Reign of Mohammed Ali. During his era, an attempt to modernize Egypt and its institutions went through nearly all spheres of life (Ali, 1989).

During Mohammed Ali's and his sons' era, many hospitals and schools were built and special attention was paid to education in general. Service delivery structures, since that time until the present day, have three basic roots: The first, and probably the most important, has been the state. This is probably due to the highly centralized nature of the Egyptian state, which since the Pharaohs' time has characterized Egypt. The second is the charity organizations. To these, particularly at the turn of the 19th century, belonged the foreign and missionary organizations as well as the local ones belonging to rich families. The third is the private sector. Given the educational nature of the current study, an overview of the educational services provided to people with SEN will be presented in the next section.

2.5 The development of educational provision for children with SEN in Egypt

The MOE is the biggest provider of educational services for several groups of children with SEN. Until the 1952 revolution the ministry provisions were limited to the blind and to a lesser extent the deaf. According to the history of education in Egypt, the first special school was established for the blind and the deaf in 1874 in the era of Elkhedewy Ismail, Mohammed Ali's son, in which 8 students (6 boys and 2 girls) were enrolled. In 1888 a new school for the blind was established in Alexandria by an English lady. In 1901 another school was built in Al-Zeitoun in Cairo. In 1926 the MOE established an institute for preparing teachers of the blind. In 1927 the primary education administration began to dedicate classes for the blind and the deaf in the primary schools (MOE, 2005).

The first formal school for the deaf was established in 1950 and the first formal school for the blind was built in 1953 whereas the first formal school for intellectual disabilities was established in 1956. All these classes and schools were under the authority of the "Section for the Abnormal" within the ministry, which followed the department of primary education. In 1964 this section became an independent department and was renamed the "the General Directorate of Special Education" (MOE, 2005). In 1969 the Ministerial Resolution number 156 re-organized the state of education for disabled children, creating three departments, each caring for a type of disability, namely; the visual impairment department, the hearing impairment department, and the intellectual disability department. However, the three are under the auspices of the General Directorate of Special Education.

In 1990, the code of practice for the education of children with SEN was issued based on the Ministerial Resolution number 37 and is still valid today (MOE, 1990). The Ministry is responsible for special education schools and classrooms and the promotion of special education. In addition to the role of the MOE, Al-Azhar played an important role in providing inclusive education to the blind. Since Al-Azhar's establishment in the 9th century, all blind children are accepted in Al-Azhar institutes and they study the same curricula as their sighted peers. Many of the grand Imams and high intellectuals who were blind have studied in Al-Azhar.

2.6 Current policy and structure of special education in Egypt

Special education aims at educating, training, and rehabilitating children with different special educational needs. It also aims at training children on different skills that suit their potentials and abilities, according to well-prepared plans and special programmes,

in order to help them achieve the most of their potentials and prepare them for life and inclusion in society (MOE, 2006). In this section I will reflect on the ministry definition and classification of children with SEN and the different types of special schools.

2.6.1 Definition and classification of special education needs

The MOE defines the child with SEN as “the child whose development or education requires special care, which exceeds the recourses and capabilities of the mainstream school, for a long or short time”. Such child can be classified into one or more of the following groups:

- Talented or high intellectual abilities
- Visual impairment
- Hearing, speech and linguistic impairment
- Intellectual disabilities
- Physical disabilities and medical conditions
- Slow learning and low academic achievement
- Academic and developmental specific learning disabilities
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Social and cultural difficulties
- Autism

This is the terminology used in the Egyptian policy context. The term “intellectual disabilities” is equivalent to the English term learning disabilities and to the American term mental retardation. This term will be used through the thesis.

2.6.2 Structure of the special education system

Special Education Schools is the dominant model of education provision for children with special needs in Egypt, though the number served is still very limited: 36,808 children covering 1.8 percent of children at school-age with special needs. Special Education Services in Egypt include only visually-impaired, hearing-impaired and intellectually-disabled.

Currently, many children with disabilities such as severe intellectually-disabled and the multi-handicapped mostly fall through the net of existing services, i.e. no services cater for their needs. As mentioned above, the educational provision for children with SEN includes three types of schools (see also Table 2.1). An overview of these schools will be presented.

Table 2.1 Structure of Special Education System in Egypt

Type of SEN	Nursery	primary	preparatory	secondary
Visual impairment	-----	6 years	General (3 years)	General (3 years)
Hearing impairment	2 years	8 years	Vocational (3 years)	Technical (3 years)
Intellectual disability	2 years	6 years	Vocational (3 years)	-----

- **Schools for the visually-impaired**

Training is provided in these special schools for two categories; namely, the blind, and the partially sighted. These schools have a parallel system and parallel curricula to that of the mainstream education. These schools include three stages, primary (6 years), preparatory (3 years) and secondary (3 years). The blind has both day care as well as residential facilities and the partially sighted has only day care schools. After secondary stage, students can join university. Statistically, there are 88 special schools serving 2,544 students (MOE, 2006).

- **Schools for the hearing-impaired**

These schools oversee the education and training of two categories of the hearing impaired namely, the deaf and the partially deaf. The deaf have both day care as well as residential facilities. It includes four stages of education: pre-school (2 years), primary (8 years), vocational preparatory (3 years), and technical secondary schools for (3 years). In primary school, the deaf children follow the regular curricula of the mainstream school but in the preparatory and secondary stage they have special curricula. The partially deaf follows the regular curricula of the mainstream school with additional support and special facilities. There are 232 schools serving 14,689 students (MOE, 2006).

- **Schools for the intellectually-disabled**

These schools care for the educable intellectually-disabled children with IQ in the range 50-70. It receives children with mild intellectual disabilities who have no other psychological or physical disabilities. Education is conducted in two stages; primary for 8 years (including 2 years reception or nursery) and a vocational stage for 3 years. On the curriculum level, special schools present excerpts of the curriculum of the first three years of primary mainstream education. In the vocational stage, children are provided

with vocational training for 3 years. There is no testing in the regular sense and the evaluation for progress is within-child who at the end of the school years receives a certificate that he/she has fulfilled the school requirements. Currently, there are 468 schools serving 19,340 children (MOE, 2006).

Additionally, this department caters for the education and training of children with physical disabilities and chronic health conditions. This group includes the motor disabilities as well as the visceral such as rheumatic heart children. The education of those children takes place either in hospitals or sanatoria. There is only one special school for physical disabled children and five (3 primary and 2 preparatory) special hospital-schools for children with chronic health conditions (MOE, 2006).

2.7 Ongoing programs to achieve inclusion

Currently there is no official inclusive educational policy in Egypt. As shown above, children with SEN are educated in segregated settings and inclusion is being practised only on an experimental basis. The MOE started in the late 1990s to integrate some children in mainstream schools to sort out the problem of the limited capacity of special education schools. This process has taken different forms as follows:

- Full inclusion of a limited number of children, not exceeding a few hundred, who are benefiting from various successful pilot projects and who are included in full-time mainstream general education schools. Evidence provided from these projects shows that teaching methods were modified to cater and respond to the diverse abilities of children, and this was also positively reflected in the quality of education provided to all children in these pilot schools.
- Partial inclusion or integration of children with disabilities in some classes. For example, there are 495 students with hearing impairment in Cairo and Daqahliyah who were integrated in 27 mainstream general education schools. Also, there are special units located in mainstream general education schools (45 model classes physically integrated in 17 schools serving 229 students with mild disabilities in Cairo, Alexandria, Menoufiya, Sharqiya, Damietta, South Sinai, and Matrouh). Additionally, there are 108 special education classes attached to mainstream schools serving 831 students with mild intellectual disabilities.

Additionally, there are some pilot experiments sponsored by Non-Governmental Organizations or by private schools in Egypt in collaboration with the MOE. An overview of these experiments will be presented.

- **SETI Centre experiment**

In 1999, Support Education Training for Integration (SETI) centre, a sector of CARITAS (An Egyptian non-profit non-government organization) started a pilot inclusion project in collaboration with the MOE, UNESCO, and Save the children (UK). The project started in 1999 until 2002 in three governorates (Cairo, Alexandria, and Al Minya) with two schools in each. In 2003, the Minister of Education extended the project for another five years starting from 2003. The number of schools increased to be 15 schools and 15 kindergartens in 2005/06. Also, the number of included children increased to 132, up from 64 in 2002, with different disabilities namely hearing impairment, intellectual disabilities and physical disabilities.

The results of this programme showed improvement in students' social skills, self confidence, social interaction and friendship. Also, there was a marked decrease in behaviour problems. Additionally, the programme helped in developing teaching skills of about 500 teachers. However, the programme faced several challenges such as negative social attitudes, head teachers' inflexibility, and difficulty of the curricula and examinations which required a lot of effort to adapt it to the needs of the included children (Khuzam, 2002).

- **Misr Language Schools Programme**

The Misr Language Schools started in 2002-2003 to accommodate the needs of some students who suffer from either intellectual disabilities or specific learning disabilities. Its main philosophy lies in providing the best kind of services to these students in inclusive education settings (MOE, 2006). Due to the specific nature of this school, as it is one of the most expensive private international schools in the country, the school managed to provide students and teachers with the appropriate support. This programme was relatively successful in including children with mild disabilities. However, the school found difficulty in including children with moderate disabilities. Later on, the school had to provide education in a self-contained classroom that offers environmental changes needed for severe problems and to offer the remediation of necessary skills needed for the child to be able to cope and learn in inclusive education.

- **The Projects of the Egyptian association for caring for people with special needs in collaboration with UNESCO**

The Egyptian association for caring for people with special needs, funded by UNESCO, started an experimental project for providing two schools in Cairo with resource rooms

from 2001-2003. The aim of the project was to provide these schools with the appropriate support to help them in including some children (n=55) who have specific learning disabilities (reading, writing, and math) in addition to some other behavioural and developmental problems. In 2005/2006 this project was extended for another year to include some more children with mild intellectual disabilities and some children with moderate intellectual disabilities. The programme's name has been changed to "the inclusive education project in Egypt". The new project included 27 children with specific learning disabilities, 39 children with moderate intellectual disabilities, and 10 children with mild intellectual disabilities (Sadek & Alshakhs, 2007).

Despite all these efforts to implement inclusive education programmes in Egypt, there is no inclusive education policy in Egypt up till now. Additionally, all these programmes are fragmented. In this the placement of disabled children in mainstream schools was taking place uncritically and irregularly, thereby leading to what Liasidou (2007) called "abortive integrative attempts". Such system will not create inclusive education environment in Egyptian schools. There is no clear national vision for developing inclusion. Therefore, there is a need to rethink inclusion within the whole policy of education in Egypt.

In November 2007, the Egyptian MOE launched the National Strategy for Education Reform, with a special emphasis on the education of children with special needs (MOE, 2007). However this plan does not adopt a complete inclusive educational policy, it represents a step on the right path which needs to be supported, revised, refined, and reorganized to be inclusive by the end. In the following section, I will review the MOE plan to reform SE in Egypt.

2.8 The National Strategic Plan for Special Education Reform in Egypt

In view of the large number of children with special needs who do not have access to quality education, the MOE adopted a gradual plan of action towards the inclusion of ten percent (or 152,800) of children with special needs into mainstream general education schools. A limited number of schools (5,040) will be targeted in the first year, while parallel preparatory plans for scale up will take place in the same year. Children with mild disabilities, such as physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, slow learners or border line, visual impairments, and hard of hearing will be the main targets for inclusion. Gradually, more children with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities, as well as visual and hearing impairments, will be included. This move will be supported

by legislations, policies, and regulations that will be modified or issued during the first year of the plan implementation.

This inclusion process will be regularly monitored and evaluated for guidance and development. The targeted schools will receive support (5,040 resource rooms, 29,280 trained teachers and 1,526 assistant teachers) in order to ensure the development of a single education system that will cater for the needs of all learners within an inclusive environment. Within this context, special education schools will gradually confine their services to serve the needs of children with severe, profound, and multiple types of disabilities who were not included during the implementation period of this plan.

The Egyptian trials to reform the special education sector are influenced by a flood of international documents and policy imperatives that proclaimed the rights of the individual and, by implication, the rights of disabled children to be educated with their peers in mainstream settings. One of the main pitfalls of this plan is the absence of learners' and teachers' voices. After reviewing the plan, I found that it is, as usual, top-down plan. Teachers' voice is not heard, especially mainstream teachers who are the backbone of the inclusive education process. Also, the vision of this plan is still vague. The current study into teachers' attitudes towards inclusion could provide useful implications for the policymaker to support and guide the implementation of this plan, or at least to avoid the pitfalls of the current plan, in the future planning and implementation.

2.9 Teacher education in Egypt

One of the major problems facing efforts spent in the field of special education in Egypt is the shortage of specialized and well trained personnel. Therefore, I think it will be useful to provide an overview of teacher education in Egypt. Two complementary stages constitute teacher education. These are firstly, pre-service teacher education and secondly, in-service teacher education. A detailed account of each stage follows.

2.9.1 Pre-service teacher education

Generally, mainstream teachers are prepared in the faculties of education scattered all over the country through a two-component course. The first component is represented in the subject matter knowledge and the second component is represented in the teaching pedagogy including a teaching practicum that aims to prepare student teachers for the job. The practicum is jointly carried out by MOE inspectorates and the faculties of education. These programmes do not address the education of children with SEN.

Teachers working in special schools are provided with special pre-service training programmes as follows:

- **The Special Education Certificate (One year internship in special education)**

This is a one year internship training course supervised by the ministry of Education. MOE used to hire primary school teachers who received one internship year in one of the three fields of disability that the MOE deals with, namely, the blind, the deaf, and the intellectually disabled to staff its special schools. The quality of this programme has been questioned. Alzuhery (2003) argued that this programme is very limited because it provides teachers with disability-specific training and by the end the teacher will have no idea about the characteristics of other disabilities. Actually, the whole system of preparing the primary school teachers has been reviewed since 1992. Primary schools were to be staffed with teachers who have a qualification equal to a college or a university degree (Shukrallah et al., 1997) and this affected the special education as well.

- **University Undergraduate Degree**

As a response to the feeling of inadequacy of the quality of education provided in the field of special education by the MOE, new undergraduate degrees have been established to provide special schools with more qualified teachers. The first one of these programmes was a new undergraduate degree in special education that has been established in Ain-Shams University, Faculty of Education in 1994-1995 (Sadek & Sadek, 2000). Subsequently, similar degrees were established in some other Egyptian universities.

Another root of special educators have developed after reforming the system of preparing the primary school teachers as the old schools for the preparation of primary school teachers were turned into the Faculty of Nursery or kindergarten. The degree is a four year degree. It is being offered by the Universities of Al Minya, Alexandria and Helwan. A programme in special Education has also been introduced, for those interested in pursuing education in the field of disability (Shukrallah et al., 1997).

Additionally, due to a shortage in teaching staff, the graduates of several other faculties (e.g. faculty of Physical Education, faculty of Art Education etc) and Early Childhood Departments in faculties of Education are still hired by the MOE to work in special schools.

- **Post graduate diplomas in special education**

Alongside the above mentioned undergraduate courses, several universities offer a post graduate diploma for teachers of special education. The programme is a one-year course. For example, this course is provided by the University of Al-Azhar, through the faculty of Education and Human Sciences and by Ain-Shams University, Faculty of Education.

2.9.2 In-service training

Realising the importance of in-service training for teachers, the MOE has directed attention to in-service training to develop teachers professionally. There are two kinds of in-service teacher training in Egypt: firstly, “in-country” training and secondly, out of-country training or “teacher missions”. It is worth mentioning here that the MOE follows the same approach with most teachers including SE teachers.

Regarding in-country training, the General Directorate of Training in the MOE offers short courses during mid-term and summer holidays. Additionally, some University Centres like; Childhood Disabilities Centre Al-Azhar University, Psychological Counselling Centre Ain-Shams University offer some in-service training sessions. These courses aim at upgrading SE teachers’ proficiency and teaching skills. However, all these courses are also disability-specific courses. I mean, teachers are trained how to teach a certain type of disability. Additionally, there are some in-service training courses provided by some NGOs like SETI.

With respect to “out-of-country” training, an initiative was officially taken by the Egyptian MOE in 1996 to upgrade the skills of SE teachers by sending groups of teachers to universities in the UK and the USA. The aim was to expose SE teachers to different systems of education and study methodology. The training period is usually three months long and includes both university and school-based components. On their return teachers are required to assist with the training of other teachers in issues associated with the educational reform (MOE, 2006).

To conclude, the state of special education teacher education seems to be going through a transitional stage. Some new degrees for the preparation of teachers have opened, ranging from undergraduate training for four years up to post graduate diplomas. Additionally, the MOE had paid attention to in-service training programmes to develop teachers’ teaching skills. However, there are some points of concern related to the quality of the programmes offered and their segregative nature. Teachers working in regular schools are not trained at all to teach students with SEN which means in case of

adopting inclusive education policy there will be a problem. And finally, there is a clear lack of uniformity in the types of certificates and cadres produced. The different courses are offered by different faculties with no higher auditing relevant to the needs of the current schools and available systems.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented a general overview of the structure of the Egyptian Educational system. Also, I have reflected on the educational provision to children with SEN, reviewing the policy, the structure, and the new plan for reforming the system. The chapter highlighted the change in this provision that has been underway in the last decade. This change is represented in the MOE trials and plans to reform SE and to move towards more inclusive practices. However, an innovation at the level of policy and school structure should be complemented by a change at the level of pedagogical values. Namely, it should be accompanied by a change in the pedagogical values of those people concerned with the change, the teachers. This is what the following chapters of the study aim to ascertain.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter Three: Perspectives on Inclusive Education

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore some of the main issues in the field of inclusive education. I will start with a review of the theoretical models of understanding disability and SEN based on the assumption that these theoretical models have different ontological positions, and consequently give way to different approaches to inclusion. Then, a historical review of the concept of inclusive education and its implementation in a global context and the different assumptions about this concept and differences between terms will be discussed. Finally, the barriers to the process of inclusion and the required change to achieve this process will be explored in this chapter. This chapter and the next one present the theoretical framework and literature review of the thesis as they provide a tool kit of theories and issues relevant to the interpretation of the field work results.

It is worth reminding the reader here that, for the purpose of this study, I will use the terms that the authors used in their respective papers (when describing their papers) or the generic term “inclusion” when multiple papers are cited. Additionally, inclusion and integration will be used interchangeably for the following reasons: (1) to encompass the range of programmatic models in Egypt used to integrate students in the general track; and (2) because participants in the study do not distinguish between the two terms as both of them are translated into one Arabic word “Damg”.

3.2 Special Educational Needs and Disability

3.2.1 Definitional issues

SEN refers to children’s learning needs in school. According to Frederickson & Cline (2002), definitions of SEN are generally based on “*individual deviation from normal expectation on significant difficulties in learning compared to the majority of children of a given age*” (p. 39). Additionally, SEN is legally defined in Britain, as in many other countries, and this legal definition is used to decide whether particular children are eligible for special educational services.

The last two decades have seen parallel shifts in the UK and the USA in the concept of SEN and the legal framework surrounding its assessment (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). In the UK, SEN first coined by Warnock in 1978 was introduced as a legally defined term by the Education Act 1981 (Department of Education and Science, 1981). Before 1981 the focus was very much on identifying and making provision for individuals

described as “handicapped”. There were twelve recognized categories of disability; blind, partially sighted, deaf, partially deaf, physically handicapped, delicate, educationally subnormal (moderate), educationally subnormal (severe), epileptic, maladjusted, speech defects, and autistic (Frederickson & Cline, 2002).

The Warnock Report (DES, 1978) recommended abolishing these statutory categories of disabled children and instead children who required special educational provision should be identified on the basis of a detailed profile of their needs following assessment. However, Norwich (2007) argued that this report has just replaced a set of disability-specific categories with a more general category. But he also asserted that this approach has enabled a focus on the individual needs of children in curriculum and teaching terms rather than membership of a category group. Additionally, according to the report, SEN were conceived as lying on a continuum with ordinary needs. It was proposed that provision too should be on a continuum. This “continuum of provision” can be described in organisational terms (see Figure 3.1).

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Full-time education in an ordinary class with any necessary help and support(2) Education in an ordinary class with periods of withdrawal to a special class or unit or other supporting base(3) Education in a special class or unit with periods of attendance at an ordinary class and full involvement in the general community life and extracurricular activities of the ordinary school(4) Full-time education in a special class or unit with social contact with the main school(5) Education in a special school, day or residential, with some shared lessons with a neighbouring ordinary school(6) Full-time education in a day special school with social contact with an ordinary school(7) Full-time education in residential special school with social contact with an ordinary school(8) Short-term education in hospitals or other establishments(9) Long-term education in hospitals or other establishments(10) Home tuition |
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Figure 3.2 Continuum of Provision: Department of Education and Science (1978, Para. 6.11)

The implementation of the 1981 Education Act in the UK shifted the purpose of assessment from the diagnosis of disability to the identification of SEN. This is clear from the definition of SEN introduced in the 1981 Education Act and maintained in subsequent legislation. For example, SEN is still defined in recent legislative documents as “a child has *special educational needs* if he or she has a *learning difficulty* which calls for *special educational provision* to be made for him or her. A child has a *learning*

difficulty if he or she (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age (b) has a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority (c) is under five and falls within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do if special educational provision was not made for the child” (Department of Education and Skills, 2001, 1.3). This definition reflects that the need of the child is the result of a complex interaction between the child’s characteristics, the level of support available and the appropriateness of the education being provided.

Similarly, legislation on SEN in the USA emphasized meeting the individual needs of children and focused on the provision of a match between these needs and the education offered. For example, the “Individuals with Disabilities Education Act” defines a student as having a disability if he or she requires “special education”, defined as “specially designed instruction” (Bailey, McWilliam, Buysse & Wesley, 1998; Peters, 2004)

Generally, The SEN approach has been welcomed as a development on the “categories of handicap” approach which it replaced and this approach has affected legislations in different countries (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). However, this approach has been criticized in relation to different educational acts in the UK (Goacher, Evans, Welton, & Wedell 1988; Leadbetter & Leadbetter, 1993; Pearson, 2005), and in the US (Baker & Zigmond, 1995) as well. For example, Goacher et al. (1988) stated that there is a notable degree of circularity in the legal definition of SEN in the British 1981 education act. They argued that the interrelationship between needs and provision embodied in this definition is circular where one is defined with reference to the other. More radically, Tomlinson (1982) claimed that this approach has served the needs of dominant power interests in society, rather than those of children who experience difficulties in the school.

3.2.2 Theoretical conceptualizations of Special Educational Needs

The way SEN is understood affects the provision provided to SEN students. Inclusive education is based on a conceptualization of SEN different from that one which special provision is based on. Generally speaking, there is an ongoing debate about the principles which present the correct understanding of SEN. There are two conceptualizations of the nature of these difficulties which are often compared and contrasted. The first view is often referred to as the medical model, the psycho-medical

model or the individual model. This model argues that the difficulty or the disability or the need is located within the child. The alternative approach, the social model, argues that SEN arises when inappropriate environmental demands are placed on individuals which exceed their current capabilities for meeting those demands.

These two models are well researched and documented in the literature (see for example, Barnes, Oliver & Barton, 2002; Burchardt, 2004; Devliger, 2005; Dewsbury, Clarke, Randall, Rouncefield & Sommerville, 2004; Finkelstein, 2001; Landsman, 2005; Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000; Oliver, 1996; Shakespeare, 2006; Shakespeare & Watson, 2001; Siminski, 2003; Thomas, 2004). These two approaches will be illustrated in the following section. It is worth mentioning here is that although the disability models are usually presented as having succeeded each other, it would be more correct to consider that they co-exist or become dominant in particular places and times (Devliger, 20005). Devliger also argued that *“thinking that one mode of thought has totally replaced another mode of thought is illusory. It is always a matter of dominance, of situational context, and in particular of time, i.e. of not yet having achieved a particular mode of thinking and the fact that older dominant modes of thinking never leave us”* (p.10).

3.2.2.1 The medical model

This model conceptualizes special needs as arising from deficits in the neurological or psychological make-up of the child, analogous to an illness or medical condition. Generally, the focus of causation is within the child (Fougeyrollas & Beauregard, 2001; Shakespeare, 2006; Skidmore, 1996; Thomas, 2004) In this model, the power to define and treat disabled people is located within the medical profession, and it is the role of the disabled people or their caretakers to seek out such experts (Boxall, Carson & Docherty, 2004; Burchardt, 2004; Landsman, 2005; Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000). This conceptualisation assumes that children deemed to have difficulties in learning should be segregated from others and subject to an alternative form of educational provision. Those children who appear unable to learn “normally” are first grouped into different categories according to their problems and then prescribed special treatment or special pedagogical programmes from specialist practitioners in order to make good the deficit. Pedagogical solutions aim at helping people with disabilities to better cope with society. The children must be changed if they are to benefit from education or they have to be changed to fit into the system (Hausstätter, 2004; Lynas, 2002). This has been called the assimilation approach in understanding SEN.

This model has been criticized for the way in which “it views disabled people as somehow lacking, unable to play a full role in society” (Dewsbury et al., 2004, p.147). In addition, factors external to the individual (e.g. quality of teaching, school system) are not considered. Also, this model has been criticized generally for its lack of acknowledgment of human beings as social animals (Fougeyrollas & Beauregard, 2001); as it is based on logic of intervention, treatment, repair or correction of pathology, or deviation from the physiological, anatomical, behavioural or functional norm.

Additionally, Solity (1993) argued that this model is based on certain assumptions without strong evidence to support such assumptions. For example, it is often assumed that children have had appropriate learning opportunities; that their learning experiences have been appropriately matched to their needs; that the teaching available has been effective with their peers but not them; and that the discrepancy cannot be attributed to starting school with lower attainments than peers or to widely differing preschool experiences. The appropriate evidence is rarely available to support these assumptions and yet they are rarely challenged.

Also, it has been criticized for ignoring the important role of social and educational contexts. Where the educational context contributes to the problem, focusing on the individual will not make a broader contribution to improving the context. Dyson (1990) argues that the education system is not equally favourable to every child who participates in it and urges that instead of asking how education can change the individual, we should be asking how the education system itself can be changed to accommodate the characteristics of all children, regardless of the degree to which they are atypical. This reflects in a way the belief that inclusion is about the individual child and his or her response to the world and also the response of others to the particular child (Bayliss, 1998).

3.2.2.2 The social model

On the contrary to the medical model, the main hypothesis of the social model is that difficulties that children face are inherent in the environment not in the child (Devliger, 2005; Oliver, 1996). This approach has been particularly well-represented in the work from the UK and its influence remains significant. According to Skidmore (1996), the social conceptualization of SEN marks a sharp break with the hypothesis of special needs as arising from neurological deficits inherent in the student which typifies research in the psycho-medical paradigm. A shift away from this conceptualization was already to be found in the UK in the language of the Warnock Report (DES, 1978) and

the succeeding Education Act 1981, which abolished the existing statutory categories of handicap and introduced in their place the concept of special educational needs.

This model, which inclusive education is premised on, locates the source of difficulties within the educational environment rather than within the child. Disabilities are created by the society in order to exclude and marginalize groups of people who in one way or another do not fit in with the current situation (Oliver, 1996). Special education in this perspective reproduces social inequalities. The social model prescribes change. Not on changing the child to help her/him fit into the “normal” classroom but on rethinking and changing the whole school’s teaching and learning environment so that it can genuinely welcome all children and accommodate pupil diversity (Ainscow, 1999).

Proponents of this approach assume that the SEN children’s current attainments reflect the nature and quality of previous learning experiences and that those children will learn when taught appropriately. At one extreme then the social model holds that there are no children with learning difficulties, only adults with teaching difficulties (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). While a range of influences are acknowledged, it is typically argued that the most pervasive cause of learning difficulties is that for some children ‘the curriculum moves too fast and demands too much in relation to their existing skills. They get further and further behind and are entrenched in a failure cycle’ (Gickling and Havertape 1981, cited in Frederickson & Cline, 2002). The majority of school-related problems are therefore regarded as being curriculum induced.

Similarly, Barnes (1996) argued that the focus on environmental demands leads to an analysis of disabling environments and hostile social attitudes, rather than individuals and their different functioning and abilities, which may be played down or even denied. The major achievement of this approach is its contribution in developing inclusive education. Based on the critique of this approach to the philosophy of special education, it is no longer possible to assume a priori consensus around the idea that children deemed to have difficulties in learning should be segregated from others and subjected to an alternative form of educational provision. In addition, it plays an important role in “*sensitizing practitioners to the potentially damaging effects of attaching negative diagnostic labels to pupils*” (Skidmore, 1996, p.37).

Although this approach has been particularly well-represented in the work from the UK and its influence remains significant, there are some issues raised by different researchers. Critics of this approach say that it did not offer practical advice to teachers in classrooms as it was more related to an analysis of schools and society (Clough &

Corbett, 2000). Skidmore (1996) adds that this approach is tended towards abstract, hypothetical argument. It is also based on an ill-defined set of terminology (Altman, 2001). Moreover, the focus of this model on environmental factors attends only to features of the situation and ignores children's characteristics that may be useful in explaining why they can or cannot perform (Frederickson & Cline, 2002).

Analysis of the two models has brought to light certain limitations inherent in each. It seems that the medical model ignores or at least marginalizes the role of the environmental factors in constituting difficulty or SEN and the social model denies the role of the within-child factors. In my view, neither the medical conceptualization of SEN nor the social one is adequate on their own. None of them reflects the whole picture; rather each reflects just a part of it which might be misleading. The medical model arrives at an assimilation approach to special education. The process of intervention is focused on changing the child. The social model views the process as accommodation, i.e., changing the environment, especially the social environment, to meet the child's existing characteristics. In practice, according to Bayliss (1998), intervention should be based on both assimilation and accommodation.

Tomlinson (1982, p. 22) argues that "*neither fatalistic psychological views of individual causality nor simple sociological views of environmental determinism should go unchallenged*". Similarly, Gutierrez and Stone (1997), in discussing a cultural-historical view of learning and learning disabilities, argued that attention must be given to environmental in addition to individual variables, not instead of them. Such criticism raised a lot of calls for a different conceptualization of SEN. Many researchers now call for an interactional or integrative approach in understanding SEN. Such approach should combine between within child factors and environmental factors to give a more appropriate and holistic view of the phenomenon.

3.2.2.3 Interactional approach of SEN and Disability

The interactional approach, which is based on a critique of both medical and social models of conceptualizing disability and SEN, views the level of need as the result of a complex interaction between the child's strengths and weaknesses, the level of support available and the appropriateness of the education being provided. This conceptualization is premised on reported importance of the dynamics of the interaction between teacher and student in facilitating or impeding learning (Skidmore, 1996; Frederickson & Cline, 2002). It is also based on the perspectives of interactionism and interactivity theory (Coles, 1989; Quicke & Winter, 1994) which draw on constructivist

theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1986) and original empirical work to investigate the influence of the instructional relationship and the learning environment on the process of learning. In addition, this conceptualization is related to the ecosystem approach. From an ecosystem viewpoint, Cooper and Upton (1990) suggest that *“human behaviour is the product of ongoing interaction between environmental influences and internal motivations which derive from prior (mainly social) experience”* (p. 302).

There is currently widespread support for this approach. In this regard, the Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (World Health Organization [WHO] 2001) can be considered as a shift towards recognizing the complexity of the relationship between personal conditions and environmental circumstances. This classification replaced the International Classification of Impairment, Disability and Handicap (ICIDH) (WHO 1980) after systematic field trials and international consultation over years. According to Geertzen (2008), the ICIDH was a result of the traditional medical model of thought. The new classification represents a transition from the biomedical model to a bio-psycho-social model.

In addition, this approach had been supported by a lot of researchers all over the world. For example, in discussing the challenge of SEN in a rural community setting in India, Kaul 1992 (cited in Frederickson & Cline, 2002) argues that *“to understand the special educational needs of children with disabilities we need to look at them as children with personal identities in a particular social milieu”*. We therefore need to examine not only the child but his or her particular social environment in order to understand his special educational needs. Booth (1996) suggests that the difficulties children experience in learning in schools arise in the context of a relationship between teachers, pupils and curricula. Similarly, Keogh, Gallimore, & Weisner (1997), in the USA, argue from a socio-cultural perspective that it is impossible to separate the learning competencies of individual children from the contexts in which they live and function.

Although the interactional view is widely espoused and advocated, it cannot be assumed that this model is widely implemented in practice (Frederickson & Cline, 2002).

3.3 Inclusion

3.3.1 Moves from segregation to integration/inclusion

The inclusion of students with SEN/disabilities in regular classrooms is a major challenge facing countries throughout the world. It is a distinct departure from the special education model, which calls for integration into regular classes for only some

students with disabilities and retains the possibility of segregation if progress is seen as insufficient (Bunch & Valeo, 2004).

Historically, special education has focused on the education of children and youth with disabilities and their families. Children with disabilities or SEN were educated in special units or schools based on the belief that they have similar problems that can be met in these units or schools. The early provision of SEN services began with residential schools for blind and deaf students which were first established in the eighteenth century in Europe. Later on, these schools grew rapidly during the 19th century. Special schools for children with mobility impairments came later around the turn of the 20th century. At the same time, children with mental impairments were largely institutionalized as uneducable in both Europe and North America (for a comprehensive review see Frederickson & Cline, 2002; and Peters, 2004).

Grouping children who are thought to have similar needs results in them being segregated from other pupils of their age. This can be stigmatizing; it can also restrict access to important educational opportunities. During the 1970s there was a great debate about the effectiveness of placing children with disabilities in special schools in solving their educational problems (Fox, 2003). Therefore, many authors (e.g. Ainscow, 1999; Skrtic, 1991, Slee, 1993, 2006) questioned the purpose, practice and location of special education. This led to calls in different countries for integrating children with SEN in mainstream schools. Thus, inclusive education emerged from the general dissatisfaction with the traditional conceptualization of special education, how research and teaching was conducted, and how results tended to pathologize and further marginalize people with disabilities and SEN (Florian, 2005; Landorf & Nevin, 2007).

Also, it has been noticed that inclusive education was established in the midst of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. The goal of this movement was to gain equal opportunities and equal rights for all regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or handicapping condition (Landorf & Nevin, 2007). Therefore, there was a change in the conceptualization of disability as the result of this broader civil rights movement in society towards “normalization” and appreciating social justice and human rights (Bunch & Valeo, 2004; Gaad, 2004). In this view, people with disabilities should have the right to the same opportunities and options as other members of society based on the belief that inclusion will result in stronger social and academic achievement, advance citizenship and the development of a stronger community. It was also argued that integrating children with SEN into mainstream schools would facilitate their access to

and participation in society, both as children and adults, and that continued segregation could no longer be justified, from either a “research” or a “rights” perspective.

Also, integrating children with SEN wherever possible was preserved in the Warnock Report (1978) and the 1981 Education Act in the UK. Due to Warnock Report (1978) there was a commitment to a continuum of special educational provision to all children with SEN in Britain. This report identified integration as “the central contemporary issue in special education”. Similarly, in the USA, PL94-142: Education of All Handicapped Act of 1975 established the principle of “zero-reject” or entitlement for all in public education. Normalization focused on commonalities between children with disabilities and other children, rather than differences (Peters, 2004).

In addition, this movement has been acknowledged internationally in different parts of the world. Internationally, the conceptualisation of children with significant disabilities as being “special” and requiring “special education” has been challenged and there has been a strong movement away from placement in segregated settings for children with SEN towards greater integration in mainstream schools. After Salamanca statement (1994), it has been argued that all students with disabilities should be taught completely within mainstream classrooms through full inclusion (Lipsky & Gartner, 1996; Booth, Ainscow & Dyson, 1998). Proponents of inclusion drew attention to the stigma attached to withdrawal programmes and the fragmentation of the learning experiences offered to children receiving withdrawal programmes; especially where communication and cooperation between mainstream and special needs teachers was limited.

These changes in terminology, from exclusion, segregation, integration, inclusion to full inclusion, not only reflect special educators’ concerns that children with special educational needs are not being appropriately educated, but they are also used to shift the public’s perception of inclusion. Moreover, inclusion is not a state that can be reached but it is a process that should be developed and enhanced to the most extent possible. Also, inclusive education is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, that is the realization of an inclusive society (Barton, 1999, Thomas, 1997).

We should keep in mind that the move towards more inclusion is not a calm journey to some an unequivocally better place. Effective inclusion needs to take account of the needs and differences of all children (Reid, 2005). In spite of these developments, inclusion remains a complex and controversial issue which tends to generate heated debates (Ainscow, 2007; Brantlinger 1997; Farrell, 2004). For example, there is a great

deal of uncertainty about the definition of inclusion as it means different things to different people in different places and to this point I will turn.

3.3.2 The meaning of Inclusion

In the 1980s the terms “integration” or “mainstreaming” were used to refer to the placement of children with SEN in mainstream schools. The term inclusion began appearing in the early 1990s (Stainback & Stainback, 1992), in part as a reaction to the way in which mainstreaming was being poorly implemented in some public school settings for elementary school-aged children. But initially, ideas about inclusion began to emerge somewhat early from North America in the mid to late 1980s (Tilstone, Florian & Rose, 1998) when provinces and local educational authorities in Canada and the USA began to develop programmes which focused on including all children with SEN in the least restrictive environment (i.e. the mainstream classroom setting).

The term was introduced in the UK around the early 1990s with the launch of annual inclusion conferences aimed at extending and refining ideas about integration (Tilstone et al., 1998). By the mid-1990s, the term “inclusion”, as opposed to “integration”, was being used to refer to a philosophy of education that promotes the education of all children in mainstream schools. More recently, the term “full” inclusion has been introduced (Fox, 2003). The main aim of inclusive education is eliminating social exclusion that is a consequence of responses to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender and ability (Vitello & Mithaug, 1998).

Regarding the definition, a commonly agreed upon definition of inclusion does not exist, and in fact the terminology associated with inclusion has changed over the years. Many definitions have been proposed with different standpoints but with similar key issues and elements. For example, Clark, Dyson & Millward (1995) defined inclusion as “*a move towards extending the scope of ordinary schools so they can include a greater diversity of children*” (P. v).

Some definitions focused on valuing children and celebrating differences regardless of their abilities or disabilities. For example, Uditsky (1993) defined inclusion as “*set of principles which ensures that the child with a disability is viewed as a valued and needed member of the community in every respect*” (p. 88). Similarly, Farrell (2004) defined inclusion as “*the extent to which a school or community welcomes pupils as full members of the group and values them for the contribution they make. This implies that for inclusion to be seen to be “effective” all pupils must actively belong to, be*

welcomed by and participate in a mainstream school and community- that is they should be fully included” (P. 7).

Some other researchers (e.g. Dyson & Millward, 2000; Rouse & Florian, 1996, Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2004) adopt an institutional or organizational perspective and focus on organisational arrangements and school improvement. For example, Smith et al. (2004) conceptualized inclusion as a process that refers to students with disabilities becoming part of the general education classroom, receiving a meaningful curriculum with necessary support, and being taught with effective strategies

Corbett and Slee (1999) broadened the definition and initiated a definition that goes beyond inclusion as a special education initiative. They argued that inclusive education *“proceeds from larger political, as opposed to technical questions about the nature of society and the status afforded to people in varying forms and structures of social organization. As a political movement in the first instance, inclusion is about establishing access for all people. It is not conditional, nor does it speak about partial inclusion”* (Corbett & Slee 1999, p. 134).

Although it is problematic to find a standard definition, some researchers provided more illuminative and illustrative definitions of inclusion. For example, Ballard (1997) provided a comprehensive definition of inclusion that, in my view, reflects most of the key issues in the mentioned definitions above:

“Inclusive education means education that is non-discriminatory in terms of disability, culture, gender, or other aspects of students or staff that are assigned significance by a society. It involves all students in a community, with no exceptions and irrespective of their intellectual, physical, sensory, or other differences, having equal rights to access the culturally valued curriculum of their society as full time valued members of age-appropriate mainstream classrooms. Inclusion emphasises diversity over assimilation, striving to avoid the colonization of minority experiences by dominant modes of thought and action” (pp. 244-245).

Whilst any definition of inclusion is inevitably arbitrary, the key elements are nevertheless non-negotiable. Interestingly, different conceptualizations of inclusion have been suggested; such conceptualizations ranged from securing active participation in mainstream schools to active participation in all aspects of life in the society, from a set of principles that organize work in schools to social, political and ideological commitment. Such conceptualizations reflect a broader understanding of inclusion rather than providing technical definition of the process.

In this regard, it has been suggested that inclusion is the process of increasing participation in and decreasing exclusion from mainstream social settings (Armstrong, Armstrong & Barton, 2000; Booth, 1996; Booth et al., 1998). This view of inclusion which associates inclusion with participation has been adopted by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in UK (Wade, 1999, p. 81) which sees inclusion as “*securing appropriate opportunities for learning, assessment and qualifications to enable the full and effective participation of all pupils in the process of learning*”.

Based on such conceptualizations, definitions of inclusion have been broadened to refer not only to the education of children with SEN but also to the active participation of all citizens in all the activities that typify everyday society. In this regard, Booth & Ainscow (1998) expressed the view that policies on inclusion should not be restricted to the education of pupils thought to have special needs. Inclusion, they argue, is a process in which schools, communities, local authorities and governments strive to reduce barriers to the participation and learning for all citizens. Barton (1998) developed this point, offering a definition of inclusive education that moves the debate well beyond concerns regarding children with SEN: *inclusive education is about the participation of all children and young people and the removal of all forms of exclusionary practice. Inclusive education is thus about responding to diversity, it is about listening to unfamiliar voices, being open and empowering all members. It is about learning to live with one another (pp.84-85).*

Another perspective related to this point is that inclusion is about a school culture which welcomes and celebrates differences and recognizes individual needs (Corbett, 2001). The point here is that inclusion is about all children. Inclusion is about all learners who have complex, multiple identities (Hall et al., 2004). Booth et al. (1998) suggest that inclusion requires the removal of barriers to learning for all children. In this sense, it is not relevant to ask whether a child with a disability can join mainstream education settings, but how the circumstances in these settings can be arranged in a way that makes the educational development of each child possible.

Additionally, it has been argued that inclusion is not about placement in the mainstreaming school only but it is mainly about the experience of learning and quality of life in the school. As O’Brien (2001) put it “*inclusive schools must offer more than inclusive placement (being there) and focus upon the provision of inclusive learning “learning there”*” (p. 48). He argued that this is because inclusive learning recognises and connects with the individuality of the learners. In other words, inclusion is about

the quality of mainstream education and is not about special education per se. “*What we refer to as inclusion is, and should be, derived from mainstream approaches to instruction and school organization, creating an alternative to special education knowledge and practices*” (Ballard, 1999, p.1).

Moreover, this view of inclusion is consistent with the view that an inclusive school should represent the ethos of community involvement (Bayliss, 1995c; Friend & Bursuck, 1996; McConkey, 2002; Reid, 2005). It is by embracing community involvement and participation that every individual can appreciate the diversity and individual qualities of others. This shift in thinking about school as a community asserts the notion of belonging. All those in charge contribute in building such a community.

So inclusion is when there is a sense of ‘belonging’ and ‘identity, as a group. According to Bayliss (1997, p. 3), inclusion requires interdependence, mutuality and reciprocity to develop relationships between children across dimensions of gender, ethnicity and disability. (Mutuality is when a feeling or action is felt or done which is common between one or more people. Reciprocity is when there is an interchange of "give and take" of mutual actions and feelings. Interdependence is when people become dependent on each other). Inclusion is a matter of entitlement, an issue of belonging within an educational community on equal terms. Visser, Cole and Daniels (2003) added, if schools to be more effective in meeting the needs of children with SEN, schools need to be open, positive and diverse communities, not selective, exclusive or rejecting. They need to ensure they are barrier free for pupils with SEN.

Researchers such as (Ballard, 1995; Barton, 1995; Corbett, 2001; Lipsky & Gartner, 1999) regard inclusion as an ideological commitment and a political struggle against exclusive attitudes, values and beliefs, approaches and structures of the overall education system. In this sense, inclusion is seen as a radical, dynamic process of change rather than an end-product (Ainscow, 1999; Booth, 1996; Daniels & Garner, 1999; Levin, 1997; O’Brein, 2001). In this, inclusion must be viewed as intrinsic to the mission, philosophy, values, practices and activities of the school.

To conclude, the above argument shows that inclusion remains a generalized and disputable concept that is open to interpretation. Educators and researchers continue to engage in conversations about it “*irrespective of the fact that they may be talking across deep epistemological ravines*” (Slee, 2001, p. 169) and the term appears to mean different things to different people who have various investments, or vested interest, in how it is constructed and interpreted.

Despite the lack of definitional consensus, most definitions and conceptualizations discussed above reflect common themes and elements. Some definitions focused on practical issues in the school level, while some others concentrated on the philosophical and ideological premises of inclusion. But we should keep in mind that inclusion embodies a range of assumptions about the meaning and purpose of schools which are quite different from those which have informed the integration movement. In this sense, clarifying differences between integration and inclusion may be useful and to this point I will turn.

3.3.3 The differences between integration and inclusion

The difference between the concepts of integration and inclusion is very important when we are considering educational change. Reviewing the literature, I found that these terms are often used interchangeably in relation to students with special educational needs. However, some authors tried to explore differences between them. According to Barton (1987), integration follows a ‘deficit’ medical and/ or psychological explanation of disability, where “deficit” diagnosis, categorization and individual treatments are stressed and usually disguised under the traditional special educational provisions. As such, integration literally means putting students diagnosed with special educational needs together with regular students in the classrooms. Very often, integration became a simile for assimilation. On the contrary, inclusion generally employs a social model of disability to describe and analyze the conditions of oppression for students described as having special educational needs (Slee, 1997).

Additionally, it has been suggested that integration is about making a limited number of additional arrangements for individual students with SEN in schools which themselves change little overall (Ainscow, 1997, 2005; Frederickson & Cline, 2002; Lindsay 1997). On the contrary, inclusion implies the introduction of much more radical changes through which schools restructure themselves to be able to embrace all children. Inclusion starts from the assumption that all children have a right to attend their neighbourhood school. So the school work has to be developed in response to pupil diversity. This has to include a consideration of overall organisation, curriculum, and classroom practice, support for learning and staff development. According to Ainscow (2005), inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all students. Additionally, it is a school culture which values diversities and celebrates differences, and a process of a never-ending search for learning to live with and learn from

difference. In this sense, Inclusion has a wider context than the term integration (Pijl, Meijer & Hegarty, 1998).

Moreover, inclusion is not only related to education, but also to society at large. This view is perhaps more clearly illustrated by the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) which stated that inclusive schools are the most effective at building solidarity between children with special needs and their peers. Solidarity between children leads to one population of children being educated, not two: the disabled and the non-disabled.

The argument that regular schools should accommodate all students irrespectively of type or severity of need and ensure that all learners belong to a community locates the debate in a social-ethical discourse which is strongly focused on values and, in this sense; it differs qualitatively from a concept of integration where children are placed in existing provision without the necessity of restructuring that environment to ensure membership. The intentions, attitudes, beliefs and values are part of a vision of an inclusive society of which education is a part. Simply integration is about “going to school” whereas inclusion is about “participating in school”.

In spite of this conceptual distinction between integration and inclusion, the terms are often used as synonyms (Thomas, Walker & Webb 1998). Additionally, Pijl and Dyson (1998) argued that however the term inclusion is more widely accepted in the USA and the UK, the term integration is more preferred internationally. The present study is concerned with the Egyptian context which can be said to be fostering integration.

3.3.4 Inclusion process: Inclusion within a continuum of provision

In spite of the different assumptions underlying both inclusive education and special education, there is a commitment to a continuum of special education provision. The framework of provision can be seen as a continuum which ranges from complete segregation (tuition at home or special school placement) to full inclusion (regular class placement with no support). Historically, the provision for SEN students had moved through this process from segregation to inclusion (Peters, 2004). Firstly, there was segregation in special schools; secondly, integration which means that the school accepts the child but he/she has to fit in with the school; and finally inclusion where the school accepts the child and all those in the school, adults, pupils, and the institution as a whole will adapt as best as they can in order to meet the child’s needs. This may mean adapting attitudes and thinking, the curriculum, classroom organization, and the physical environment.

In the UK the Warnock Committee (DES, 1978) described the continuum from non-segregation to segregation and also distinguished between locational, social and functional integration. These are defined as follows:

- Locational integration refers to physical location and exists where special classes are located in mainstream schools or a special school is located on the site of a mainstream school. In reality, many children who are locationally integrated experience little or no curriculum integration. In addition being locationally integrated does not mean that the children in the special unit interact on a social basis with the rest of the school.
- Social integration means social interchange between children with and without special needs and includes eating, playing and engaging in out-of-classroom activities together.
- Functional integration refers to joint participation in educational programmes which have been carefully planned to ensure that all the children benefit. It also means full integration as a member of the school community with as much time as is deemed possible in an ordinary classroom.

The Warnock Committee shifted the focus from separate or alternative provision to provision that was additional or supplementary to that normally available in mainstream schools. Since the implementation of the 1981 Education Act in April 1983 there has been a trend towards the greater use of mainstream placement (Frederickson & Cline, 2002).

The integration-segregation continuum can also be seen according to Bayliss (1995a) in resource allocation terms where physically, at least, children are not segregated. Bayliss (1997) argues that the process of supporting integration and inclusion can be seen in two different ways:

- Phased integrational process which starts from locational integration and leads to social-functional-curriculum-psychological and which ought to lead to inclusion: interdependence, mutuality and reciprocity. Or:
- Inclusion which starts from the premise of supporting mutual and reciprocal relationships through interdependence and which subsumes psychological, curricular, functional, social and locational integration.

Additionally, inclusion may also be implemented at different levels. For example, Kobi (cited in Meijer, Pijl, & Hegarty 1994, pp. 5-6) developed a model for integration that

describes the organizational variation in school in terms of actual student integration.

The level of integration is divided into six levels:

1. Physical integration. The architectural arrangements facilitate contact between handicapped and non-handicapped.
2. Terminological integration. Labelling and discriminatory expressions for the Handicapped are not used.
3. Administrative integration. Handicapped students are encompassed within the same legislative framework as other students (there can of course be large differences between regulations on, for instance, support arrangements, transport and achievement levels).
4. Social integration. Social contacts between handicapped and non-handicapped students are frequent and intensive.
5. Curricular integration. The same curriculum framework and long-term goals apply for handicapped and non-handicapped students.
6. Psychological integration: All students are instructed together: that is in one room, at the same time and using the same programme.

To sum up, inclusion should be seen as a process not a state (Ainscow, 1997; Booth 1996; Cornwall, 2001; Daniels & Garner, 1999; Levin, 1997, O’Brein, 2001). It is not simply a question of placement in the same groups and institutions as others but it is a process which involves whole school re-organization in order to develop inclusive schools. Implicit in this process, however, is the eventual goal of full inclusion.

3.3.5 Rationale for Inclusion

Social-ethical, legal, and educational rationales for inclusion are noted by Bricker (1978), Bayliss (1995b) and Bailey et al. (1998). In practice, these rationales appear to be implemented in ways that differentially affect the nature of inclusive education.

3.3.5.1 The social-ethical rationale

The social-ethical rationale of inclusion is premised by the disability rights and educational reform movements which used some of arguments and tactics of the civil rights movement of the 1960s in America for crystallizing awareness of problems inherent in the segregation of persons with disabilities (Bailey et al., 1998; Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995). Simply the social-ethical rationale asserts that all children have the right to a life that is as normal as possible.

The social-ethical rationale emphasises that children with SEN should experience the same quality classroom program as typically developing children; become members of the classroom community through participation in class activities; and develop positive social relationships with class members and teachers (Odom & Diamond, 1998). Many proponents argue that full inclusion applies to all children under all circumstances. Also, this rationale is driven by the belief that systematic segregation of any group of children or families is intolerable. Thus, the social-ethical rationale is not founded on legal or empirical grounds, but rather on the assumption that inclusion is the right thing to do and thus must not be compromised (Bailey et al., 1998; Bricker, 1978; Stainback & Stainback, 1992).

In addition to giving SEN students the equal opportunities for participation like typically developing children, inclusion also offers the chance to alter the societal attitudes towards disabled persons, thus encouraging them to accommodate and welcome people with special needs into their community. Lipsky and Gartner (1999) stated that inclusion provides opportunities to combat discriminating attitudes and helps to establish acceptance by communities in an effort to build an inclusive society. By changing societal attitudes the so-called “disabled people” can become accepted as equal members in a homogeneous and cohesive society.

However, this does not mean that inclusion will automatically change attitudes; as Bayliss (1995b) points out; it is questionable whether such a process of integration would support real attitudinal change in the dominant group to allow full participation by the minority. Finally, the social-ethical view of inclusion talks of “opportunities” within a “rights” discourse which “may” change attitudes. As Roaf and Bines (1989) have suggested the way forward lies through an approach in which the three concepts of needs, rights and opportunities can be inter-related.

3.3.5.2 The Legal-legislative rationale

It goes without saying that if inclusion is to take place then a legal framework needs to be in place which guarantees the right to free public education within the regular school for all children. By having laws means that disabled persons have the same rights and access to being an “Active Citizen” (Bayliss, 1995b, p.6). In the American context, US Public Law (94-142, 1975) introduced the concept of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and required schools to provide a broad, balanced, relevant education for all children, which meets their educational, social and personal needs. The LRE principle was reiterated in later amendments to the legislation broadening the provision to

preschool-aged children and in subsequent achievement of what is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Bailey et al., 1998). These laws provided drive for the placement of children with SEN in settings with their typically developing peers (Odom & Diamond, 1998).

In the UK, the 1981 Education Act, premised on Warnock Report (1978), established the right of children with SEN to mainstream educational provisions. This Act recognised (1) the constitutional right of children with SEN to receive free public education, and (2) the ability of their parents through specific review procedures to request the allocation of appropriate resources for their child. More recently, in 1994 the “Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Children with Special Educational Needs” (DFE, 1994) states that all children should have access to a broad and balanced education including the National Curriculum.

Additionally, most European countries have legislations that support the process of inclusion. For example, according to Zambelli and Bonni (2004), Italy presents what may be considered as an advanced model of inclusion; numerous legislative measures, since 1971, have sought to achieve full integration of disabled children into normal classes in schools of every type and at each level. However, we should keep in mind that legislation on its own will not transform any educational system into a fully inclusive one (Corbett & Norwich, 1997; Visser & Stokes, 2003). Setting a legislative framework for inclusion is only a step towards the final goal, as the Disability Rights Task Force (1999) state: ‘...*Whilst legislation in itself cannot force a change in attitudes, it can provide certain rights and lay down a framework that will encourage and hasten a change in culture*’ (p. 2, Para. 1).

3.3.5.3 The psychological-educational rationale

The psychological-educational rationale of inclusion is concerned with the learning of children with SEN and providing them with a better learning environment. Following this rationale, children with SEN are placed in inclusive settings because professionals and family members believe that the developmental benefits in inclusive settings are superior to non-inclusive settings (Odom & Diamond, 1998). The argument for inclusion here is that a child’s needs are better met in inclusive schools. For example, Bricker (1978) argued that integration should benefit children with disabilities by providing: (a) a more challenging learning environment; (b) opportunities to observe and learn from more competent peers; (c) real-life contexts for learning skills; and (d) a more socially responsive and facilitative environment.

Additionally, it has been argued that inclusion should benefit typically developing children by: (a) helping them learn about differences in the way people grow and develop; (b) nurturing the development of more accepting attitudes toward persons with disabilities; and (c) helping children become more accepting of their own strengths and weaknesses (Bailey et al., 1998).

There are two types of psychological support that inclusion could provide for children with SEN (Bayliss, 1995b): (1) peer support; this is essential not only in the learning process, but also for their social and emotional development within the school culture; and (2) support in the form of a differentiated-curriculum, that is, an individualised curriculum in mainstream classes. Differential curricula allow children with SEN to progress through the school curriculum at their own pace, and ability, which should help to dispel feelings of inferiority.

The psychological-educational rationale of inclusion is supported by research evidence. Diverse findings have been reported in the literature, with some supporting full inclusion and others supporting the need for inclusion in the context of a continuum of specialized services (e.g., Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Marston, 1996). Moreover, many researchers have found that children with SEN who were placed in segregated special classes did not seem to achieve any better than those who remain in mainstream classes despite the vast amount of resources being made available to these special classes (e.g. Myklebust, 2006; Thomas & Webb, 1997). Thus, the empirical foundation for inclusion is quite strong; even more compelling is the fact that little scientific evidence exists to suggest that segregated settings result in superior outcomes for SEN children. However, Lindsay (2007) argued that there is no clear support for the positive academic or social effects of either inclusion or separate schooling.

Collectively the ethical, legal, and educational arguments provide a critical support of inclusive practices. However, many children with SEN are not in inclusive settings in different countries including Egypt. Definitely difficulties in changing traditional service systems play an important role (Bailey et al., 1998). Also, there are a lot of political, structural and personal barriers to the process of inclusion. Moreover, it is clear that inclusion is a contested issue and opinions about it vary widely (e.g., Ainscow, 2007; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Kufman & Halhan, 1995; Norwich, 2008a, 2008b; Slee, 2001). For proponents, the arguments in support of inclusion are so strong as to conclude that segregated services are not acceptable under any circumstances. For opponents, inclusion is considered highly desirable for most children, but may not be

the best choice in some situations. In addition to the contested nature of inclusion, there are many political, structural and personal barriers to the process of inclusion. Recognizing and addressing these barriers is a prerequisite for developing inclusive practices. In the next section, I will highlight some of these barriers and reflect upon the required changes to put inclusion into practice.

3.3.6 Challenges to inclusive education: Moving towards successful inclusion

It has been argued that there is a need to identify challenges and barriers to inclusion as a way for changing policy and developing practice (Buysse, Wesley & Keyes, 1998; Elshabrawy, 2008). Obviously, the process of change is complicated and very rooted in the nature of the educational system and the cultural context in which change is required. Allan (2003) noted that the achievement of an inclusive educational system is a major challenge facing countries throughout the world. The process of developing such educational system requires substantial personal, organisational and cultural changes. Dyson (1990) argued that special needs education must change in response to wider changes in society in general and the education system in particular. In the following two sections, I will discuss barriers to inclusion and the possibility of change.

3.3.6.1 Barriers to inclusion

Based on the above argument, a number of studies have attempted to document the barriers that hinder adopting change related to inclusive education and some barriers have been identified. These barriers can be categorized broadly into three groups; barriers related to teachers, institutional barriers and social barriers.

- **barriers related to teachers**

One of the most often cited barriers to inclusion is teachers' negative attitudes. Several studies (e.g. Forlin, 1998; Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, Lamasterd, & O'sullivan, 2004; Vaughn et al., 1996) argued that teachers' negative attitudes could undermine the development of inclusion. Without teachers' readiness to accept children with SEN in their classrooms, inclusion will not be successful. Additionally, these studies found that teachers' attitudes were least favourable toward serving children with significant disabilities. Some researchers concluded that teachers' beliefs about inclusion were linked to children's individual characteristics and the special needs they exhibited rather than educational placement philosophy.

In addition, research has stressed that lack of training, and opportunities for professional development are disincentives to inclusion (Corbett, 2001; Kristensen, Omagor-loican

& Onen, 2003; Reid, 2005; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Winter, 2006). If teachers do not have the necessary skills to teach children with SEN they might feel frustrated and they cannot accommodate those children in their classes.

Moreover, these studies have shown that training, professional development and pedagogy are critical to the success of inclusion programmes. In their review of the literature on inclusion, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) contend that '*without a coherent plan for teacher training in the educational needs of children with SEN, attempts to include these children in the mainstream would be difficult*' (p. 139). It is especially important, therefore, that we prepare teachers who have both the confidence and the skills to teach in inclusive settings, and who are equipped to provide appropriate instruction for all pupils.

Another issue related to teachers is workload. The previous research indicated that most teachers feel they cannot tolerate the overwork load in case of inclusion (Bunch & Finnegan, 2000; Vaughn et al., 1996). This may be because of the different barriers like: large class sizes, or lack of teachers' desire to teach those children, type of taught subject or activity or even due to insufficient time for teachers to cater for those children (Kristensen et al., 2003; Morley et al., 2005; Rose, 2001; Vaughn et al., 1996) or may be due to difficulties teachers face in managing children's behaviour (Forlin, 1998; Hodge et al., 2004).

- **Institutional barriers**

Several barriers related to the education authorities context, school and the classroom contexts have been reported. For example, in an English project designed to promote the reintegration of pupils with emotional and behavioral difficulties, Macleod (2001) identified some barriers to effective reintegration. Most of these barriers reflect less supportive ethos of inclusion within the local education authority (LEA) and the school. He argued that lack of conviction within special schools about the suitability of inclusion, LEA's lack of commitment towards inclusive practices in spite of its commitment to policy terms, the lack of an ethos prompting the removal of statements, lack of collaboration, the reluctance of some schools to accept students with SEN represent challenges to inclusive education. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) noted a number of studies providing evidence that 'the school's ethos and the teachers' beliefs have a considerable impact on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion which, in turn, are translated into practice' (p. 140).

Many other issues related to the school environment have also been criticized. For example, physical structure of schools, Lack of support and resources, big classroom sizes, lack of physical and educational facilities, lack of funding play a role (Forlin, 1998, Hodge et al., 2004; Macleod, 2001; Morley et al., 2005; Singal, 2005). Additionally, concerns about the curriculum, teaching methodologies and examinations have been raised by some researchers (Kristensen et al., 2003; Singal, 2005). Moreover, these studies have shown that successful inclusion can be achieved if appropriate practices and teaching methods are in place in order to achieve curricular inclusion.

- **Social barriers**

Social barriers refer to the barriers rooted in the broader social context. These always refer to the community commitment towards inclusion, social attitudes towards disabilities and parental involvement. Lack of community commitment towards inclusion through showing less interest towards this policy or through showing negative attitudes towards individuals with disabilities is a major challenge facing inclusive education movements. In a recent study, Singal (2005), in his review of the Indian literature related to barriers perceived in the development of inclusive education, concluded that some Indian researchers focused on issues such as social attitudes towards disability, lack of awareness, with a continued lack of community awareness and limited parental motivation. He argued that such issues could create an anti-inclusion environment.

Additionally, parents' negative attitudes towards inclusion and lack of parent involvement have been identified as major inhibitors to successful inclusion (Forlin, 1998; Macleod, 2001; Singal, 2005; Vaughn et al., 1996). These studies argue that lack of parents' involvement and lack of communication between parents and schools are fundamental challenges to inclusive education. They argue for more positive communication between parents and schools in order to support inclusion.

The above studies showed that the commonalities in perceived barriers or challenges to inclusion are more than the differences. The most identified barriers in the mentioned studies are negative attitudes, lack of teacher preparation, lack of equipment and appropriate educational materials, lack of collaboration and support, insufficient funding, severity of disability, physical accessibility in schools, time issues and class size. However, we should take into account that most of these barriers are inter-related and affect both policy and practice.

Additionally, we should note that although barriers to inclusion are similar in different contexts, the complexity of each single barrier is differently rated based on the degree of development in the context under investigation. Also, barriers are not only related to the school system but also they go beyond this. For example, Allan (2003) argued that barriers to inclusion extend beyond school system and include ways of knowing (special education); ways of learning (to be a teacher); and ways of working (within accountability regimes). These are difficult obstacles and even if these cannot be removed completely, at least acknowledging their destructive potential could be helpful.

3.3.6.2 The possibility of change

Based on the barriers to inclusive education discussed above, the emphasis in research has shifted to identifying the characteristics and components of effective inclusion. In other words, research has concentrated on identifying factors and key issues that could support inclusion and lead to a successful inclusion. Recently, Frederickson & Cline (2002) noted that a range of different studies, conducted in different countries and using different methodologies, have reported conclusions which show substantial overlap in this respect. Most of these studies concluded that for inclusion to be responsible and successful there should be a lot of change in all aspects of school life. For example, Vaughn and Schumm (1995) concluded that for inclusion to be effective and therefore responsible rather than irresponsible and possibly damaging, inclusive practices need to include nine components. These are:

- considering academic and social progress in ordinary classes as the major criteria for considering alternative interventions
- Considering teachers' choice whether or not to teach inclusive classes.
- Adequate human and physical resources.
- Developing inclusive practices tailored to the needs of the students, parents and communities and to take into account the expertise of their own staff.
- Maintaining a continuum of services including withdrawal for small group teaching and placement in special education classrooms.
- Continually monitoring and evaluating the organisation of provision
- Ensuring ongoing professional development is available to all staff.
- Encouraging the development of alternative teaching strategies and means of adapting the curriculum
- Developing an agreed philosophy and policy on inclusion which provides guidance to teachers, parents and others.

Ainscow (1995, 1999, and 2007) has been concerned with the development of effective strategies for making policies and practices inclusive. Much of his work, obviously in collaboration with many others, has been set in a context of a school improvement initiative known as Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA). According to Ainscow (2007, P. 148), the IQEA approach to school improvement emphasises the following features:

- Developments in teaching and learning, through the creation of conditions within schools for managing change successfully;
- School improvement led from within schools, focusing on areas that are seen to be matters of priority;
- Collecting and engaging with evidence in order to move thinking and practice forward, and to evaluate progress; and
- Collaboration amongst colleagues in partner schools, and with IQEA consultants, so that a wider range of expertise and resources is available to support improvements in all of the participating schools.

Similarly, Kilgore, Griffin, Sindelar and Webb, (2002) identified several factors that are instrumental in the transformation of the school culture and the implementation of inclusive education. These factors are: a system of democratic governance, a culture of collaboration, commitment to and capacity for professional growth, strong supportive leadership, and concern about equity and the success and well-being of individual students.

Additionally, Ferguson (2008) proposed some suggestions for achieving inclusive education. These suggestions represent five areas which Ferguson frames as “shifts” from a tradition of practice that is grounded in long-standing assumptions to a new practice grounded in new assumptions that challenge and replace the old ones. These shifts are: moving from teaching to learning; from offering services to providing supports; from individual to group practice; from parent involvement to family-school linkages and from school reform to ongoing school improvement and renewal (p.114-117).

Similar results regarding the key issues in change either in policy or practice have been reported by different researchers (e.g. Fox, Farrell & Davis, 2004; Lipsky & Gartner, 1996; Ring & Travers, 2005; Kilgore, Griffin, Sindelar & Webb, 2002).

However, some other researchers (e.g. Allan, 2005; Skrtic, 1991; Liasidou, 2007; Slee, 1998, 2006, 2007a; Slee & Allan, 2001; Ware, 2003) are arguing for change in perspective. They argue for moving beyond the technical questions of inclusion and they call for the deconstruction of traditional forms of knowledge about SEN and inclusion.

For example, Slee (2007a) calls for changing our epistemological views about children with SEN. He argues that there is a need to move our gaze from describing individual defective pathologies to understanding the more pervasive and complex pathology of schools. He also calls for putting the public into the public policy. In this regard, education should take the disabled researchers' voice into account. He further argues that *"inclusive education invites the application of a new imagination to consider the impact of different forms of schooling and its constituent elements of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and organization upon different groups of students...Inclusive education asks us to jettison linearity in our thinking, to invite new coalitions to the table to establish the parameters of the issues we are dealing with and directions for educational reconstructions (p. 168).*

Although this approach, which calls for changing the perspective, may have limited impact upon policy and practice in the field as noted early by Ainscow (1991), it has the potential of challenging our thoughts about SEN and inclusion which could provide new paths and could help us to abandon linearity in our thinking about social and educational phenomena.

What the literature showed as Fox et al., (2004) have noticed is that there is no one recipe for guaranteeing effective inclusion. Rather, it is the interaction of certain key factors that determines the extent to which the child is included in the classroom and in the wider life of the school. If inclusion is to be enabled at all, attention needs to be paid to the current process of change and to the conditions that exist that will facilitate or hinder it (Cornwall, 2001). This process of change can be used in two specific senses (Dyson & Millward, 2000). First, the move to inclusion is seen as involving a process of structural change. Second, the change process as a continuing dynamic process in which practices had to be continually reoriented in a more inclusive direction. This resembles what Vlachou (1997) calls struggle for inclusion. It is worth noting here the complexity and context-dependability nature of the process of change. Changes required to develop an inclusive educational system might be similar in names but will be different in nature and complexity from context to another.

It is worth mentioning here that despite all the efforts done in many countries regarding developing the inclusive education system, Dyson's note is still of relevance at least to the Egyptian educational system. He noted that much of the work in the field of special education has been based on the individual change model which views education system as a fixed and unchanging structure to which the individual must accommodate himself/herself (Dyson, 1990). This model has come under attack and has been criticised from the standpoint of the system-level change model, which sees it as the duty of the educational system to change so as to accommodate the individual differences of its pupils. This model defines special needs as the failure of the system to achieve this change, and looks forward to the eventual elimination of these needs. Dyson argues that for this model to be a reality, the role of the special needs facilities has to be radically defined, and those responsible for administering these facilities have to adopt a more politically-aware stance. From the same perspective, it has been argued that change in the educational system in general is a complicated process (Fullan, 1991, 1993).

One of the useful frameworks proposed for change in complex systems that can be used in understanding inclusion is that of Knoster (1991) (cited in LeRoy & Simpson, 1996). According to this model, the basic requirements for changing educational systems, (e.g. with regard to inclusion) are vision, skills, incentives, resources and action plans. This model views change as additive process. A combination of vision, skills, incentives, resources and action plans are required for change to occur in a systematic and positive manner. If any of the five factors of change is missing the restructuring process would lead to confusion, anxiety, frustration or relegation to a treadmill.

In conclusion, the literature suggests that successful inclusion involves addressing and implementing a multitude of legal and instructional criteria. Mainly inclusive inclusion depends on creating a collaborative environment with highly prepared and trained staff holding positive attitudes towards inclusive education equipped with all the necessary support; financial, administrative, political etc. Finally, change is a comprehensive and on-going process. I do strongly believe that

“Change is not just about the creation of new policies and procedures to implement external mandates. It is also about the development of personal strategies by individuals to respond to, and seek to influence the impact of, structural and cultural change: personal as much as organizational change.”
(Bennett, Crawford & Riches, 1992, p.1)

3.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed the theoretical models of understanding disability. Then, a historical review of the concept of inclusive education and its implementation in a global context and the different assumptions about this concept and differences between terms were discussed. Finally, I discussed the barriers to the process of inclusion and the changes required to achieve this process. This chapter presents the first part of the theoretical framework and literature review of the thesis. In the next chapter I will discuss some issues about attitudes and I will review some previous studies regarding teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter Four: Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education: Theoretical and Empirical Issues

4.1 Introduction

The success of inclusive education depends largely on the teachers' attitudes. Based on such common belief, a great deal of research has sought to examine teachers' attitudes towards the general philosophy of inclusion, while exploring factors that might influence their attitudes. In this chapter, I will highlight some issues regarding definitions, models and measurement of attitudes. Then, I will provide an overview of some previous studies related to teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Finally, I will provide some critical reflections upon these studies.

4.2 Definition of attitudes

Attitudes have a long history and a central role in the field of social psychology to the extent that Allport (1935) noted that "*the concept of attitudes is probably the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary American social psychology*" (p.798). Even, this is still true for contemporary social psychology (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Despite this long history and centrality, **a numerous, diverse and inconsistent number of definitions have been proposed for attitudes**. Early on, Thomas & Zaniecki (1918) (cited in Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) viewed attitudes as mental processes that determine a person's actual and potential responses. Allport (1935) defined attitude broadly as "*a mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related*" (p. 798).

This definition is considered by some researchers as the best known definition of the early definitions of attitudes because it is rich and comprehensive. This definition can be broken into three parts with some important implications (Rajecki, 1990, cited in Bordens & Horowitz, 2001). First, because attitudes are mental or neutral state of readiness, they are necessarily private. This means they cannot be measured directly. Second, if attitudes are organized through experience, they are presumably formed through learning from a variety of experiences and influences. This means our attitudes towards any object are shaped by the attitudes passed on by our culture, especially by parents, friends and other agents of socialization such as schools and television. Finally, because attitudes exert a directive or dynamic influence on an individual's response to

objects, attitudes are directly related to our behaviour. However, the relationship between attitudes and behaviours is problematic as we will see later in this chapter. In the same vein, Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) defined attitudes as “*predispositions to respond to some class of stimuli with certain classes of response*” (p.3). Such conceptualizations of attitudes reflect a multi-component view of attitudes.

On the contrary to this multi-component view of attitudes, other authors have proposed attitude conceptualizations that emphasize the evaluative character of attitudes as their most important or even sole component. For example, Thurstone (1931) defined attitude as the “*affect for or against a psychological object*”. In the same vein, Petty & Cacioppo (1981) stated that “*The term attitude should be used to refer to a general, enduring positive or negative feeling about some person, object or issue*” (P.7). Such definitions and conceptualizations are called unidimensional because they focus only on one component of attitudes; emotional evaluative response.

Three factors are at least responsible for such diversity in definitions. Firstly, the theoretical understanding of the nature of attitudes underpinning each definition, I mean whether attitudes is considered as unidimensional construct representing the evaluative response (e.g. Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Thurstone, 1931) or a multidimensional construct representing the complexity of affect, cognition and conation (e.g. Allport 1935; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Rosenberg & Hovland 1960). Secondly, the measurement considerations were responsible as well (Krosnick, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2005). And finally, the ongoing debate about the relationship between attitude and behaviour is also responsible. All these three issues will be discussed through the chapter.

It is worth referring to the note of Moliner and Tafani (1997). In their analysis of the nature of attitudes, they noted that despite the diversity in attitudes’ definitions, there are three fundamental points upon which most researchers today agree. Firstly, attitude relies on a process that is impossible to observe directly because it is internal to the subject. Secondly, the observable part of attitudinal process lies in the evaluative nature of the response a person manifests about the object of attitude. And finally, a person’s responses towards an attitudinal object can be divided into three classes, cognitive, affective and behavioural, depending on whether the responses relate, respectively, to the information or beliefs the person has about the object of the attitude, his feelings or emotions towards it and his behaviours or behavioural intentions towards it.

Similarly, Ajzen (2005) defined attitudes as “*a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event*” (p. 3). However, he argued that “*although formal definitions of attitude vary, most contemporary social psychologists agree that the characteristic attribute of attitude is its evaluative nature*” (p. 4). Additionally, he stated that it is useful to categorize attitude-relevant response into various subgroups like, cognition, affect and conation. This means that attitude can be categorized into three types of responses but the main feature of all of them is the evaluative nature.

4.3 Models of attitudes

However there are different conceptualizations of attitudes to be found in the literature, the single component model and the three component model are the most popular (Stahlberg & Frey, 1996). Following is a brief discussion of each.

4.3.1 The single component model of attitudes

This model of attitudes is unidimensional because it focuses on one component in which evaluation is central. Attitudes for this model refer to an individual’s emotions or feelings towards an attitude object (Franzoi, 1996). Generally, the terms affect and evaluation are used interchangeably within this model. Due to this restriction, supporters of this view distinguish the attitude concept from the concepts of beliefs, intentions and overt actions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The term belief means opinions, ideas, thoughts, information, or knowledge an individual has about an attitude object. Attitudes, then, stand for the affect or emotions connected with the attitude object, that is, its positive or negative evaluation. Finally, behavioural intention represents some sort of predisposition to behave towards a certain attitude object in a certain way.

4.3.2 The three-component model of attitudes

On the contrary to the unidimensional view of attitudes, another multidimensional model of attitudes has been proposed. This model of attitudes has a long and illustrious history (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). According to this model, attitudes are defined as “*predispositions to respond to some class of stimuli with certain classes of response*” (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960, p.3). These classes of responses are specified as affective (concerning evaluative feelings of liking and disliking), cognitive (concerning beliefs, opinions and ideas about the object of attitude) and behavioural concerning the behavioural intentions or action tendencies).

Similarly, Eagly and Chaiken (1993) defined attitude as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour” (p.1). In this definition, evaluating refers to “all classes of evaluative responding, whether overt or covert, cognitive, affective or behavioural. They also emphasised that an attitude develops on the basis of evaluative responding. This means that an individual does not have an attitude until he or she responds evaluatively to the attitude object on an affective, cognitive or behavioural basis. Generally, this model views attitude as an inferred state, with evaluative responses divided into three classes (cognitive, affective, and behavioral). The three components will be briefly highlighted. The relationship between the three components is represented in Figure (4.1)

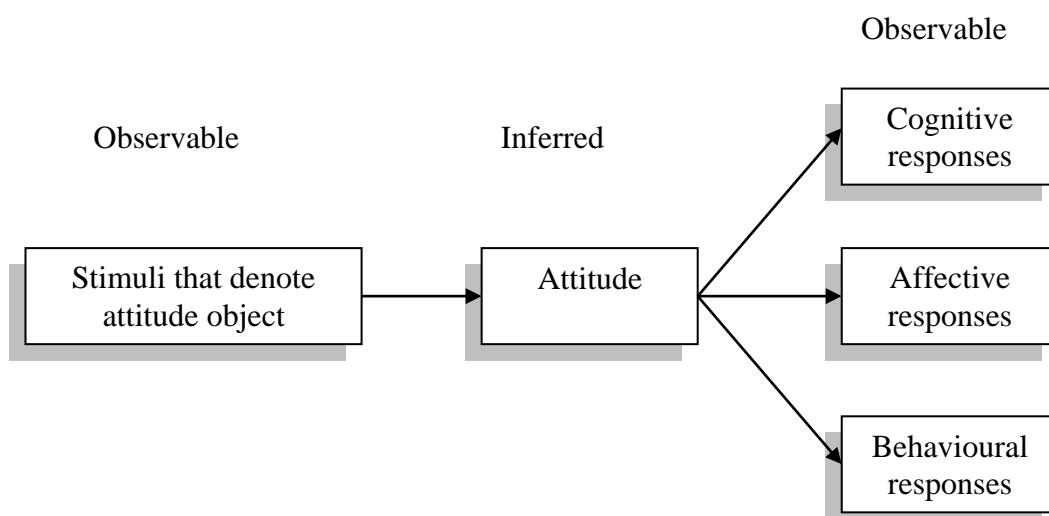


Figure 4.3 The multi-component model of attitudes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993)

The cognitive component refers to thoughts or ideas about the attitude object (Ajzen, 2005; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Stahlberg & Frey, 1996). These thoughts are often conceptualized as beliefs, where beliefs are understood to be associations that people establish between the attitude object and various attributes. These cognitive evaluative responses include the covert responses that occur when these associations are inferred or perceived as well as the overt responses of verbally stated beliefs.

The attributes that are associated with the attitude object express positive or negative evaluation and therefore can be arguably located by psychologists on an evaluative continuum at any position from extremely positive to extremely negative, including the neutral point. For example, some teachers believe that inclusive education enhances social and emotional functioning of students with SEN. This belief links the attitude object with a positive attribute. Other teachers may believe that inclusive education undermines academic achievement of students without SEN. This belief links the

attitude object with a negative attribute. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) pointed out that the cognitive responses have sometimes been given a variety of other names, including cognitions, knowledge, opinions, information, and inferences. Generally, a person who evaluates an attitude object favourably is likely to associate it with positive attributes, whereas a person who evaluates an attitude object unfavourably is likely to associate it with negative attributes.

The affective component consists of feelings, moods, emotions, and sympathetic nervous system activity that people experience in relation to attitude objects (Albarracín, Zanna, Johnson & Kumkale, 2005; Ajzen, 2005; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). These affective responses can also range from extremely positive to extremely negative and therefore can be located on an evaluative dimension of meaning. For example, when considering the concept of inclusive education, some individuals may experience a feeling of pessimism, and others may experience a feeling of hope and optimism. In general, people who evaluate an attitude object favourably are likely to experience positive affective reactions towards it, whereas people who evaluate an attitude object unfavourably are likely to experience negative affective reactions.

The behavioural component consists of the overt actions that people exhibit in relation to the attitude object and includes intentions to act which are not necessarily expressed in overt behaviour (Ajzen, 2005; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, 1998). Because these responses also range from extremely positive to extremely negative, they too can be located on an evaluative dimension of meaning. For example, in relation to inclusive education, some teachers may behave positively towards children with SEN in their classes and others may not. A teacher may intend to adapt his teaching style to accommodate children with SEN in his class, but may or may not actually carry out this intention.

Eagly and Chaiken (1993) argued that people who evaluate an attitude object favourably tend to engage in behaviours that foster or support it, and people who evaluate an attitude object unfavourably tend to engage in behaviours that hinder or oppose it. The important point here is that these responses either overt or covert are sometimes highly complex and they do not depend solely on attitudes. They also reflect the kind of social situation and the history of the relationship between individuals.

Ideally, if there is positive cognitive, affective and behavioural information towards the attitude object, the person usually holds a positive attitude towards it. However, not all the three components need to be in place before an attitude towards an object is formed.

As Franzoi (1996) pointed out that during the formation of an individual's attitude towards an object, cognitive information will sometimes play a major role in determining what is important, while in other cases, especially in an emotion arousing situation, affective information may be a key factor. Further, in another situation, information about past behaviour might dominate an individual's attitude. Because of this, it is possible for an individual to hold mixed and sometimes contradictory beliefs, feelings and intentions towards an attitude object.

4.3.3 Empirical support for the two models of attitudes

The three component model implies correlation of moderate magnitude among measures of the three components. Several attempts have been made to confirm the discriminant validity of measures designed to tap the different components. Ajzen (2005) stated that based on the method used and the assumptions made, the data have variously been interpreted either as supporting the three component model or the single component model.

Some authors came to the conclusion that the three-component model found no empirical support, because factor-analytical approaches were not able to justify the three components; they are often too highly correlated to be conceptually differentiated (e.g., Hormuth, 1979; McGuire, 1969, 1985 cited in Stahlberg & Frey, 1996). However, some other researchers found support for the three-component model. For example, Kothandpani (1971) and Ostrom (1969) concluded that cognition, affect, and behaviour were interrelated, although still distinguishable from each other. Some other researchers analysed the structure of attitudes using more refined statistical methods (Bagozzi & Burnkraut, 1979, 1985; Dillon & Kumar, 1985) and reached equally contradictory conclusions.

Moreover, Schlegel (1975) and Schlegel and DiTecco (1982) assumed that attitude dimensionality may vary with the kind of attitudinal object studied. They showed that attitudinal structures can be conveyed in a single affective response, as Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) postulate, when relevant beliefs about the attitude object are simple, their number is small, and they do not contradict each other. However, if beliefs are numerous, complicated and at least partly contradictory a simple evaluative response will fall short of representing the whole attitude structure.

Such results led to another move of research that explored factors that make the relationship between the components stronger or weaker. Fazio & Zanna (1981) suggest

that consistency between behaviour and the affective component of attitude is likely to be higher for attitudes acquired through direct experience.

Breckler (1984) took the view that these tests of the three component model were insufficient because they relied on verbal measures of responses of the three classes and presented subjects with only symbolic representations of the attitude objects (i.e., a verbal label). Breckler had subjects respond to an attitude object (a snake) that was physically present and assessed their cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses using both verbal and nonverbal measures. Statistical analyses showed that the three types of responses could indeed be viewed as representing three different factors. At the same time, however, the correlations among the factors were of considerable magnitude. The cognition-affect correlation was 0.38, the affect-behaviour correlation was 0.50, and the correlation between cognition and behaviour was 0.70.

To conclude, Empirical evidence in support of unidimensional or multidimensional attitude models has so far been considered contradictory. Eagly and Chaiken (1998) concluded that a definitive judgement of the three- versus one-dimensional issue seems premature at present and is unlikely in the near future. However, Ajzen (2005) revised these two models and concluded that the multidimensional model appears consistent with the results of empirical research.

4.4 Relationship between attitudes and behaviour

There have been a lot of controversies in research surrounding the relationship between attitude and behaviour. Much research is simply based on the assumption that attitudes explain and predict behaviour, but the result of this work proved rather inconclusive. The classical demonstration of the inconsistency between people's attitude and behaviour was conducted by LaPiere (1934). He visited 184 restaurants and hotels across the United States accompanying a Chinese couple with the intention of having dinner. They only failed once to be served in their 184 attempts. However, a letter from LaPiere sent to these same establishments asking whether they would accept members of Chinese race as guests generated a very different picture. 92% said no and the rest said it would depend on the circumstances.

Following LaPiere, several other studies were done to explore the relation between verbally assessed attitudes and behaviours. However, the results of these studies failed to find a strong relation between attitudes and behaviour. Such results led to a pessimistic view among some researchers like Wicker (1969) who concluded that attitudes could not predict behaviour and called for abandoning the attitude construct.

From that time, researchers began to think about the mediating factors that could affect the relation between attitudes and behaviour. One of the most influential moves in this direction comes from Fishbein and Ajzen in their theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). They suggest that behaviour may be more accurately predicted if we know about a person's intentions with respect to behaving in a particular way. To predict behaviour from attitude, the theory takes into account subjective norms (normative beliefs about appropriate behaviour in a situation), attitudes towards the behaviour (based on expectancies and values) and behavioural intention.

One of the shortcomings of this theory is that it does not take into account whether the behaviour is under the control of the person, i.e. how easy or difficult it would be for a person to act in a certain way. To take this into account, Ajzen (1991) modified the theory to incorporate a person's perceived behavioural control. This is called the theory of planned behaviour. Perceived behavioural control influences both the behavioural intention and the behaviour itself. This approach has led to successful predictions of behaviour across a range of topic areas (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). The important point that has been emphasised by this approach is that behavioural, normative and control beliefs people hold about performance of a given behaviour are influenced by a wide variety of cultural, personal and situational factors.

Generally, the approach of Fishbein and Ajzen has resulted in a much better understanding of the relationship between attitudes and behaviours (Pennington, Gillen & Hill, 1999) and how attitudes, mediated through behavioural intentions, influence actual behaviour. However, this approach has not escaped criticism, particularly with respect to the assumptions it makes regarding the causal links between attitudes, subjective norms, intentions and behaviour. Such criticism is based on the assumption that correlations do not establish causality (for an extensive review see Eiser, 1986, 1994).

It is worth mentioning that one of the main aims of the current study is exploring teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. In this sense, if I was interested in predicting teachers' behaviour, then multiple behavioural measures would have to be used. However, prediction of teachers' behaviour is not a concern of the current study. The main concern is gaining understanding of teachers' conceptions of and attitudes towards inclusive education. To gain such understanding, the study will focus more on

the formation of teachers' attitudes and how these attitudes were shaped and investigating teachers' understanding of the process of change.

4.5 Attitudes measurement

It is clear that the concept of "attitudes" is latent and unobservable construct (Krosnick et al., 2005, Stahlberg & Frey, 1996), so it cannot be measured directly. Therefore, it is necessary to find adequate indicators of an attitude. Historically, a wide variety of measurement techniques have been used to gauge people's attitudes. Most of these techniques are based on the assumption that attitudes can be measured by the opinions or beliefs of persons about the attitude object (e.g. Thurstone, 1931; Likert, 1932), whereas other techniques try to assess primarily the evaluative character of an attitude (Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum, 1957). These methods are usually called direct self-report measures. With these methods the person is asked directly about his or her attitudes or opinions; that is, persons are to give some sort of self-descriptions.

Classically, there are three unique approaches used to develop a self-report attitude scale: Thurstone's equal-appearing interval method, Likert summated rating method, and semantic differential method (Krosnick et al., 2005). Also, the one-item rating scale is used to measure attitudes but it is not as reliable as the more complicated classical methods (see Hogg & Vaughan 2005; Oppenheim, 1992; Stahlberg & Frey, 1996 for a detailed review of the above mentioned scales).

It is noticeable from the literature that self-report methods, especially Likert method, have been used extensively to measure individuals' attitudes towards different objects. According to Smith & Mackie (2007), self-report scales normally consist of a set of questions that asks a person how strongly he/she agrees or disagrees in his/her evaluation of the attitude object. Participants choose from options that range from an extreme negative evaluation through neutral point to extreme positive evaluation. Despite the currency these approaches gained through history, it is worth mentioning that they have lots of advantages and disadvantages.

According to Krosnick et al. (2005), these methods at least have two main advantages. First, administering many items yields a final score that contains less random measurement error (Alison, 1975 cited in Krosnick et al., 2005). Second, these procedures have the advantage of being built using empirical evidence of convergence of interpretations across people and of correlational validity of the statements. However, these methods are time consuming and demanding for the participants. Also, the Thurstone and Likert procedures entail a great deal of preparatory work prior to the

administration of the battery. The major disadvantage of self-report measures is the notion of social desirability bias. The basic assumption of self-report measures is that participants are willing and motivated to describe themselves accurately and honestly. However, it has been evidenced that some people distort their answers to questionnaire items by giving socially desirable answers.

Additionally, there is another potential source of response distortion; self-deception (Ajzen, 2005). Not only people want to have favourable images of themselves in the eyes of others, but they also want to have such images in their own eyes as well. They may be motivated by the desire to have a high self-esteem as psychological research has evidenced that the pursuit of self-esteem is a basic human motive. So people may be motivated to convince themselves that they are respectable, good people, and doing so may entail misconstrue of facts. Several attempts have been made over the years to overcome self-presentational biases, some by disguising the purpose of the inquiry, others by using responses over which respondents have limited control (Ajzen, 2005; Krosnick et al., 2005).

To overcome the disadvantages of self-report methods, some other alternative non-direct or implicit approaches have been used to measure attitudes. The most popular methods of this approach are; unobtrusive behavioural observation and physiological measures (for more about these methods see Krosnick et al., 2005; Stahlberg & Frey, 1996). With these indirect methods, the researcher tries to measure attitudes without the individual holding this attitude being aware of the measurement procedure. Although these methods have the advantage that they are less susceptible to social desirability or self-presentational motives, they are used less frequently in comparison with self-report measures and also they have their own disadvantages. The major disadvantages are the ambiguities of interpretation (i.e. questionable validity of the attained measures) and ethical problems.

To sum up, there is no unique method without disadvantages. Therefore, to minimise such disadvantages especially regarding misrepresentation of self evaluation data, other approaches in measuring attitudes should also be used in any given study. In this regard, it has been suggested that using mixed method research designs may be more appropriate for investigating attitudes (see methodology chapter).

4.6 Justification of the use of the three component model for the study

I used this model in my study mainly because of its potential to unveil the complexity of inclusion. Following Eagly and Chaiken (1993), I believe that however the affective

responses dominate our attitude when we think about someone or something we should keep in mind also that this evaluation is based on all the thoughts, intentions, and behaviours that go into the structure of the attitude. Nonetheless, the multidimensional model provides an important conceptual framework that allows researchers to express the fact that evaluation can be manifested through responses of all three types, regardless of whether the types prove separable in appropriate statistical analysis.

Additionally, the object of attitude in the current study “inclusion” is complex by itself and attitudes are also complex and multidimensional and when we measure attitudes we measure attributes of the attitudes we are interested in. Such complexity has not been considerably considered by most previous studies on teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion which have addressed one of the three components, generally the cognitive component, without enough reflection on the multidimensional nature of attitudes. These studies do not reflect a thorough understanding of attitudes. Also, my approach is supported by the argument of Schlegel (1975) and Schlegel and DiTecco (1982) that if beliefs are numerous, complicated and at least partly contradictory a simple evaluative response will fall short of representing the whole attitude structure. This is typically the case with inclusion where beliefs about inclusion are always contradictory.

Therefore, the three component model was chosen in this study because it offers a holistic way for analysing teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion. This model implies that teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion would be dependent, to some extent, on all or some cognitive, affective, and behavioural information about what would be involved in the inclusion process. It is this information that will shape their thoughts, feelings, and intended behaviour, that is, their overall attitudes towards accepting children with SEN in regular schools. Also, these elements would determine both their actual and potential responses to inclusion implementation.

Additionally, some studies have utilized this approach in the field of special education and disability (e.g. Avramidis et al., 2000; Findler, Vilchinsky & Werner, 2007) and their results indicated that this approach illustrated attitudes more appropriately.

Also, given the nature and scope of the current study, the three component model has been adopted because it is at least descriptively adequate and may elucidate the complexity of inclusion. This model allows for a relatively better understanding of teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion in the first descriptive quantitative phase of the current thesis. However, we should take into account that such traditional quantitative methodologies, which have been used in most previous studies, cannot capture the

essence of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Therefore, this quantitative study was planned to represent the exploratory phase of the thesis which was then followed by another in-depth qualitative study.

In the following sections, I will try to extract from the previous studies of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and present in a systematic way some of the factors that have been found to affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

4.7 Overview of studies of teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion

It has been argued that teachers' favourable attitudes are critical for the successful integration/inclusion of students with SEN in regular schools (Bradshaw & Mundia, 2006; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie 1996; Ward et al., 1994). Based on such argument, teachers' attitudes towards integration have been studied in many parts of the world, commencing as early as the 1950s (see Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996 for a detailed review).

With the political shift towards inclusion, especially after Salamanca Statement in 1994, much research has been carried out regarding teachers' attitudes and beliefs about inclusion because of their importance to the success of inclusive practices (Avramidis et al., 2000; Ellins & Porter, 2005; Everington, Stevens & Winters, 1999; Hastings & Oakford, 2003; Monsen & Frederickson, 2003). Much of this work has been carried out in other countries, notably western countries. Although it might be relevant to Egypt, the education systems and laws do vary between countries. This and any cultural differences may reduce the relevance of the findings to the Egyptian context. However, I think it will be useful to refer to some of these studies in addition to some studies about inclusion in developing countries as their educational systems might be similar to the Egyptian one based on the premise that the concerns of one developing country are the concerns of many.

Internationally, there were different results either supporting inclusion or not but they actually reflect a degree of a common awareness of the importance of studying teachers' attitudes, beliefs and perceptions in order to develop inclusive practices. Generally, the results from studies examining teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion are inconclusive and provide a mixed picture. Several researchers reported that regular teachers do not hold supportive attitudes towards inclusion (Kalyva et al., 2007; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera & Lesar, 1991; Thomas, 1985; Vaughn et al., 1996), while others reported more favourable attitudes (Avramidis et al., 2000; Dupoux et al., 2005; Rojewski & Pollard, 1993; Sadek & Sadek, 2000; Subban & Sharma, 2006; Villa et al.,

1996; Ward et al., 1994), and a few researchers found neutral or uncertain attitudes (Bennett, Deluca, & Bruns, 1997; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001; Padelia, & Lampropoulou, 1997; Yuen & Westwood, 2001).

Early on, Bowman (1986) in her fourteen nation UNESCO study of approximately 1000 teachers' with experience of teaching children with SEN, reported a wide difference in teacher opinions regarding integration. Teachers favoured different types of children for integration into ordinary classes. Although teachers' responses varied in terms of the development of their educational systems in general and of special education in particular, there was a general hierarchy of conditions that were more or less regarded as possible for integration. The least favourable types of disabilities were severe mental handicap and multiple handicaps, while medical and physical conditions were seen as most easy to manage. Additionally, Bowman noted that in countries, which had a law requiring integration, teachers expressed more favourable views (ranging from 47 to 93 percent). However, teachers from countries which offered the most sophisticated segregated educational provision were less supportive to integration (ranging from 0 to 28 per cent).

In an early Australian study with regular teachers, Center and Ward (1987) indicated that teachers' attitudes to integration reflected lack of confidence both in their own instructional skills and in the quality of support available to them. Teachers showed positive attitudes towards integrating those children whose disabling characteristics were not likely to require extra instructional or management skills. In another Australian study, Ward et al. (1994) explored teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in the state of New South Wales. The results showed that within the context of the amount of resources available during the study the majority of teachers agree with the general concept of inclusion. However, there were considerable attitudinal differences towards inclusion based on teachers' professional status with the most cautious attitudes expressed by mainstream teachers.

However, in a more recent Australian study, Subban and Sharma (2006) found that participants generally held positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular settings. Also, participants who reported having undertaken training in special education were found to hold more positive attitudes and to experience lowered levels of concern about implementing inclusive education. These studies suggest that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion have slightly changed through

the time. This indicates that long-term practice of inclusion, positive experience of inclusion and appropriate training programmes could produce positive attitudes.

Similarly, Clough and Lindsay (1991) argued that attitudes had shifted in favour of integrating children with SEN over the past ten years or so in the UK. They, further, argued that this was partly the result of the experiences teachers had had. This study also revealed that the respondents appeared more supportive towards integration. Other attitude studies supported this finding and suggested that regular school teachers have developed positive attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis et al., 2000; Avramidis et al., 2002, Beh-Pajoo, 1992; Morley et al., 2005).

For example, Avramidis et al. (2000) explored mainstream teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special needs in the ordinary school in England. The results revealed that teachers who have been implementing inclusive programmes, and therefore have active experience of inclusion, possess more positive attitudes. Also, the findings showed the importance of professional development in the formation of positive attitudes towards inclusion. More specifically, teachers with university-based professional development appeared to hold more positive attitudes.

In the same vein, early American studies on integration/inclusion reported results which were not supportive of a full placement of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). A study carried out by Semmel et al. (1991) showed that teachers (both general and special) were satisfied with a special education system that operated pullout special educational programmes. Another study by Vaughn et al. (1996) examined mainstream and special teachers' views of inclusion through the use of focus group interviews. The majority of these teachers, who were not participating in inclusive programmes at that time, had strong negative feelings about inclusion and felt that decision makers were out of touch with classroom realities. Additionally, teachers identified some factors that would affect the success of inclusion including class size, inadequate resources, the extent to which all students would benefit from inclusion and lack of adequate teacher preparation.

On the other hand, in studies where teachers had active experience of inclusion, contradictory findings were reported. For example, LeRoy and Simpson (1996) and Stoiber, Gettinger and Goetz (1998) reported that teachers held positive beliefs and attitudes towards inclusion. The researchers concluded that teachers' attitudes were associated with their level of education, training background, and years of experience and type of disability. More specifically, the study of LeRoy and Simpson (1996)

indicated that as teachers' experience with children with SEN increased, their confidence to teach these children also increased.

Similarly, Van Reusen et al. (2000) suggested that more positive attitudes towards inclusion in secondary school teachers were affected, not only by a higher level of special needs training, but also by experience of teaching children with disabilities. The evidence seems to indicate that teachers' negative or neutral attitudes at the beginning of an innovation such as inclusive education may change over time as a function of experience and the expertise that develops through the process of implementation.

Given that there are variations between countries and even within countries in terms of philosophies, policies and systems, it is expected that teachers' attitudes will vary as well. For example, a cross-cultural study of teachers' attitudes towards integration in four continents revealed that teachers in Germany and the United States have more positive attitudes than those in Ghana, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Israel (Leyser, Kapperman & Keller, 1994). They attributed positive attitudes in the United States to the wide practice of integration as the result of the Public Law 94-142. Surprisingly, teachers in Germany exhibited positive attitudes to inclusion, although at the time of the study, Germany had no special education legislation, their teachers were not provided with special education training, their children with SEN were educated in segregated settings, and integration was being practised only on an experimental basis. On the contrary, teachers' attitudes were negative in Ghana, the Philippines, Israel and Taiwan. The authors explained that this could probably be due to limited or non-existent training for teachers to acquire integration competencies.

However, in a recent comparative study between Haiti and the United States, Dupoux et al. (2005) found that teachers in both countries had slightly similar positive attitudes towards the integration of students with disabilities. Also, the data showed that teachers' attitudes towards integration were positively correlated with years of teaching experience and advanced degree. However, teachers' attitudes were not correlated with country, gender or class size. In the United States, attitudes were not correlated with whether the teacher was a special or general education teacher; however, in Haiti being a special education teacher was positively correlated with attitudes. And finally, teachers in both countries seemed to have created a hierarchy of accommodations to severity of disability, by choosing the learning disability category as their first choice, and the emotional and behavioral categories as their least favourite.

These studies together suggest that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion varied from country to another. However, in some cases, the differences between countries are not just related to the country per se, rather they may be related to other contextual factors within educational systems and schools like training, experiences, type of children included at the time of these studies and even to the nature of teachers and their understanding and interpretations of the different kinds of disabilities.

In Hong Kong, Yuen & Westwood (2001) assessed teachers' attitudes towards integration in secondary schools and found that the teachers did not hold particularly favourable or supportive attitudes towards the policy of integration. Although the majority supported the underlying principle that it is every child's right to learn in a regular classroom, most were uncertain about the actual practicalities of such placement. Teachers showed negative attitudes towards the feasibility of integrating students with behavioural problems, and those with severe visual or hearing difficulties or with mental handicaps. However, more positive attitudes were expressed towards integrating students with physical disabilities and those with mild health or speech problems.

Likewise, Mushoriwa (2001) investigated teachers' attitudes towards including blind students in regular classes in Zimbabwe. The results showed that teachers hold negative attitudes towards including blind children in their classes. In addition, there was no gender differences as both males and females were equally rejecting to the idea.

Similar results were found by Alghazo (2002) who explored Jordanian teachers' and administrators' attitudes towards persons with disabilities and towards including those students in regular educational settings. The findings of the study showed that teachers hold negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities and towards inclusion. Additionally, the results showed that special teachers have more positive attitudes than regular teachers. Finally, teachers' and administrators' attitudes vary according to the type of disability with specific learning disabilities as the most favourable type for inclusion and mental retardation as the less favourable.

Despite the richness of the international literature, there is a dearth of such studies in the Egyptian context. For example, Sadek & Sadek (2000) explored the attitudes of teachers, parents, administrators and students towards inclusive education in Egypt. The results showed a positive attitude towards inclusion in the view of parents, teachers, and administrators. The students' attitudes were positive as well although relatively lower than the other groups. There were no significant differences in teachers' attitudes according to gender. All the groups agreed that inclusion will increase social interaction

among students, although their response towards the academic benefits of inclusion varied.

Additionally, Tufelis (2001) investigated students', teachers', and parents' attitudes towards including blind students in secondary schools. She found that blind students' attitudes towards being integrated in regular schools were negative, whereas their sighted peers in mainstream schools hold slightly positive attitudes. Additionally, the results showed that teachers hold positive attitudes as well. The two Egyptian studies came positivistic in their nature. This is not strange as the positivistic approach is the dominant approach in educational research in Egypt (Gahin, 2001). There is lack of interest in making use of the interpretative qualitative research designs in educational research in general and special education research tradition in particular. Given the dearth of interpretative-constructivist studies in the Egyptian context, it was timely that a study investigating teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and their perceptions about barriers to inclusion and the necessary changes to put inclusion into practice should be conducted.

Based on all the above mentioned studies, it can be concluded that there are many differences in teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with SEN. These differences occur both between countries and within countries. These differences possibly reflect the wide range of experiences of teachers as well as a range of attitudes towards the concept of inclusion. These factors are in many ways inter-related, and their impact on teacher attitudes will differ from country to another. Nevertheless, they have an important influence on shaping teachers' attitude towards the general concept of inclusion, and the assumption here is that research in Egypt will reveal a similar range of attitudes among Egyptian teachers as has been found in other countries.

4.8 Factors associated with teachers' attitudes

Multiple factors have been found to affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. These factors are interrelated in many ways. Following the typology developed by Salvia and Munson (1986) and recently updated by Avramidis and Norwich (2002), these factors could be termed as child-related variables, teacher-related variables, and educational-environment related variables. Each of these three general classes of variables will be reviewed in turn.

4.8.1 Child-related variables

The main child-variable explored in existing research relates to the nature of the child's disability or special need. According to Clough and Lindsay (1991), teachers' concepts of children with SEN normally consist of types of disabilities, their prevalence and the educational needs they exhibit. Generally, teachers' perceptions could be differentiated on the basis of three dimensions, physical and sensory, cognitive, and behavioural-emotional. In their study, they found that the majority of teachers surveyed ranked the needs of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties as being most difficult to meet, followed by children with learning difficulties, followed by children with visual impairment, and followed by children with a hearing impairment.

Additionally, various studies have found that children with less severe special needs, who are also less demanding in terms of teachers' input, are generally viewed more positively as candidates for inclusion than children with severe disabilities. Generally, children with intellectual disabilities or emotional and behavioural difficulties are typically rated less positively by samples of teachers (Avramidis et al., 2000; Dupoux et al., 2005; Forlin, 1995; Hastings & Oakford, 2003; Heflin & Bullock, 1999; Kuester, 2000; Soodak et al., 1998; Stoiber et al., 1998)

In their review of the literature on teachers' attitudes towards integration/ inclusion, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) concluded that whilst attitudes are generally positive, the nature and severity of children's needs strongly influence teachers' disposition towards inclusive practices. Teachers showed more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with mild disabilities or physical/sensory impairments than students with more complex needs. In particular, in the case of the more severe learning needs and behavioural difficulties, teachers hold negative attitudes to the implementation of inclusion.

Different research results are in accordance with this conclusion. For example, the results of (Al-Zyoudi, 2006; Pearson et al., 2003; Yuen & Westwood, 2001) showed that teachers' attitudes were found to be strongly influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition presented to them, the length of teaching experience, and training. Students with physical disabilities, followed by students with sensory disabilities were considered the most suitable for inclusion. The students considered least includable were the students with intellectual disabilities and behaviour problems.

In conclusion, in most of the studies mentioned above, teachers were more willing to accept or support the integration or inclusion of children with physical and sensory

impairments, than those with intellectual disabilities and behavioural-emotional difficulties. Also, most teachers advocate inclusion of children with mild/moderate disabilities rather than children with severe disabilities. Given that children with SEN in Egypt are defined categorically, it is expected that teachers' attitudes will differ according to the type and severity of disability.

4.8.2 Teacher-related variables

There is enough evidence in the literature that there are some teacher-related variables that could affect their attitudes towards inclusion. Researchers have explored different teacher-related variables such as gender, age, training, years of teaching experience, contact with disabled persons and personality factors which might impact upon teacher acceptance of the inclusion principle. A synthesis of these findings is presented below.

- **Gender**

Research findings regarding the effect of teachers' gender on their attitudes towards inclusion are inconsistent. Some researchers found that female teachers tend to have more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of special needs students than did male teachers (Papadopoulou, Kokaridas, Papanikolaou, & Patsiaouras, 2004; Thomas, 1985). However, others reported that gender is not related to attitudes (Beh-Pajoo, 1992; Bradshaw & Mundia, 2006; Kalyva et al., 2007; Leyser et al., 1994; Mushoriwa, 2001; Sadek & Sadek, 2000).

- **Professional development**

There is too much evidence in the literature that training either pre-service or in-service is an important factor in improving teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. For example, Leyser et al. (1994) found that teachers with substantial training in special education had a significantly higher positive attitude than those with little or no training about inclusion. Their findings showed that information about disabilities and inclusion acquired through training enhanced the formation of positive attitudes. Therefore, they anticipated that as more effective training programmes on inclusion are offered to teachers, they would begin to have more favourable attitudes about inclusion.

More recently, Avramidis and Kalyva (2007) studied the influence of teaching experience and professional development on Greek teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and found that training plays an important role in forming teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion. Their study revealed that teachers with further training in SEN and inclusion matters hold significantly more positive attitudes than those with little or no

training concerning inclusion. These results are supported by several attitudinal studies in the literature confirming the influence of training on the formation of positive attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis et al., 2000; Center & Ward, 1987; Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes, 1995; Lifshitz, Glaubman & Issawi, 2004; Pearson et al., 2003; Shade & Stewart, 2001; Stoiber et al., 1998; Van Reusen et al., 2000). Additionally, all these studies tend to reinforce the view that special education qualifications acquired from pre- or in-service courses were associated with less resistance to inclusive practices.

However, few studies (e.g. Ellins & Porter, 2005) revealed that there were no significant differences in teachers' attitudes according to training. In addition, they found that increasing pre-service teachers' knowledge in the various aspects of assessment and instruction of children with SEN did not concomitantly produce more positive attitudes towards inclusion as a general education policy. Therefore, I could argue that although most studies showed that training affects teachers' attitudes towards inclusion positively, this should not be taken as a fact. As the purpose, the type of training and the quality of training vary from context to another and these issues could make a difference.

Additionally, level of qualification and area of certification are broadly related to teachers' professional development. The results regarding the effect of qualification on teachers' attitudes are inconsistent. While some studies indicated that the higher the education level of the teachers, the more negative the attitude towards integration (Antonak, Mulick, Kobe & Fiedler, 1995), other studies suggest that, as levels of education rise, teachers demonstrate more positive attitudes towards integration (LeRoy & Simpson, 1996; Villa et al., 1996). Similarly, the results of Dupoux et al. (2005) indicated that on average, teachers with graduate degrees have more positive attitudes towards integration than teachers with less than a master's degree.

Regarding area of certification, some studies indicated that special education teachers have more accepting attitudes compared to general educators (Balboni & Pedrabissi, 2000; Elhoweris & Alsheikh, 2006; Forlin et al., 1996). However, Padeliadu and Lampropoulou (1997) found that the regular education teachers were more positive towards integration than their special education colleagues. Recently, Romi and Leyser (2006) reported that general education and special education pre-service teachers did not express support for inclusion and there were no significant differences among them.

- **Age and years of teaching experience**

Teachers' attitudes appear to vary with their perceptions of inclusion according to teaching experience and age. For example, Clough and Lindsay (1991) found that

younger teachers and those with fewer years of experience have been found to be more supportive of inclusion. Conversely, teachers with more years of teaching experience have been found to express more negative attitudes towards inclusion. These results have been supported by several other studies (Center & Ward, 1987; Cornoldi et al., 1998; Leyser et al., 1994; Soodak et al., 1998).

For example, Forlin (1995) found that acceptance of a child with a physical disability was highest among teachers with less than six years of teaching and declined with experience for those with 6-10 years of teaching. The most experienced educators (greater than 11 years of teaching) were the least accepting. Forlin also obtained a similar result for the integration of a child with intellectual disability. His study seemed to indicate that as educators gained experience in teaching, they became less accepting of integration. Similarly, Center and Ward (1987) found in their Australian study that teachers with the least teaching experience (0-2 years) were consistently more tolerant to integration than were their more experienced colleagues.

However, other investigators have reported that the length of teaching experience was not significantly related to teachers' attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis et al., 2000; Dupoux et al., 2006; Hastings & Oakford, 2003; Kalyva et al., 2007).

- **Experience with people with special needs**

Although the amount of the years of teaching experience is not a significant factor in shaping teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion, the direct experience of teaching or contact with children with SEN has been proved to positively influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusion (Balboni & Pedrabissi, 2000; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Luk, 2005; Romi & Leyser, 2006).

Recently, Avramidis and Kalyva (2007) found that teachers who had been working in schools with integration units hold more positive attitudes than their counterparts who had presumably little or no experience of inclusion. Also, the former group also felt more prepared to teach children with different types of needs in a full inclusive classroom. Additionally, Kalyva et al. (2007) found that Serbian teachers held overall slightly negative attitudes towards the inclusion of children with SEN, with teachers with experience in teaching children with SEN holding more positive attitudes towards inclusion in comparison to teachers without such experience.

In keeping with this pattern of findings, teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of children with special needs have been found to be positively associated with their non-work

experience or social contact with people with special needs. In an Australian study, Subban and Sharma (2006) found that participants with a family member or a friend with a disability, and those who possessed some knowledge about the legislation surrounding the education of students with disabilities exhibited more positive attitudes towards including students with disabilities.

Taken collectively, these studies suggest that contact with students with SEN or disabilities may result in positive changes in teachers' attitudes. Moreover, these studies also indicate that previous experience in educating students with disabilities may allow the mainstream teachers to view inclusive educational practices more positively.

However, the nature of such experiences either a working or non-working may alter perceptions, negative encounters are viewed as reinforcing negative perceptions, as positive experiences result in more favourable perceptions (Lampropoulou & Padelliadu, 1997). For example, Koutrouba, Vamvakari and Steliou (2006) found that a large percentage of teachers acquired a negative experience from working with SEN students. Correspondingly, teachers developed a negative stance towards the inclusion process. These teachers attributed their doubts regarding inclusion to the lower academic performance of the class as a result of necessary adjustments in teaching to cater for the abilities of SEN students.

However, others reported that experience is not related to attitudes. For example, Zambelli and Bonni (2004) found that there were no significant differences among teachers towards inclusion according to the direct experience with integration as both teachers with and without experience revealed mixed attitudes (positive and negative) towards inclusion. Likewise, Ellins & Porter (2005) argued that social contact or experience of special educational needs out of school per se does not lead to favourable attitudes.

- **Teachers' beliefs and knowledge**

Recently, teachers' beliefs and knowledge about their instructional roles, their responsibilities, views about children with disabilities have been cited as a variable affecting not only their attitudes towards inclusion but also their actual teaching styles and adaptations in heterogeneous classrooms. For example, Dupoux et al. (2006) found that variables representing teachers' cognitions and beliefs (instructional tolerance, education level, teachers' perception of colleagues' attitudes) were more important in predicting attitudes than variables related to the teachers' actual experiences of teaching (years of teaching experience, class size, special education or regular teacher, and

number of special education students a regular teacher has had in class). The variables representing the actual experience of teaching explained only 2.8% of the variance in attitude, while the variables representing the teacher's cognitions and beliefs explained an additional 5.3% of the variance in attitude.

Jordan, Lindsay and Stanovich (1997) found that teachers, who understand disability as a within-child problem, differed in their teaching from those who attribute student problems to an interaction between student and environment. In another study, Stanovich and Jordan (1998) found that the strongest predictor of effective teaching behaviour was the subjective school norm as operationalised by the principal's attitudes and beliefs about heterogeneous classrooms and his or her pathognomonic/interventionist orientation. Additionally, teachers' responses on the pathognomonic/interventionist interview scale were also found to be important predictors of effective teaching behaviour.

Similarly, Papadopoulou et al. (2004) found that attitudes of Greek physical education teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in their regular classes are related to the level of knowledge that the teachers believe they have for the special needs conditions. Also, they doubt the feasibility of inclusion, due to the lack of appropriate support services.

Perceived confidence of mainstream teachers is another cited variable that is thought to affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Avramidis et al. (2000) argued that teachers who perceive themselves as confident enough to include students with disabilities appear to hold more positive attitudes towards inclusive education.

In their review of the literature, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) concluded that the school's ethos and the teachers' beliefs have a considerable influence on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion which, in turn, are translated into practice. Moreover, teachers who are willing to accept responsibility for teaching a wide diversity of students and feel confident in their instructional and management skills can successfully implement inclusive programmes.

It could be concluded here that there are too many teacher-related variables that may affect their attitudes towards inclusion. However, none of these variables could be considered as a single predictor of attitudes. Of the mentioned factors, training in inclusion and special needs and experience in teaching students with SEN seem to be the most effective factors in shaping positive attitudes towards inclusion. Also, these

results indicate that while teacher-related variables could affect their attitudes towards inclusion, other contextual and cultural issues need to be considered.

4.8.3 School-related variables

Some studies have tried to investigate different variables related to the educational environment that could influence teachers' attitudes positively. The age group (primary/secondary) or the grade level appears to be a significant variable. However, results are inconclusive. Some studies have found that inclusion of children at higher grades in the school system is viewed more positively (Leyser et al., 1994). However, many others have suggested that teachers working with younger children are more positive (Chalmers, 1991; Clough & Lindsay, 1991; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). It could be argued that this variable is simply a factor related to the teacher or the child. However, I believe that it is significant because of its relationship to the nature of the school environment. In particular, younger children in primary schools tend to spend more time with a single teacher or smaller numbers of teachers than do children later in their secondary school. The impact of a child with special needs on the teacher in these two circumstances may be quite different.

Salvia and Munson (1986) in their review concluded that as children's age increased, teachers' attitudes became less positive to integration, and attributed that to the fact that teachers of older children tend to be concerned more about subject matter and less about individual children differences. This was supported by Cornoldi et al. (1998) who claimed that factors that could be contributing to the primary/secondary difference are the more demanding curriculum at the secondary level and the greater time spent by primary teachers with their students. However, there are some studies which have not found a relationship between school level and attitude (Avramidis et al., 2000; Hastings & Oakford, 2003; Monsen & Frederickson, 2003).

Another variable that has consistently been found to be associated with more positive attitudes is the availability of physical and human support services at the classroom and the school levels. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) indicated that regular teachers feel that implementing inclusive education programs would involve a considerable workload on their part, as a result of increased planning for meeting the needs of a very diverse population. Therefore, human and physical support can be seen as important factors in generating positive attitudes among mainstream teachers towards the inclusion of children with SEN.

Moreover, there is great evidence in the literature that providing schools with adequate and appropriate resources and materials, adapting teaching materials, restructuring the physical environment to be accessible to students with physical disabilities and reducing class size are instrumental in the development of teachers' positive attitudes (Clough & Lindsay, 1991; Janney et al., 1995; Koutrouba et al., 2006; LeRoy & Simpson, 1996).

In their study of factors affecting teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in Cyprus, Koutrouba et al. (2006) argued that addressing infrastructural and specialized staff shortages in schools is very important, as this shortage is a major cause of mistrust among teachers towards inclusion efforts. They added that providing equipment to schools with appropriate ramps and lifts, supplying Braille machines and closed-circuit television systems (for students with visual impairment), providing headphones and special microphones and the staffing of schools with sign language users and speech therapists (for students with hearing and speech disabilities) could significantly reverse teachers' negative attitudes.

Also, the role of human support from head teachers, learning support assistants, special teachers, speech therapists, etc. has been highlighted. For example, several studies indicated that the continuous administrative support and encouragement from the school principals plays an important role in building positive attitudes and commitment among teachers towards inclusion (Center & Ward, 1987; Chazan, 1994; Janney et al., 1995; Smith & Smith, 2000). Center and Ward's (1987) study reported that mainstream teachers whose head teachers had provided some form of support for the integration program exhibited a more positive attitude towards its implementation than those who had not received any. Additionally, Pearson et al. (2003) concluded that teachers in schools with extra funding provisions, teachers trained to teach special needs children, additional counselling resources and specialist support expressed more accepting attitudes towards children with special needs and their admission into mainstream schools.

The importance of support from specialist resource teachers and from specialists in general was also highlighted in some studies (Janney et al., 1995; Koutrouba et al., 2006; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005). Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) reported that while the teachers in their study did implement inclusive practices, they indicated that appropriate pre-service training, support from administrators, and support from resource personnel are important to provide a successful inclusive environment.

4.9 Reflections on the literature review and conclusion

The results from the mentioned studies above are inconclusive and provide a mixed picture of teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion. The literature review indicates that most teachers support the philosophy or ideology of inclusion. However, they do not support a total inclusion model to special educational provision. Additionally, teachers' attitudes were affected by the nature of the special needs of children considered as candidates for inclusion. Most teachers are more willing to accept the inclusion of children with mild disabilities, rather than complex or severe disabilities. In particular, teachers showed more negative attitudes towards the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities and children with emotional behavioural difficulties.

Additionally, the evidence regarding teacher-related variables affecting teachers' attitudes is inconsistent and no single factor could be regarded as a strong predictor of teachers' attitudes. However, it is fair to conclude that there is considerable consistency regarding educational environment-related variables, which suggests that a significant restructuring in the mainstream school environment and sufficient support is necessary before students with significant disabilities are included. Nonetheless, this is not inclusive.

The review of the literature related to environment-related variables indicated that most of the literature emphasised on the "visible artefacts" of a culture; the training materials, the environment of the organization, the visible and audible behaviour patterns, etc. However, less attention was paid to the deep culture of an organization; the "underlying assumptions" (Schein, 1984, cited in Zollers, Ramanathan & Moonset, 1999) which are more important in promoting teachers' positive attitudes and in developing inclusive school cultures. Understanding such assumptions could offer an insight into the deepest level of organizational culture.

Additionally, the results indicated that there is variation in teachers' attitudes between countries and even within countries which could be due to the cultural context and the degree of development in different educational systems. It could be concluded here that the cultural and contextual factors could play a role in forming teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion. I assume that the study of this phenomenon in any given context could provide useful implications for developing theory and practice. This is specifically important for Egypt as the role of contextual factors on the teaching

and learning processes has been largely missing in educational research in Egypt (Gahin, 2001).

Moreover, most of the studies reviewed above have used traditional quantitative methodology (self-report instruments) in an attempt to ascertain the extent to which participants accept or reject the general concept of integration/inclusion as related to a range of disabling conditions. Such methodologies do not address the complexities of inclusion, SEN and attitudes as they pay less attention to the role of the social and contextual factors which may affect attitudes by emphasizing specific values and norms.

In this, the majority of the studies reviewed above investigated “individualistic” experiences of inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Eiser (1994) argues that mainstream psychological research on attitudes has taken the ‘individual self’ as both the starting-point and the focus of analysis, resulting often in a ‘psychologising’ about social issues without articulating how social interaction makes psychological processes the way they are. However, Eiser (1994) argues there is an interdependence of the ‘individual’ and the ‘social’. *“The meaning of any social interaction depends on the thoughts of the participants both in acting and in interpreting each others’ actions. Of course such interpretations will be influenced by the systems or beliefs prevalent within society or within a person’s immediate social group”* (p.130).

This means that attitudes should not be viewed as solely personal, but as arising out of interactions with others in the system (e.g. school, educational system, parents, etc.). This social constructivist view of attitudes (Carrington, 1999; Eiser, 1994; Smith & Green, 2004) is rooted within the socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) which argues that there is interdependence between the individual and the events, where each functions to give meaning to the other. Thus, elements cannot be analysed out of the context in which they occur (Goldhaber, 2000).

Additionally, the socio-cultural theory has shifted the focus from the individual to socio-cultural activity as a unit of analysis and moves from cognition as an individual property to viewing cognition as an aspect of human socio-cultural activity. Moreover, the emphasis of the socio-cultural approach on the transformation between the individual and his/her environment indicates that meaning develops through interactions and transactions across persons, symbols, physical environment and culture (Rogoff, 1998; 2003). In this, teachers’ understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion cannot be considered out of the contexts in which they occur.

Since the social context and school culture create an environment that plays a large role in shaping teachers' attitudes, so it is argued that the complexities of inclusion, SEN, and teachers' beliefs and attitudes should be studied within a framework that recognises the influence of culture and context. Therefore, in the current study I will make a particular point of addressing these themes within the exploration of teachers' attitudes. However, the study will start within the traditional framework of understanding teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in the quantitative phase, then as a part of the development of the research journey, the social-constructivist lenses will be utilised in the second phase of the study to address the complex nature of the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, the study as a whole will move towards understanding these complex issues within the socio-cultural approach. In the next chapter I will discuss the methodological framework of the study.

CHAPTER Five

Chapter Five: Methodology and Design of the Study

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology and the research framework of the study. The chapter starts with a description of the different research paradigms with more emphasis on the interpretive-constructivist paradigm. This is followed by a rationale for using the interpretive paradigm in the current study and highlighting the research design. Then, data collection procedures including design and administration of instruments through the fieldwork process are described, and the constraints impinging upon the fieldwork procedures are highlighted. Finally, the sampling framework, data analysis approach, trustworthiness of the study and the ethical considerations will be addressed.

5.2 Introducing the research paradigms

The choice of a workable paradigm is central to any research inquiry. Paradigm can be defined as the world view or the belief system that guides researchers in studying educational phenomenon (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It constitutes a way of looking at the world, of interpreting what is seen, and deciding which of the things seen by researchers are real, valid and important enough to be documented (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Patton (1990) argued that the paradigm is an important theoretical construct for illuminating fundamental assumptions about the nature of reality based on the ontological, epistemological and methodological positions related to the research to be undertaken. Similarly, Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that the basic beliefs that define a particular research paradigm can be summarized by the responses given to three fundamental questions.

- The ontological question: What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?
- The epistemological question: what is the nature of the relationship between the knower and the known?
- The methodological question: how can the inquirer go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?

Generally, there are three broad paradigms: positivist, interpretive and critical paradigms (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Grix, 2004; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) in social and human sciences. The first is known as scientific, quantitative, confirmatory, hypothesis testing or a

predictive paradigm, whereas the other two paradigms are known as exploratory, hypothesis ground, descriptive, qualitative, interpretative, non-positivist or naturalistic paradigms (Cohen et al., 2007; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

The positivist paradigm, which derives from the natural sciences (Ernest, 1994), is based on a realist, foundationalist ontology which views the social reality as existing independently of our knowledge of it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Positivists believe there are no qualitative differences between the natural and the social world and there are general and universal laws that govern individuals' social behavior. Therefore, they employ scientific methods to analyze the social world. This positivist-scientific approach has dominated research in the field of education in the 1950s and it is still one of the major approaches used in research today.

Also, this approach reflects the traditional scientific approach to problem solving by assuming that there is a single reality that can be broken down into variables. By identifying and isolating different variables, cause and effect relationships can be established. The purpose of this type of research is to test hypotheses that have been developed in advance before the research project started and to form conclusions that can be generalized to other situations. Additionally, there is too much emphasis in this approach upon measurement, comparison and objectivity (Cohen et al., 2007; Grix, 2004).

In terms of methodology and methods employed in research, experiments and quantitative predetermined questionnaires, grids or instruments are the most common. The forms of inquiry also include surveys, comparative experimental, quasi-experimental methods, and so on. There is an emphasis on quantitative data, but qualitative data can of course also be used, as and when appropriate (Ernest, 1994).

On the contrary, the interpretive paradigm gained recognition and popularity in the 1980s and is acknowledged today as an appropriate way of conducting research. It has unique aims and philosophical assumptions that guide researchers who apply it in their investigations. The interpretative paradigm and the critical paradigm reject many of the ideas of positivism.

However, unlike the interpretative paradigm, the critical paradigm attempts to be less subjective and relative. The critical paradigm rejects positivism for not focusing enough on people's real meanings, thoughts, and feelings, for ignoring the social context, for being anti-humanist and for assuming that the social order is stable and unchanging. Additionally, it rejects interpretative paradigm as subjective and relativist and aims to

uncover what's on the surface so that people can be able to transform aspects of their social context for the better. The aim is usually to bring about change (Cohen et al., 2007; Grix, 2004). Given that the current study is based on the interpretive paradigm, it is worth giving an overview of the basic assumptions of this approach before outlining how it was adopted in the study.

5.3 The interpretive paradigm (ontology, epistemology, and methodology)

The interpretive paradigm is an umbrella term that covers many variations of approach to social reality like: relativism, verstehen (understanding), phenomenology, hermeneutics, idealism, symbolic interactionism and constructionism (Grix, 2004). Guba and Lincoln (1989) believe that most terms that adhere to this approach are all similar in notion and that they all aim to achieve similar objectives. Similarly, Grix (2004) argued that however there are some qualitative differences between all of these approaches, *“they have several things in common, the first of which is an anti-positivist position (p. 82).*

Schwandt (2000) explained that the interpretive research is concerned mainly with meaning and seeks to understand social members' definition of a situation. Also, interpretivists share the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experiences from the point of view of those who lived it. Researchers try to elicit a comprehensive understanding of how participants in a given investigation view their world, their work, and the events they have experienced or observed (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Any research paradigm is based on certain ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (Patton, 1990).

The ontological assumption underpinning the interpretive paradigm is the ontological position that suggests the existence of multiple realities within the social world. These realities are perceived as constructions existing in the minds of people as they are a product of the people's consciousness and a result of their cognition, influenced by the social environment and the culture in which they find themselves (Cohen et al., 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Reality is not an objective entity. Rather, it is subjective, inter-subjective and relative. It is not given, rather it is created. Also, reality is multi-layered and complex and cannot be reduced to quantifiable figures and simple amounts of data figures (Cohen et al., 2007; Crotty, 2003; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). As outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1991), these realities are intangible, contextually bound, complex and subjective in nature and can only be studied in a holistic and idiosyncratic manner. Therefore, the aim is to

deepen and extend our knowledge of why social life is perceived and experienced in the way that it is (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Within the context of my study, this meant that I had to seek ways to uncover these various constructions of reality held by my participants and examine how these realities were socially constructed in the context of their school and their broad culture in order to understand the social world of teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion.

Epistemology is defined by Crotty (2003, p. 8) as "*a philosophical grounding for deciding what kind of knowledge are possible and how can we ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate*". Proponents of the interpretive paradigm hold constructivist epistemology that participants construct their own knowledge of the situation. Participants have their own unique interpretation of event and the world cannot be known with any certainty (Ernest, 1994). Consequently, knowledge is created from the environment in a crude form by the knower and the reality is subjectively known and constructed (Flick, 2006). Radnor (1994) suggested that when we talk about understanding others on the level of meaning, we are referring to our interpretations of what we see and hear; and through our language we are capable of reconstructing experiences.

Additionally, Ritchie and Lewis (2003) argued that in order to gain better understanding of the epistemological assumptions that guide researchers in educational and social research, two main issues surrounding the debate of epistemology should be addressed. The first is associated with the relationship between the researcher and the researched world. While the positivist or scientific adherents view this relationship as isolated or "value free", the proponents of interpretive paradigm believe that this process is an interactive process; knowledge is either mediated through the researcher (value-mediated) or is a result of negotiation and agreement between researchers and participants. The second issue is related to the way in which knowledge is acquired. A scientific approach is often seen as a deductive approach whereby propositions or hypotheses are reached theoretically through logical processes. On the other hand, knowledge in interpretive research is often obtained through induction processes by looking for patterns and associated matters derived from observations of the participants. Finally, methodology is defined as "*the theory whose methods and techniques are appropriate to generate and justify knowledge*" (Ernest, 1994, p. 4). Unlike positivistic research, the interpretive mode is concerned more with the abstract characteristics of events. Data is collected in a natural setting. Therefore, it is "*not possible to go into the*

field of inquiry with a tight research design” (Radnor, 1994, p. 9) as this might delude researchers to see only what they want or expect to see. The interpretive paradigm aims at discovering the meanings of the individuals involved in a given social situation. This leads to the adoption of research methods that yield qualitative rather than quantitative data. Therefore, interpretive research is derived from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people and its emphasis on words rather than numbers (Maxwell, 1996).

Regarding the research methods, the interpretive paradigm generally employs interviews, participant observation, journals, open ended surveys, etc. However, quantitative methods can also be used when appropriate. The researcher is the primary data collecting instrument but not the only one. The researcher is capable of recognizing, sorting and distinguishing and dealing with the information obtained in a way leading to encompassing the emotions, values, beliefs and assumptions of individuals in a social context. Events are understood adequately when they are seen in context. However, such role for the researcher in the interpretive paradigm is open to criticism of subjectivity. To overcome this weakness, triangulation is often employed. However, as long as the researcher acknowledges his/her subjectivity, this is not necessarily a weakness (Cohen et al., 2007; Crotty, 2003; Pring, 2000).

5.4 Justifying the research paradigm followed in the current study

The field of special education in general has been dominated by a research paradigm which does not fundamentally address the complexity of the core concepts of “inclusion”, and “special educational need” (Bayliss, 1998). Bayliss, further, argued that there is a need for a “paradigm shift” which starts to problematise basic understandings in order that complex situations relating to children and adults are not simplistically researched in ways which yield adverse or aversive interventions for children or adults who are different.

Similarly, researching attitudes has been criticized for similar reasons. Most of the previous research related to teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion had followed a psychological approach. This psychological approach has taken the ‘individual self’ as both the starting-point and the focus of analysis, resulting often in a ‘psychologising’ about social issues without articulating how social interaction makes psychological processes the way they are (Eiser, 1994).

Moreover, many researchers investigating teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion have used traditional quantitative research designs (questionnaire) rooted within the positivist

approach and investigated “individualistic” experiences of inclusion. Such methodologies do not address the complexities of inclusion, SEN and attitudes as they pay less attention to the role of the social and contextual factors which may affect attitudes by emphasizing specific values and norms (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Grix (2004) argued that some people can come to think in certain ways which are bound by cultural and social norms and parameters. Therefore, we need to be aware of, and understand that different views of the world and different ways of gathering knowledge exist. The assumption here is that there is a need for different research designs that might help in uncovering the factors that may underlie particular understanding of and particular attitudes towards inclusion and to avoid the general tendency among most teachers to give social desirable responses.

Furthermore, the interpretative approach carries the potential of deepening our understanding of the complexities of inclusion, SEN, attitudes and provides directions for change or continuity of provision as appropriate. For example, “inclusion” as a concept is problematized and there is no assumption that all the participants in a given study share common understanding and experience of the phenomenon. Instead, it is acknowledged that the term might mean different things in different sites within the same context (Baker & Zigmond, 1995; Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1998).

Thus, inclusion cannot be viewed as a unitary concept. Rather, it is highly context sensitive and variable across classrooms, schools, regional, national and international systems. Moreover, according to Mertens and McLaughlin (2004), within the interpretive paradigm the concept of “SEN” or “disability” is viewed largely as a socially constructed phenomenon, which is highly relative and context specific. This means that the researcher will not get on the research process with pre-established ontological assumptions of the type of disability under investigation. More significantly, and in relation to the study of teachers’ constructions of and attitudes towards inclusion, I will use multiple methods to be able to capture the complexity of such phenomenon.

Additionally, the complexity of the concept of attitudes is addressed in this approach as well. “Attitudes” in the interpretive paradigm is viewed from a social constructivist view as context dependent and responsive to factors within a particular sociocultural environment. As Eiser (1994) argued that there is an interdependence of the ‘individual’ and the ‘social’; in other words, attitudes should not be viewed as solely personal, but as arising out of interactions with others in the system (e.g. school, parents, etc). Therefore, teachers’ views should be considered within their socio-cultural context

where they will think in certain ways which are bound by cultural and social norms and parameters.

Furthermore, however research in the field of inclusion and teachers' attitudes towards this process is not a new area of research in the western context and some other parts of the world; I could argue that such research is still in its infancy stages in the Egyptian context which makes adopting the interpretive approach more convenient. As Marshall and Rossman (1995) and Creswell (2003) claim that the interpretive approach can be very useful in new areas of research.

Taking into account the above argument about the complexity of inclusion and attitudes and in view of the aims of the current study, the interpretive orientation of qualitative research appeared to be an appropriate choice. The aim in the interpretive research is to understand actualities, social realities and human perceptions that exist untainted in case formal measurement, which is guided by preconceived questions, is used. Rather than providing generalizable hunches on human phenomena, the aim is to uncover the many idiosyncrasies and present "slice-of-life" episodes documented through natural language to represent as closely as possible how people feel, what they know, and what their concerns, beliefs, perceptions and understandings are. Therefore, the interpretive/constructivist paradigm has as each defining characteristic a commitment to seeking to understand the phenomenon being studied in the light of the explanations and perceptions of those involved.

Since this study aims to ascertain how regular and special education teachers in Egypt construe their social reality, the above argument applies to this study and hence came the commitment of this study to the qualitative mode of inquiry. The study aims to describe a situation, not to generalize or to form laws or to work with a personally imposed, pre-existing framework which is the trait of the positivist approach.

More specifically, the study aims to come to grips with teachers' subjectively held understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion, the different factors underlying teachers' attitudes, teachers' perceptions about barriers to inclusion and their perspectives about changes required to put inclusion into practice. Thus, in the context of this study, teachers are understood from the constructivist perspective to be *"meaning-making organisms, theory builders who develop hypotheses, notice patterns, and construct theories of action from their life experience"* (White & Gunstone, 1992, p. 101). Also, the interpretive approach will help the researcher explain why things happened from the insider's point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

Furthermore, this is a qualitative study grounded in interpretative philosophical assumptions that look for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world (Crotty, 2003). This approach has been used because it tries to explore participants' attitudes and perceptions within the Egyptian socio-cultural context. Therefore, the interpretative approach is used here for understanding the context within which the participants act, and for understanding the process by which events and actions take place (Maxwell, 1996). As Pring (2000) argues, "*what is reached is to be understood only within the context with which, and through which, it has been constructed*" (p. 47).

Additionally, as an interpretative researcher, the purpose of the study is to construct knowledge by describing and interpreting the phenomena of the world in an attempt to get shared meanings with others. It may offer possibilities, but not certainties of the outcomes of future events (Merriam, 1998). The element of generalizability of findings to a wider context has never been a goal of interpretive inquiry. However, the in-depth nature of the inquiry means that the findings give insightful explanations of a phenomenon, which could be useful to other people in similar situations (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lichtman, 2006).

5.5 Research design

Inclusion, SEN/disability and attitudes are complex and context-based phenomena and if viewed as such we need research frameworks that can deal with this complexity. Various methods are required to elicit tacitly held attitudes, beliefs and perceptions to provide an environment in which teachers will be encouraged to reflect on and articulate their views. Therefore, the current study used a multi-method design that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2003). This is based on a premise that combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study can help elucidate various aspects of the phenomenon under investigation, providing a more holistic understanding of it, and resulting in better-informed education policies (Creswell, 2003; Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, Bird & McCormick, 1992). This is particularly true when studying complex social phenomena (Creswell, 2003), such as, in the case of this study, inclusion, SEN/disability and teachers' attitudes when confronted with a new educational policy like inclusive education.

Moreover, there are many crucial aspects justifying the use of different methods in a single study. Firstly, it can be useful for getting further explanations and more details about the phenomenon being studied instead of relying solely on statistical or

interpretive findings and to prevent the researcher from developing an understanding from a limited singular perspective (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Robson, 2002). Secondly, different research methods have different strengths and weakness; therefore, combining more than one method improves the quality, integrity and trustworthiness of the research findings and maximizes the meaning of data interpretation (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Patton, 1990). Thirdly, dependence on a single method would be risky as it only provides a limited view of the complexity of human behaviour and the situations experienced by human beings (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2003). Finally, combining different methods can be applied to seek a convergence of results between two or more methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

All the above considerations informed my decision to adopt a mixed-method research design. Thus, multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative data were employed to strengthen the research design and add depth-and-breadth to the research findings.

The research design comes in two phases. In the first phase, quantitative data were collected through the questionnaire followed by qualitative data from the in-depth interviews to refine and elaborate the findings through more in-depth exploration in the second phase. In this study it was essential to get a general picture of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion through the questionnaire and to gain in-depth insights into teachers' perceptions and opinions through the interviews.

As shown in Figure (5.1), the two types of data are analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and they are integrated during the interpretation and discussion stage (Creswell, 2003). This methodological linkage provides richer detail and full picture of many different aspects of the researched phenomenon. This may also be used to address different but complementary questions within a study and permit data to be triangulated and crosschecked with different sources of data and allows for more elaborate analysis of data (Silverman, 2000). Figure (5.1) below shows the methodological framework of the study, followed by an overview of the various data collection methods.

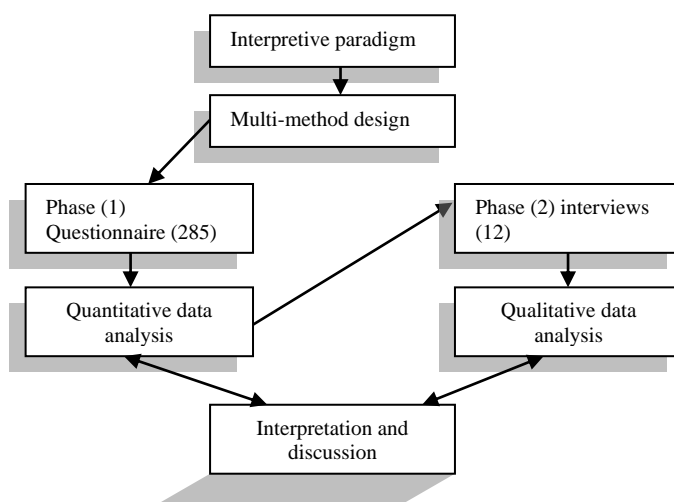


Figure 5.4 Methodological framework of the study

5.6 Data collection methods

The qualitative research is characterized by a flexible structure that permits changes to its design in order to accommodate important developments that might occur during the process of data collection. Taking into account the limited amount of time given by the authorities in Egypt (maximum 3 months) and constraints inherent in the research context, a set of data collection instruments had to be prepared beforehand. Nevertheless, this did not mean an inflexible schema. So, a balance was achieved between the need for a flexible design and the need to act within the limited time, resources and access provided. Coinciding with the research design outlined above, data were collected using questionnaire and semi-structured interviews in two phases. The next section sketches the instruments used for data collection in detail. This includes the procedures taken in their design, refinement based on the pilot study findings and the contextual constraints that I faced in the fieldwork process.

5.6.1 Phase one: Questionnaire

Various types of questionnaires can be used in educational research based on the research questions, aims, sample size and the sort of data required. For instance, researchers can choose structured, semi-structured, open-ended or unstructured forms depending on the above factors (Cohen et al., 2007). Both structured (close-ended) and open-ended forms have been utilised in the construction of the questionnaire of the current study. These two types are merged into one form with the aim of capturing general and specific information about participants' attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning of children with SEN in inclusive settings. The structured form has been chosen because it is easy, quick to complete and straightforward to code in a computer

for analysis (Cohen et al., 2007). The open-ended form has been chosen because it offers an opportunity for participants to feel free in writing more information that may not be included in the structured form.

The overall aims of the questionnaire were to:

- Explore teachers' beliefs, emotions and intentions towards inclusive education
- Explore teachers' perspectives about barriers to inclusion and explore their views regarding any changes required to put inclusion into practice
- Establish some background information about the participants such as age, teaching experience, training and school location.

The next section will explain in detail the construction of the questionnaire.

5.6.1.1 Construction of the questionnaire

The purpose of "Teachers' Perspectives about Inclusive Education Questionnaire" (TPIEQ) was to gather broad-based data from a random sample of teachers. These data were used to develop questions for discussion and clarification in the interviews in the second phase. Three criteria were followed in the development of the questionnaire: first, a review of related literature on inclusive education (Ainscow, 1995, 1997, Bayliss, 1998, 2000; Hegarty, 2001; Pivik, McComas, Laflamme, 2002; Slee, 1993; 1998, to name but a few); second, a review of similar instruments designed for the same or similar purpose (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995; Avramidis et al., 2000; Forlin, 2001; Sharma & Desai, 2002; Stoiber et al., 1998, Wilczenski, 1992, 1995); third, the workability of the instrument for the target sample of respondents.

An invaluable insight was gained from reviewing the relevant literature about inclusive education. This revision informed me with clear ideas about the assumptions of inclusive education and its philosophy, the core principles and practices of inclusion, differences between integration and inclusion and the challenges of inclusive education. Additionally, this revision provided me with a thorough theoretical base that was used in constructing the questionnaire. Moreover, it was the primary source in the analysis of teachers' understanding of and attitudes and perceptions about inclusion. Also, revising some available questionnaires about teachers' attitudes, beliefs and perceptions, teachers' concerns, and their views about barriers and facilitators to inclusion helped me in wording and formatting the questionnaire used in the current study

The questionnaire (see Appendix I) consists of three main parts plus two open-ended questions as explained below.

Part 1: Background information

The questionnaire starts with a general introduction to the questionnaire that provides instructions on how to answer the questions. Teachers were asked to provide information about their age, gender, teaching experience, qualification, taught grade, in-service training, and teaching experience for children with SEN, type of school and school location.

Part 2: Attitudes towards Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES)

This part focused on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and it was set as follows:

- A Likert scale (twenty three items) measuring beliefs relative to inclusion (cognitive component). The cognitive component of attitudes is highly saturated with knowledge and beliefs aspects. Therefore, the scale measuring the cognitive component of attitudes was divided into four domains or thematic units. The items of the first thematic unit (1, 2, 7, and 9) focus on the basic principles underpinning the inclusive education philosophy (philosophy of inclusion). The items of the second unit (3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 14, and 15) focus on the factors that make inclusion feasible and school accessible to all children (inclusion requirements and processes). The items of the third unit (5, 8, 12, 13, 16, 17, 20, and 21) focus on the psychosocial outcomes of the process, and finally the items of the fourth unit (18, 19, 22, and 23) focus on the academic outcomes of the process. Additionally, there was a tabulated question which asked teachers about the most appropriate environment for teaching students with different special educational needs (namely, physical disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, and behavioural problems. Teachers were given six settings to select from (see Appendix I).
- A semantic differential scale consisting of bipolar adjectives (Osgood et al., 1957) measuring the respondents' emotional reactions when they had to deal with newly included SEN children (affective component). The scale consisted of five items and included adjectives such as “interested-uninterested”, “negative-positive” etc. with variable responses to different kinds of children (physically-disabled, visually-impaired, hearing-impaired, intellectually-disabled and children with emotional and behavioural difficulties).
- A Likert scale (thirteen items) measuring intentions (behavioural component). Teachers were provided with a general statement saying “If a child with special

educational needs is to be included in my classroom I will....” Then, thirteen items were provided and teachers were asked to indicate their agreement towards each.

Part 3: Barriers to Inclusive Education Scale (BTIES)

The third part of the questionnaire consisted of twenty Likert-type items with responses ranging from 1 to 5 and focused on teachers’ perceptions about barriers to inclusive education. Teachers were asked to indicate “the degree to which you think each item represents a barrier to inclusion based on your own experiences and/or beliefs”.

In all the above Likert scales, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with each statement by selecting among the following response choices: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. Also, these Likert-type items were converted to numerical rating for the purpose of statistical treatment. A numerical rating of 1 to 5 was assigned to each response with 5 being the highest (strongly agree) and 1 being the lowest (strongly disagree) for positive statements. The negative statements were scored in a reversed order; 1 for the highest positive response and 5 for the lowest response. The use of a five-point Likert scale allowed me to gauge participant’s agreement with a statement, and improve scale reliability.

In the semantic differential scale, the respondents had to circle the number closest to the adjective which best described their feelings on a scale from 1 to 5. The items were totalled to generate a composite score for each component; a higher score indicated positive attitude.

Finally, two open-ended questions were added before the end of the questionnaire. The first one asked teachers to list any additional barriers not included in the scale. And the second one asked teachers about their perceptions about the required changes in order to put inclusion into practice.

5.6.1.2 Translation of the questionnaire

To avoid misinterpretation of the language, and because the study was being conducted in an Arabic context, the English version of the questionnaire was translated into Arabic, the Egyptian mother tongue. The main priority of the translation process was to ensure that the items’ meanings are the same in both languages. No attempt was made to produce a word by word or literal translation.

To check the validity of the translation, a process of give-and-take between two professional translators was followed. The first was a friend of mine who works as an

assistant lecturer in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Egypt and he is studying for PhD in Exeter University and the second was me. I did the first translation into Arabic and gave it to him to translate it back into English. Both versions were checked and compared. Despite some differences, an agreement was reached at the end.

5.6.1.3 Checking reliability and validity of the questionnaire

In order to follow the standard measurement criteria for developing valid, reliable, and sensitive measures (e.g. Devellis, 2003; Oppenheim, 1996; Sax, 1997) the items of the questionnaire were subjected to successive cycles of development, field-testing, validation and revision. In early December 2006, the questionnaire was piloted on a sample of 56 teachers. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was utilised to test the reliability of the different scales and subscales of the questionnaire and it revealed statistically satisfactory levels as follows. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for the three components of attitudes in this investigation were $\alpha = 0.88$ for the cognitive component, $\alpha = 0.94$ for the affective component and $\alpha = 0.73$ for the behavioural component. Furthermore, as the affective scale measured teachers' feelings towards including children with different kinds of disability, it was recognized more appropriate to calculate the reliability of teachers' feelings towards each one of those disabilities. Reliability analyses resulted in the following alphas; (feelings towards including the blind, $\alpha = 0.92$; deaf, $\alpha = 0.91$; physical, $\alpha = 0.92$; intellectual, $\alpha = 0.94$, and behavioural, $\alpha = 0.93$). Finally, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the scale measuring the participants' perceptions about the barriers to inclusion was $\alpha = 0.74$.

Additionally, content validity was done through asking a review committee which consisted of academics with expertise in inclusive education as well as in measurement and research design to check that the statements of the questionnaire cover the variety of features under study. They were also asked to provide suggestions about the wording and the appropriateness of the items. This process resulted in the refinement of the questionnaire and resulted in some changes in wording as well.

5.6.1.4 Administration of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed in February of 2007 on a random sample of 350 primary, preparatory and secondary school teachers in different regular and special schools including urban and rural areas in two Egyptian governorates; Cairo and Daqahllia. 285 responses were returned representing a response rate of 81.42%.

5.6.2 Phase two: Interviews

Interviewing is considered to be one of the most appropriate methods employed in qualitative research. It is an essential method used to understand others because it allows the researcher to access individuals' beliefs, experiences, wishes, and intentions in their own words rather than the words of the investigator (Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Interview is also a very sensitive and powerful method for capturing the experiences and lived meanings of the subjects' everyday world. Radnor (1994) defines the interview as "*a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information (p. 59).*"

Interview is very widely used in social and educational research and there are different types of interviews. A commonly used typology distinguishes among structured, semi-structured, unstructured interviews (Flick, 2006; Robson, 2002). The structured interview has predetermined questions with fixed wording, usually prepared in advance which gives very little freedom to the interviewer to make modifications. In this sense, the structured interview lends itself to the collection of quantitative data.

On the contrary, the interviewer in the unstructured interview has a general area of interest but lets the conversation develop within this area. In between comes the semi-structured interview in which the interviewer has a general idea of where he wants the interview to go, and what should come out of it. The questions are more flexible, less structured, and they are formulated before the interview begins but the ordering of the main and support questions are varied as the interview unfolds (Radnor, 1994). The questions allow the researcher to guide the interview by exploring the issues or topics that are listed beforehand (Merriam, 1998). There is a scope for the interviewer to introduce new material into the discussion which had not been thought of beforehand, but which arises during the course of the interview (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995).

5.6.2.1 Using the semi-structured interviews in the current study

In the current study I used the semi-structured interview because it has many advantages over the other types. I opted to a semi-structured interview because it would allow me to obtain a comprehensive account from the participants about their views and opinions about what works well in the inclusion process, what needs to be changed or adjusted, and the reasons underlying their judgments. Such rich and precise data constitute invaluable feedback for those developing various elements of the new learning infrastructure, such as curriculum content, learning materials, or teacher training programs (Giannakaki, 2005).

Also, using the semi-structured interview would give my participants a voice with a certain degree of freedom to talk about what is centrally significant to them within the designed framework of my study. More specifically, using semi-structured interviews will enable me to “get inside” the perspectives of the interviewees and to generate hypotheses from such perspectives and understand what they think is important in their own situation (Radnor, 1994). I also chose this type of interview where I would be able to keep an open mind and remain open to ideas that I would encounter and that I would not have expected, as I would not be able to predict what would come from the participants’ responses. Finally, using interviews in this study can help identify new research questions not previously taken into account, by drawing on the participants’ views of what is being studied.

Most of the interview topics and questions were prepared in advance based on the initial analysis of the questionnaire and on the results of the interviews with two Egyptian teachers during the pilot stage of the interview protocol. However, in conducting the main interviews, the order and the wording of the questions were modified and some questions were added or varied as the interview unfolded to ensure the participants grasped the meaning. Additionally, some questions were added for later interviews as a result of earlier interviewees’ comments. And this means that the interview protocol did not appear to act as a “straitjacket” (Radnor, 1994) on the interviewees or me.

The interview was guided by a list of topics that covers the research questions (see protocol of semi-structured interview, Appendix II). The interview protocol covered five main topics or themes. These are: teachers’ understanding of inclusion, teachers’ understanding disability, skills and training, resources and support, teachers’ perceptions about barriers to inclusion and perceptions about change. The order they are presented in the protocol does not imply that interviews were conducted in the same order of the questions in the schedule since the participants’ abilities to articulate their views about certain issues provided outlets for some probes or minor questions to further the discussion.

5.6.2.2 Conducting the interviews

First of all, an official permission from the MOE proved essential to access the schools teaching staff and conduct research instruments. After getting the permission from the MOE, I personally contacted teachers at their schools and arranged a mutually convenient time to conduct the interviews. Various procedures were taken into account to ensure the success of the interviews. All interviews were conducted in Arabic in

convenient settings. I selected quiet and appropriate locations as far as possible, where interviews were conducted in the school, to encourage interviewees to feel free to expand upon their own answers. However, due to some cultural and religious norms that do not allow a man to be alone with a woman in a closed place, I had to conduct the interviews with female teachers in an open room or with the attendance of other teachers which might have influenced the opinions that were being expressed.

Twelve teachers, drawn from the questionnaire sample, with different views and experiences were interviewed using a sensitive portable digital recorder. For nine teachers, interviews took place in the schools in out-of-class times. Three interviews, upon informants' request, were done in their home to talk more freely away from the workplace. Each interview lasted approximately 40-60 minutes.

For administrative reasons, some interviews were cut up in the middle and completed afterwards either in the same or the following day. Also, seven interviewees were interviewed twice for more rich and in-depth information and discussion. I started each interview with a personal introduction and an overview of the study and its purposes and significance. I gave listening ears to the interviewees. Face-to-face position with the informants was also avoided. I could establish good rapport with respondents but this does not entail identifying completely with them (Cohen et al., 2007; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). These were very important aspects to encourage participants to cooperate with me.

After each interview, I did an initial analysis of the material and made notes on a covering sheet to act as a framework for subsequent questions. Also during the interviews I used to ask teachers to confirm if I have summarized and interpreted their responses accurately as a way of validating data. After I returned back to the UK, the recorded interviews were transcribed in full and the transcripts and my comments were exchanged through email with the interviewees for their scrutiny, confirmation and criticism as a means for achieving validation.

5.7 Sampling procedures

According to the phases of the study, sampling procedures (Figure 5.2) came in two stages, the questionnaire sample and the qualitative sample as follows:

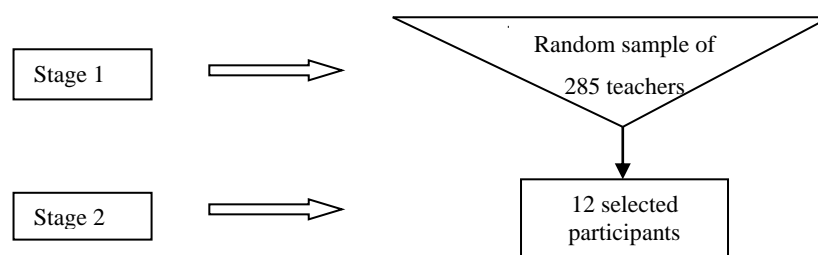


Figure 5.5 Sampling strategy of the study

5.7.1 Stage one: Questionnaire sample

The questionnaire sample was selected randomly, covering a variety of teacher qualifications, a range of teaching experience, in-service training, age, gender, phase taught, type of school, and school locations (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.2 The Demographics of the Study Participants

Variables	Respondent Subgroups	N	%
Gender	Male	175	61.4
	Female	110	38.6
Age	21-25	34	11.9
	26-30	51	17.9
	31-35	59	20.7
	36-40	69	24.2
	More than 41	72	25.3
Length of teaching experience	1-5	67	23.5
	6-10	55	19.3
	11-15	72	25.3
	16-20	54	18.9
	More than 21	37	13.0
Type of school	Regular	103	36.1
	Al-Azhar	93	32.6
	Special	56	19.6
	Regular+ mainstream unit	33	11.6
Phase taught	Primary	140	49.1
	Preparatory(middle)	100	35.1
	secondary	45	15.8
SE Qualifications	BC	21	7.4
	SE Certificate	39	13.7
	No qualification	225	78.9
SE Training	Yes	73	25.6
	no	212	74.4
SE Teaching experience	No Experience	195	68.4
	Have experience	90	31.6
location of the school	Rural	121	42.5
	urban	164	57.5
Total		285	100%

A total of 285 Egyptian teachers out of 350 teachers responded to the questionnaire. The sample included both genders: one hundred and seventy five (61.4%) were male teachers and one hundred and ten (38.6%) were female. In terms of age and the length teaching experience, teachers were divided into five groups for each variable as shown in Table (5.1). The variable type of school comprised 4 groups. From Table (5.1), it can

be seen that 103 (36.1%) were regular education teachers, 93 (32.6%) were Al-Azhar teachers, 56 (19.6%) were special education teachers and 33 (11.6%) were regular education teachers working in regular schools with mainstream units.

The variable qualification in SEN comprised 3 groups with the majority of teachers 225 (78.9%) have no qualification in the field of special education. Only 21 (7.4%) had a bachelor degree in special education and 39 (13.7%) had a special education certificate. And the variable phase taught comprised 3 groups; primary, preparatory and secondary covering 6-12, 13-15 and 16-18 age ranges respectively. As shown in Table (5.1), both teachers who have got in-service training in SEN (73, 25.6%) and those who have not got this training (212, 74.4%) were represented; though the first were a minority. Also, both experienced teachers in SEN (90, 31.6%) and non-experienced teachers (195, 68.4%) were represented as well. And finally, teachers were divided into two groups in terms of the location of the school; rural (121, 42.5%) and urban (164, 57.5%).

5.7.2 Stage two: Qualitative sample

Unlike quantitative methods, qualitative inquiry is interested in purposefully selecting and studying in depth relatively small samples of participants and, in some studies, single cases. Using purposeful sampling enables the researcher to select “*information rich*” (Patton, 1990, p. 169) cases, which can be studied in depth. Patton (1990) identifies information-rich cases as the ones that can provide an immense amount of information in relation to the purpose of the study. Similarly, Erlandson et al. (1993) suggested using purposive sampling in qualitative based inquiry to “*maximize discovery of the heterogeneous patterns and problems that occur in the particular context under study*” (p. 82). Also, possibilities for information richness could be provided by selecting participants for the study who would “*most help to answer the basic research questions and fit the basic purpose of the study*” (p. 83) and also bring a diversity of backgrounds, perceptions, and experiences to the study.

In the current study, a postscript to the questionnaire asked the respondents whether they would be willing to be interviewed (see Appendix 1). I received 35 initial agreements. This number was more than satisfactory, especially when we know that ‘interviews’ are quite rare in educational research in Egypt. This is due to the “*premium on saving face in the Egyptian culture which makes it difficult for some to honestly discuss social problems objectively, sometimes for fear of state authority*” (Cook, 1998, p. 98).

Despite this initial agreement, seven teachers withdrew either because of the religious and cultural sensitivity of male/female face-to-face interaction or because of other administrative obstacles. Out of the remaining 28 teachers, I selected twelve teachers purposely for the interviews using the maximum variation strategy. The sampling was designed to include a broad variety of informant attitudes and experiences based on training in SEN, a variety of teaching expertise to children with SEN, varied experiences of teaching at different grade levels (primary, preparatory and secondary and different school contexts (regular school, special school, regular school with mainstream unit and Al-Azhar institutions) (see Table 7.1).

5.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is defined by (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, P. 111) as “*the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data*”. In the current study, data were analysed in different ways according to data type as follows.

5.8.1 Quantitative data analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire (close-ended questions) were fed into the SPSS program (statistical package for social sciences) version 15.0 for window XP. Two kinds of statistical analysis were performed: descriptive and inferential. The descriptive statistics used included means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages, whereas the inferential statistics included analysis of variance and correlation analysis. The open-ended questions in the questionnaire were content analyzed.

5.8.2 Qualitative data analysis

The study involved an ongoing data analysis that began from the first day of the data collection process. In qualitative research, data collection is not something easily separated from data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore, I started data analysis with the first contact between me and the participants during the field study. After each interview I did an initial analysis of the material and made notes on covering sheets to act as a framework for subsequent questions. To achieve this initial analysis I used different techniques like: post-interview analysis notes, initial reading of transcripts, writing memos, and the creation of initial diagrams representing a participant’s attitudes and views (Maxwell, 1996). Due to the huge amount of data, this early analysis helped to reduce the problem of data overload by selecting out significant features for future interviews (Cohen et al., 2007).

On finishing my field study on early May 2007, I returned back to the United Kingdom and started the second phase of data analysis. I analyzed the data qualitatively using an interpretive analytic framework (Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994). At the first instance, I had prepared and managed the data based on the general guidelines proposed by many researchers (e.g. Cohen et al., 2007; Merriam 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Miles and Huberman (1994) for example, suggest three main stages in analyzing raw data in qualitative research. The first stage is data management, in which researchers organize data for systematic data collection, storage and retrieval. This process includes firstly editing, correcting, typing up notes, or transcribing and translating; and secondly, formatting, cross-referring, indexing, and paginating the data in notebooks or computers. The second stage is data reduction, in which researchers begin with reading documents or transcripts, and taking notes to facilitate thinking. The third stage is data display, which refers to the organized assembly of information to enable the drawing of conclusions.

I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews and I filled them in a notebook leaving space for coding, memos and notes. The created files contained basic information on each participant, labeled with pseudonyms, and all data gathered from interviews and field notes. These files helped me to sort out and reduce the data into a manageable size and provided me with an important starting point for analyzing emerging patterns and relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I read all the interviews to get a broader sense of the nature of the data. Using paper and pencil, I tagged hard copies of the interviews for aspects that appeared, at that stage, to be relevant and interesting, and to specify some of the major aspects that I was paying attention to and to ensure that these aspects were noted across all the interviews. At this stage of analysis, I read the hard copies of the interviews again.

It is worth mentioning here that although there are several computer software packages available for qualitative data analysis (Tesch, 1990); I opted for manual analysis by hand. I believe that computer-based analysis focuses more in linguistic patterning in reducing the data and that it becomes less meaningful compared to a manual analysis by the researcher through interacting directly with the data. Qualitative data contains direct quotations of the participants' views, feelings and knowledge (Patton, 1990) which are indiscernible by the computer programs.

After the completion of the management steps of dealing with the qualitative data, I started the coding process. Coding involves how the researcher differentiates and combines the data he has retrieved and the reflections he makes about this information. Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes usually are attached to “chunks” of varying size-words, phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected a specific setting (Cohen et al., 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

In the current study I followed the three analytical stages or levels of coding of qualitative data proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). Codes reflected different levels of analysis ranging from descriptive to the inferential. Some codes were created at the first round of reading and others arose in the second and some in the third reading of the transcripts.

At the first level, I went through the transcripts to divide the interviews into chunks through coding and labeling to assign units of meaning to the data. Assigning codes is a procedure for summarizing segments of data. These are descriptive codes and they entail little interpretation. The codes are used to retrieve and organize the “chunks” mentioned earlier. The organizing part will entail some system for categorizing the various chunks, so the researcher can quickly find, pull and cluster the segments relating to a particular research question, construct, or theme. Some chunks were given straightforward category labels or codes or more complex ones. The focus at this stage was placed not on the words but on their meanings and connotations since a word or a phrase does not contain its meaning as a bucket contains water, but has the meaning it does by being a choice about its significance in a given context.

At the second level, I grouped those summaries or chunks into a smaller number of sets, categories, or construct (Pattern coding). These codes are more inferential and explanatory. A coded segment of field notes illustrates an emergent pattern that the researcher has discerned in local events or relationships. They typically are used in the course of data collection, as the patterns become clearer. As the analysis proceeded, it was very important to formalize and systematize my thinking into a coherent set of explanations. One way to do that is to generate propositions, or connected sets of statements, reflecting the findings and conclusions of the study and this is the third level of analysis. This was done through building a list of broad themes under each a set of conclusions and findings have been stated. Codes were given operational definitions

and names that are closest to the concepts they describe. This was done for the purpose of easy reference.

It is worth mentioning that during the analysis process I revised, created, and eliminated codes. Moreover, throughout the revision, I was particularly attentive to possible new codes that would reflect the participants' views and attitudes that could be inferred from the interviews. Since the generated codes were initially descriptive, I continuously re-examined the data in an effort to make them more conceptual. The main aim of the analysis was to understand the research situation to find what theory accounts for it as it is and to make sense of the data and to make meaning as Merriam (1998) suggested. Care was taken not to impose my expectations on the data and to let the categories or the themes to emerge from the data.

5.9 Trustworthiness of the current study

The trustworthiness of a qualitative study reflects issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability (Seale, 1999). However, it has been argued that qualitative research, which is based on different assumptions about reality and a different worldview, should consider validity and reliability from a perspective congruent with the philosophical assumptions underlying the paradigm. This may even result in naming the concepts of validity and reliability differently (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam 1998).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness consists of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These terms replace the quantitative concepts of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity, respectively. More importantly, they believe that the issue of trustworthiness can enhance confidence in a particular study. Several points have been suggested by qualitative researchers to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the findings. These include careful attention to the study's conceptualization, and the way the data are collected, analysed and interpreted (e.g. Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maykut & Morehouse 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2000). In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data and findings of the current study several things have been done.

Early on, during my three month engagement in the field, I succeeded in building trust, assuring my participants' privacy and confidentiality, and convincing them that they would be listened to without any prejudice (Radnor, 1994). Teachers were informed about the general aims and processes of the research and were kept informed throughout the research. They were assured that the data collected through the interviews would not

be used in a way that would have damaging consequences. Moreover, they were assured that their names and schools would remain anonymous and their right to withdraw from participation was ensured as well.

Additionally, I used some strategies suggested by Merriam (1998), namely triangulation and member-checks, to ensure the credibility of the research (the naturalist researcher's term for internal validity). According to Denzin (1988), triangulation is the most widely stressed validation technique in the educational research literature. Stake (1995) also suggests that triangulation can ensure accuracy and alternative explanations so that it is a crucial means of validating interpretive research.

Although different types of triangulation are available in the literature (Cohen et al., 2007; Denzin, 1988) the most common involves checking information from different sources or methods for consistency of evidence across sources of data which is known as methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation was utilised in the current study through using a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques (questionnaires and interviews) so as to maintain a balance between qualitative in-depth data, and quantitative data to establish the extent to which insights were transferable to a wider population (Erlandson et al., 1993). The richness of the data collected by different methods provided opportunities to sort and examine data from various aspects.

Another reason for using triangulation is to break down the traditional gap between normative and interpretative approaches and to increase the trustworthiness of the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, dependence on a single method would be risky as it only provides a limited view of the complexity of human behaviour and the situations experienced by human beings. Furthermore, research methods act as filters through which the environment is selectively experienced and they are never atheoretical or neutral in representing the experienced phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2007).

Member checking is another crucial method for establishing credibility in qualitative research. I used member checking to reduce the impact of subjective bias, while establishing trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), it is a method *"...whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stake holding groups from whom the data were originally collected"* (p. 314). They also argued that if the researcher is to be able to claim that his/her reconstructions are recognizable to audience members as adequate representation of their own realities, it is essential that they are

given the opportunity to react to them. In the current study, informal member checking occurred during and after interviews as I used to summarise what has been said and ask participants to confirm if the notes accurately reflect their position.

Additionally, after I finished transcription and coding of the interviews I used member checks again through email exchange due to time and distance constraints. The interviewees reviewed my interpretations and constructions of the data by reading my narratives based on our interviews to verify that I had adequately represented their views and experiences. This was done out of the belief that *“if the purpose of a piece of qualitative work is emic, that is, if the intent is to give an account of how the participants in a situation see it, then checking the account with the participants(or with a selected informant) is a vital step”* (Philips, 1987, p. 20). This helped to keep the interviewees in touch with the research, an essential aspect of qualitative research. To summarize, member-checks were used throughout the study between the participants and myself to make sure firstly, that the data accurately expressed what they believed, and secondly, that the interpretations were presented accurately.

Moreover, peer debriefing was used to evaluate the data and enhance its credibility (Schwandt, 2000; Mertens, 2005). In the current study, this was done by asking two of my colleagues who were researchers at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Exeter to code three interviews and see whether they gave the same codes for the same segments of the data. Mainly, their role was to question the themes and issues I pulled, or potentially overlooked, from transcribed interview data. In terms of recurring themes, agreement was reached between the researcher and the peer debriefers after several discussions and meetings.

Furthermore, verbatim transcriptions deriving from the interviews were made to avoid making claims without any evidence in the findings. Also, a re-coding technique was used where data were several times checked and cross-checked to enhance possibility of new understandings. This was also done through discussions with my supervisors.

Finally, I tried to meet the criterion of transferability by providing rich description of my data and context. Merriam (1998) argued that transferability becomes possible if rich descriptions of data are produced. Merriam explains that such descriptions allow readers *“to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred”* (p. 211). As Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted, the reader, not the researcher, is responsible for establishing if (and what) element of a study can be applied to another context. As a researcher, I provided

detailed descriptions of the context of the study, participants, data collection methods and procedures and data analysis. I also used quotes to make sure that the reader has access to part of the original data.

However, we should take into account that an interpretive study does not seek to generalize the findings but provides perspectives that are contextually bound, unique and ever changing over time. In this respect, it is impossible to exactly replicate an interpretive study, as replication of this study might just produce another version of the results due to the peculiarities of the context and the particular circumstances, as well as the researcher. However, the findings of the study might be transferable and be made use of by other educational researchers or practitioners in similar contexts.

5.10 Ethical considerations

There are many ethical principles that should be taken into account while conducting any kind of research. Research ethics are very important and provide researchers with some guidelines on how to conduct research in a morally acceptable way (Pring, 2000). The main ethical considerations include negotiating access, gaining informed consent from participants, offering the right to withdraw, protection of identity and confidentiality (Cohen et al., 2007; Christians, 2000; Pring, 2000). Additionally, it is important within qualitative research design to involve participants from the beginning of the process, in order to ensure an equal balance of power between them and researchers. It has been noted that this engagement and collaborative work between participants and researchers can overcome any ethical problems (Burgess, 2002). The mentioned ethical considerations have been addressed in the current study as described below.

5.10.1 Gaining access and informed consent

Usually gaining access should precede the process of attaining consent from participants, as no researcher can demand access to an institution, an organization or to materials (Bell, 1993). At the very beginning, I had to clear official channels by formally requesting permission to carry out my field work from the gatekeepers in Egypt. Therefore, I sent an official letter to the Egyptian cultural counselor and director of the educational and cultural bureau in London, my sponsor, to ask for permission from the MOE in Cairo to use a group of teachers as participants in the research. These official letters included details of the purposes of the study, the number of participants requested, the data collection processes, a letter from my supervisors stating their

agreement to conduct the fieldwork at that time and my promise to keep the participants anonymous and the data confidential. By turn, the MOE sent a letter to the Director General of Education in Cairo and Daqahllia Governorates in order to give me permission to enter schools to obtain data from teachers.

By the time I arrived Egypt, I made personal contact with the head teacher of each school to facilitate access to the school. However this personal contact was so valuable and provided an easy route into the schools, as Celnick (2002) suggests, proper procedures needed to still be followed. Therefore, once I entered any school I gave the head teacher a copy of the official approval to validate my access to the school. Then, the head teachers introduced me to the teachers.

Actually this introduction does not necessarily guarantee that all teachers were ready to participate in the research. Teachers' acceptance to participate in the research is an ethical issue that must be addressed as well. This is known in ethics literature as informed consent. Informed consent is the procedure according to which individuals choose whether to participate in any investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decision (Cohen et al., 2007). In this study, participants were fully informed of the research purposes. The procedures followed in each stage of data collection were explained, and the participants were told that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time they wish. Also, they were asked to stop me at any time that they felt that further clarification was needed.

5.10.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

Once the researcher gets the consent for participation he or she should keep the identity of participants anonymous and confidential. The essence of anonymity is that the identity of the participants or their organizations is not identifiable by the information given (Cohen et al., 2007; kvale, 1996). In the current study, the identity of the schools and the teachers were not identified. In doing this, direct references are not made but those involved were given pseudonyms (alphabetical letters like: A, F, G, H, I, K, M, S, T, U, Y and Z) to ensure that their rights were protected and their anonymity was preserved.

The issue of anonymity is highly correlated with the issue of confidentiality which connotes the idea that attribution of comments, in reports or presentations, should avoid identifying the sources of the data. This is very important to maintain the privacy of the participants. Although researchers know who has provided the information or are able

to identify participants from information given, they will in no way make the connection known publicly (Cohen et al., 2007). Thus, all participants in this study were given a promise that the information obtained from them would be kept confidential to maintain their privacy. Furthermore, I asked for the participants' permission to use the findings for future research and possible publication.

5.11 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodological approach adopted in the current study. Research paradigms were discussed with a detailed review of the interpretive paradigm and its philosophical assumptions, followed by a rationale for using it in the current study. The research design was discussed and justified. A description of the research procedures; data collection methods, sampling and data analysis was presented. Issues about trustworthiness of qualitative research and ethical considerations were also presented. To conclude, I can argue that even though I have justified my choice of the research paradigm, methodology, methods and the sample used, I do not claim that the methodology used was the perfect for this study, since no methodology, whatever it is, has ever claimed to be "the method" (Modood, 1999). Though I did my best within the web of constraints I faced, I have to acknowledge that there are still problems and limitations in the study (see Chapter 9), which I have to bear in mind in the analysis and in reporting my findings in the next chapters.

CHAPTER SIX

Chapter Six: Findings of the Questionnaire Data Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is mainly based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the questionnaire data. The questionnaire was meant to be exploratory in nature to provide a brief overview (snapshot) of inclusion and act as a springboard for the interviews. The SPSS software programme (v.15) was used in the analysis of close-ended questions, whereas open-ended questions were analysed qualitatively.

I will begin by the analysis of teachers' general attitudes to be followed by a detailed analysis of the three components of attitudes: cognitive, affective and behavioural. Finally, teachers' perceptions about the barriers to the implementation of inclusion will be presented in addition to the qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions.

6.2 Analysis of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion

This section of the chapter aims to illuminate the first research question: What are Egyptian teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with SEN in regular schools?

Given that attitudes towards inclusion are complex and multifaceted, it was recognized that they cannot be captured by a single score. As explained in the literature review (see Chapter 4), the multi-component model of attitudes was used in the current study because it holds the potential of illuminating attitudes clearly than the single-component model. The analysis will focus on the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitudes in order to get a detailed and clear picture of teachers' attitudes and to highlight certain issues regarding inclusion. Teachers' general attitudes will be presented first to be followed by analysing the relation between the three components and a detailed analysis of these components.

6.2.1 Teachers' general attitudes towards inclusion

The results of this study suggest that teachers in Egypt tend to hold mildly favourable attitudes towards inclusion. Considering the range of the scales (from 1-5 in all the scales measuring the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitudes) it could be argued that the mean scores of the participants showed mildly positive attitudes towards inclusion in all the three components of attitudes as high mean scores indicate positive attitudes (Table 6.1)

Table 6.3 Means and SD of the three components of attitudes

Variable	N	M	SD
Cognitive component	285	.361	.44
Affective component	285	3.23	.87
Behavioural component	285	4.23	.54

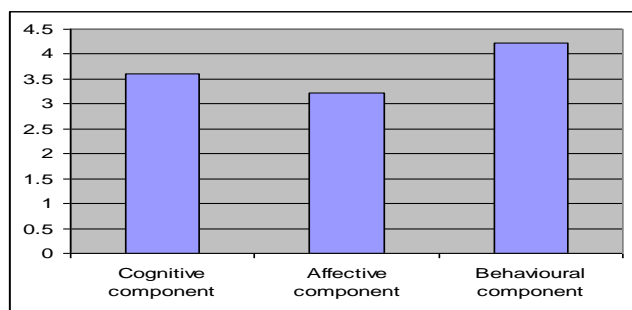


Figure 6.6 Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion

Examination of Table (6.1) and Figure (6.1) above indicates that the majority of Egyptian teachers tend to hold positive beliefs about inclusion (cognitive component $M=3.61$, $SD=.44$), feel moderately positive about including students with SEN in the regular classrooms (affective component $M=3.23$, $SD=.87$) and have strong positive intentions towards the implementation of inclusion (behavioural component $M=4.23$, $SD=.54$). Before going on in analysing the three components in detail, I will present the relation between these components first.

6.2.2 Correlation between components of attitudes

The relationship between the three components of attitudes was investigated using Person product-moment correlation coefficient. This analysis (Table 6.2) revealed that all the components of attitudes were mildly correlated with each other based on Cohen's (1988) guidelines for the interpretation of the correlation values. There was a small positive correlation between the cognitive component of attitudes and the affective component ($r=.28$, $p < .01$), with high levels of cognitive beliefs associated with high levels of emotional response. Also, there was a medium positive correlation between the cognitive component of attitudes and the behavioural component ($r =.42$, $p < .01$), with high levels of cognitive beliefs associated with high levels of positive intentional behaviours. Finally, there was a small positive correlation between the affective component and cognitive component of attitudes ($r =.29$, $p < .01$), with high levels of emotional response associated with high levels of positive intentional behaviours.

Table 6.4 Correlations between mean scores of the three components of attitudes

Component	cognitive	Affective	behavioural
Cognitive	1.000	.285(**)	.424(**)
Affective		1.000	.293(**)
behavioural			1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In conclusion, this correlational analysis provided results which are consistent with the main assumptions of the three component model of attitudes adopted in the current study. Additionally, the analysis suggests that those respondents who perceive themselves as possessing positive beliefs about inclusion appear to hold slightly positive emotional responses and moderate positive intentional behaviour towards the inclusion of students with SEN in the regular school.

6.2.3 Cognitive component of attitudes

The cognitive component of attitudes is highly saturated with knowledge and beliefs aspects. As stated in Chapter 5, the scale measuring the cognitive component of attitudes is divided into four domains or thematic units: philosophy of inclusion, inclusion requirements and processes, psychosocial outcomes and academic outcomes. Additionally, there is a tabulated question asking teachers about the most appropriate environment for teaching children with different special educational needs.

For the purpose of analysis, the four domains of the cognitive component of attitudes and the tabulated question will be analysed in detail rather than depending only on the total score of this component. It is worth mentioning that however the frequencies and percentages of the five points of the scale (SA, A, U, D and SD) are represented separately in the tables, they were collapsed together in the analysis this way: (SA+A) and (D+ SD) for the purpose of simplicity and clarity. Also, in all the following tables, where numbers and percentages are used together, numbers come first and then percentages.

6.2.3.1 Philosophy of inclusion

The aim of this domain was to investigate teachers' beliefs about the assumptions and the basic principles of inclusion. According to the results shown in Table 6.3 below, Egyptian teachers' participating in this questionnaire tend to hold positive beliefs about the philosophy of inclusive education as they had a mean of overall acceptance score of 3.49 out of 5.00 for the aims and the philosophy of inclusion.

Table 6.5 Mean and SD of philosophy of inclusion

N	Mean	SD
285	3.49	0.65

More specifically, as shown in Table 6.4 below, the majority of teachers support children’s right to be educated and effectively participate in the inclusive classroom. Just over half of the sample (51.6%) believes that all SEN students have the right to be educated in the regular school like their typically-developing peers. Further, most of them (58.6%) believe that SEN students should be given every opportunity to function effectively in inclusive classrooms.

Also, this was supported by a belief among about half of the teachers (49.8%) that inclusion is mainly about valuing and respecting children regardless of any differences. On the contrary to such positive beliefs, teachers hold a contradictory belief that inclusion could be injustice for the other children. Some teachers (40.7%) believe that inclusion represents injustice to other students while a similar percent of them (41%) refused such belief. These contradictory beliefs require further investigation into teachers’ understanding of inclusion. We need to understand why teachers believe in SEN children’s right to be educated in the regular school and at the same time believe this will be injustice for typically-developing children?

Table 6.6 Frequencies and percentages of the philosophy of inclusion

N	Items	S A	A	U	D	SD
1	Children with SEN have the right to be educated in the regular school	62 21.8	85 29.8	40 14.0	58 20.4	40 14.1
2	Children with SEN should be given every opportunity to function in inclusive classroom	85 29.8	82 28.8	32 11.2	54 18.9	32 11.2
7	Inclusion means that all children are valued, regardless of their differences	71 24.9	71 24.9	25 8.8	68 23.9	50 17.5
9	Inclusion represents injustice to other children	45 15.8	71 24.9	52 18.2	63 22.1	54 18.9

6.2.3.2 Inclusion requirements and processes

This section of the questionnaire aims at investigating teachers’ views regarding the processes and requirements of inclusion in terms of adapting the teaching strategies and the classroom structure to meet the diversity of children. Examination of Table 6.5 below indicates that the majority of teachers believe positively in the different processes of inclusion as the mean of their scores was 4.03 and the standard deviation was 0.53. This means that they broadly agree with the statements mentioned to them about the inclusion requirements and processes.

Table 6.7 Mean and SD of inclusion requirements and processes

N	Mean	SD
285	4.03	0.53

According to teachers' responses showed in Table 6.6 below, teachers believe that inclusion is a comprehensive process that requires many things; physical, organizational, and educational. Most of the teachers (82.5%) believe that there should be special areas in the classroom to accommodate SEN children. Reflecting a sense of ethical responsibility, most teachers (86%) believe that all labels should be abandoned in the inclusive school to avoid feeling of stigma. Also, most of them (89.8 %) believe that all services; health, physical, occupational, or speech therapy should be available in inclusive schools to make inclusion responsible, effective and beneficial to SEN children.

Table 6.8 Frequencies and percentages of the Inclusion requirements and processes

N	Items	S A	A	U	D	SD
3	Inclusion requires special areas in the classroom suitable for use with SEN children (computer, reading, listening)	121 42.5	114 40.0	22 7.7	20 7.0	8 2.8
4	labels should be abandoned in inclusive schools	176 61.8	69 24.2	16 5.6	15 5.3	9 3.2
6	Services needed by children with SEN should be available (e.g. health, physical , occupational, or speech therapy) in the regular school	189 66.3	67 23.5	11 3.9	12 4.2	6 2.1
10	Teachers should use varied teaching methods to meet diversity in inclusive classes	163 57.2	101 35.4	11 3.9	5 1.8	5 1.8
11	Inclusion necessitates adapting course content for the included children	117 41.1	121 42.5	19 6.7	12 4.2	16 5.6
14	Examination system needs to be adapted for SEN included children.	128 44.9	108 37.9	17 6.0	14 4.9	18 6.3
15	Teachers in regular schools have the necessary knowledge and skills for teaching SEN children	44 15.4	52 18.2	21 7.4	85 29.8	83 29.1

Furthermore, most teachers believe that inclusion requires some educational and instructional adaptations to the educational process. The most important educational adaptations for them were: varying teaching methods to meet students' needs and diversity (92.6%), adapting course content (83.6%) and adjusting examination systems (82.8%).

However, the results indicated that the majority of teachers (58.9 %) believe that teachers in regular schools do not have the essential knowledge and skills for teaching children with SEN. This reflects, in a sense, their lack of self-confidence to meet the needs of children with SEN in regular classroom simply because they do not have the appropriate skills. I guess this may be because of teachers' understanding or conceptualizations of SEN and disability. Such blurred findings need to be explored further in the qualitative study.

6.2.3.3 Psychosocial outcomes

The aim of this section was to explore teachers' views regarding the psychosocial benefits of inclusion for children with and without SEN. The results showed that most teachers were very positive on accepting and agreeing on the psychosocial benefits of inclusion for all children since the mean of their scores was 3.60 and the SD. was 0.68 (see Table 6.7 below).

Table 6.9 Mean and SD of psychosocial outcomes

N	Mean	SD
285	3.60	0.68

Specifically, teachers' responses showed in Table (6.8) below, indicate that the majority of teachers (68.8 %) believe that inclusion affects the social development of SEN children positively. This social and emotional development was presented in many ways like developing self-esteem (65.3%); increasing children's friends (70.2%) and getting a feeling of belonging in the classroom (60.4%). Consistently, most of the teachers (63.2 %) believe that grouping SEN children in a special school or class has a negative effect on their social and emotional development. Also, almost half of the teachers (48.4%) disagree that inclusion could make children feel inferior.

Moreover, the majority of teachers (67.7%) believe that inclusion is socially beneficial for all children either with or without SEN because inclusion helps all children to learn about and accept differences. And finally, more than half of the sample (53.3 %) believes that inclusion will not increase disciplinary problems in the regular classes.

Table 6.10 Frequencies and percentages of psychosocial outcomes

N	Items	S A	A	U	D	SD
5	Inclusion has a positive effect on the social development of SEN children	104 36.5	92 32.3	39 13.7	27 9.5	23 8.1
8	Children with SEN have a sense of belonging in the regular classroom	80 28.1	92 32.3	46 16.1	35 12.3	32 11.2
12	Inclusion puts SEN children at risk of developing sense of inferiority by comparison with peers	36 12.6	55 19.3	56 19.6	85 29.8	53 18.6
13	Inclusion increases the SEN children circle of friends	104 36.5	96 33.7	41 14.4	27 9.5	17 6.0
16	Inclusion gives an opportunity for all children with and without SEN to learn about and accept differences	83 29.1	110 38.6	50 17.5	26 9.1	16 5.6
17	Grouping children in a special class has a negative effect on their social and emotional development	94 33.0	86 30.2	36 12.6	45 15.8	24 8.4
20	Inclusion promotes self-esteem of SEN children	80 28.1	106 37.2	41 14.4	38 13.3	20 7.0
21	Inclusion of SEN children adds to the disciplinary problems in regular classes	31 10.9	42 14.7	60 21.1	85 29.8	67 23.5

6.2.3.4 Academic outcomes

This section aims at investigating teachers' perceptions about the academic benefits of inclusion for children with and without SEN. According to teachers' mean scores (see Table 6.9 below), it could be said that teachers participating in the current questionnaire tend to hold mildly favourable beliefs about the academic benefits of inclusion as they had a mean of overall acceptance score of 3.28 out of 5.00 for the items representing the academic benefits of inclusion.

Table 6.11 Mean and SD of academic outcomes

N	Mean	SD
285	3.28	0.75

However teachers' responses (Table 6.10) regarding the academic benefits of inclusion were slightly positive, they were not as strong as their responses regarding the social benefits (see Table 6.8 above). This means that it is still debatable, in terms of teachers' understanding in the current study, whether inclusion is academically beneficial for SEN children or not. Approximately about half of the teachers (45.2%) believe that the regular school is academically beneficial for SEN children because their needs can be met there. Consistently most of the teachers (60.7%) believe that children with SEN will not learn better in the special school.

Furthermore, 48.8% of the teachers think that inclusion will not worsen learning problems of SEN children. However, some teachers were concerned about the effect of inclusion on typically-developing children. About 45.6% of the teachers believe that inclusion will not affect the typically-developing children learning negatively. However, more than one third of teachers (35.5 %) believe that inclusion will affect the normal children learning negatively.

Table 6.12 Frequencies and percentages of academic outcomes

N	Item	S A	A	U	D	SD
18	Inclusion worsen the learning problems of SEN children	38 13.3	53 18.6	55 19.3	76 26.7	63 22.1
19	Including SEN children in regular classes impede the learning of other students	37 13.0	64 22.5	54 18.9	73 25.6	57 20.0
22	SEN children would learn better when grouped together in a special school	31 10.9	34 11.9	47 16.5	81 28.4	92 32.3
23	Academic needs of children with SEN can be met in the regular classroom	52 18.2	77 27.0	61 21.4	46 16.1	49 17.2

The findings of the cognitive component as a whole indicate that however teachers believe that SEN children have the right to be educated in regular schools, they emphasised more on the physical environment requirements and resources and the processes of inclusion. Thus, if the physical requirements and resources either physical or personnel are not available, some SEN children will not be able to go to the regular school. Putting the discourse this way does not reflect the inclusive education ethos; rather it reflects the integration ethos. Furthermore, teachers believe that inclusion will be socially beneficial to children with and without SEN. However, they were concerned about the academic outcomes. Obviously, these findings are not clear cut. The inconsistency noted in some responses and the difficulty of explaining some findings due to the use of the generic term SEN in this section necessitate further investigation in the qualitative study.

6.2.3.5 Teachers' views about placement

This section of the cognitive scale aims to highlight teachers' views about placement of children with different SEN. Actually the analysis of teachers' views about placement has two main objectives: to explore their general views about different placements or provisions to see whether is it in the segregated direction or in the integrative one, and to explore their perceptions about the most suitable placement for every individual category or type of disability.

Table 6.13 Frequencies and percentages of teachers' views about Placement

SEN/provision	home	Residential care unit	Special school	Special class in RS	Inclusion +out-class support	Inclusion +in-class support
	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
Visual impairment	4 1.4	42 14.7	112 39.3	41 14.4	44 15.4	42 14.7
Hearing impairment	2 .7	20 7.0	149 52.3	56 19.6	28 9.8	30 10.5
Physical disability	7 2.5	35 12.3	63 22.1	51 17.9	62 21.8	67 23.5
Intellectual disability	6 2.1	79 27.7	144 50.5	34 11.9	13 4.6	9 3.2
Behaviour problems	9 3.2	68 23.9	77 27.1	40 14.0	52 18.2	39 13.7
total	28	244	545	222	199	187
average*	1.98	17.2	38.24	15.56	13.96	13.12

* Mean of percentages

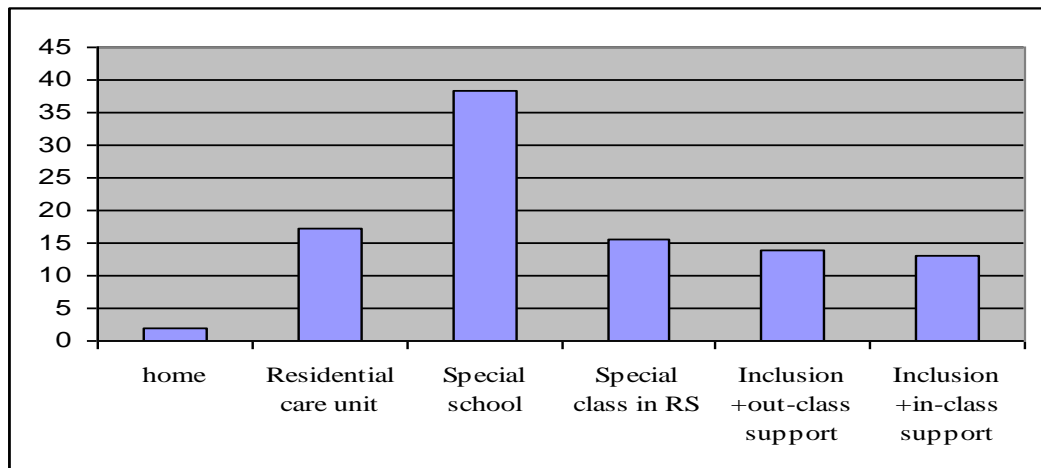


Figure 6.7 Teachers' general views about the different placements

The analysis of teachers' perceptions of placements across disabilities showed that the most appropriate placements selected by the teachers were distributed across the entire continuum of services (see Table 6.11 and Figure 6.2 above). The most preferred choice for the majority of teachers was the special school option as 38.24% of them selected this option. The residential care units (residential special schools) came second (17.2%). The most segregated or an exclusionary setting (home) was chosen least often (1.98 %). All of the options in regular education settings or integrative options (Special class in regular school (15.56%), inclusion + out-class support (13.96%) and full-time inclusion with in-class support (13.12%) accounted for 42.64% of the placements chosen.

This analysis showed that teachers' perceptions about placement are in favour of the special school model. However, if we consider all the options in the regular school as representing a continuum of integrative settings I could argue that this option would be the most appropriate according to teachers' responses. Nonetheless, this was not completely consistent with their perceptions about the individual categories of disabilities (Figure 6.3).

When analysing data by category of disability, the perceived most appropriate placements varied considerably depending upon the disability category. Inclusion in the regular classroom plus in-class support was chosen most often for the category of physical disabilities (23.5%) only. Special education setting was chosen most often for the categories of visual impairment (39.3%) hearing impairment (52.3%), intellectual disabilities (50.5%) and behavioural problems (27.1%). However, if we consider all the options in the regular school as representing a continuum of integrative settings I could argue that this option would be the most appropriate according to teachers' perceptions

for the categories of physical disabilities (62.3%), visual impairment (44.5%) and behavioural problems (45.9%).

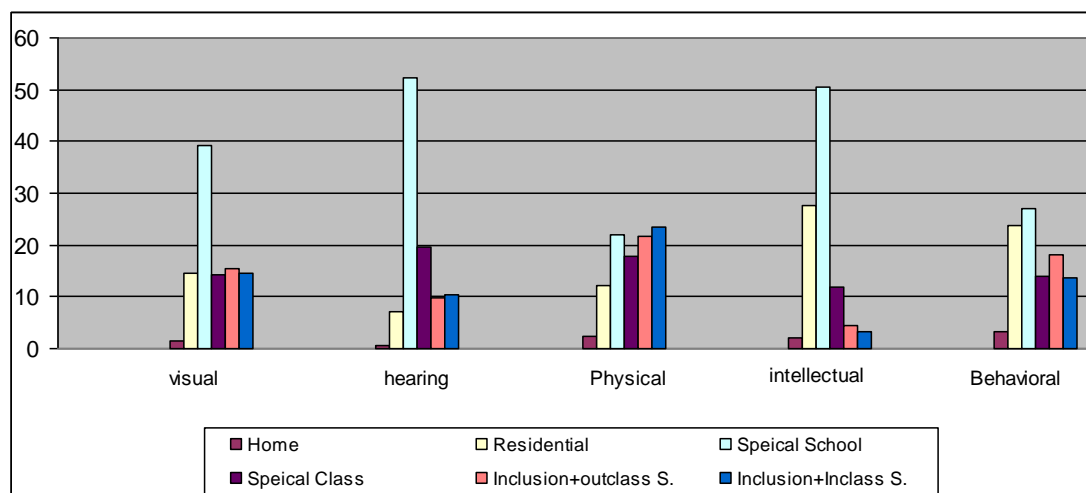


Figure 6.8 Teachers' views about the different placements distributed by type of disability

On the contrary, the majority of teachers preferred segregated settings for children with intellectual disabilities as (50.5%) of teachers preferred the special school and 27.7% preferred the residential care unit. Additionally, teachers tend to prefer the special school for children with hearing impairment as just over half of the sample (52.3%) preferred the special school for them, however about (39.9%) preferred the integrative settings.

Surprisingly, teachers' perceptions about the suitable placement for children with behavioural problems varied very considerably. As 27.1% of teachers chose home and residential care units (3.2 and 23.9 % respectively) and also 27.1% chose special school and about half of the sample (45.9%) chose integrative settings. These results showed that teachers tend to prefer the integrative setting for children with physical disabilities and visual impairment, and to prefer special school for children with hearing impairment and intellectual disabilities. However, they were less decided about behaviour problems.

Such results gave rise to many questions; why teachers were predominantly positive towards teaching some children with SEN in integrative settings and were predominantly less favourable towards teaching some other children in such environments? Is it because of their understanding of disability in general or their understanding of each type of disability in particular, or because of their perceptions about the requirements of teaching each category of those children? Or is it because of their perceptions about teaching and learning? Or is it because of their views of the

impact of inclusion on other kids, or their image of themselves as teachers? Actually all those issues could be possible explanations for such results but they cannot be captured through the analysis of the questionnaire as they need further investigation in the qualitative study.

6.2.4 Affective component of attitudes

The aim of this section was to explore teachers' feelings and emotional responses towards the inclusion of children with different SEN. Descriptive statistics showed that teachers' feelings or emotional responses towards children with different SEN varied considerably depending upon the disability type (see Table 6.12 and Figure 6.4)

Table 6.14 Means and SD for the affective component of attitude

Type of disability	Mean	SD
visual impairment	3.65	1.05
hearing impairment	3.30	1.14
physical disability	3.88	1.06
intellectual disabilities	2.51	1.24
behavioural problems	2.80	1.23

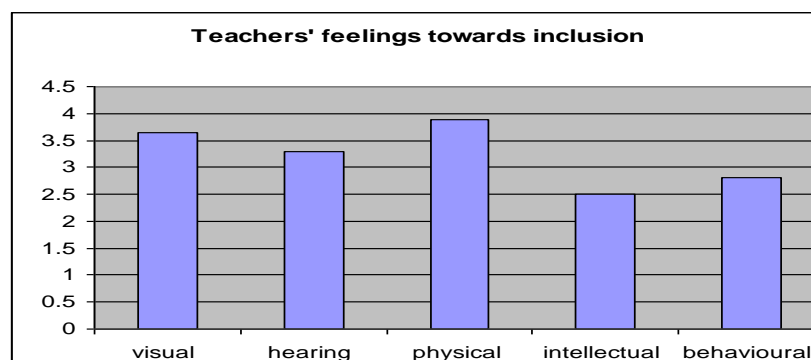


Figure 6.9 Teachers' feelings towards including children with different SEN

Examination of the above mean scores (Table 6.9) indicates that generally, teachers showed moderate positive feelings towards inclusion. However, their feelings varied widely according to disability type. Teachers felt more comfortable including children with physical disabilities (M= 3.88, SD=1.06), followed by blind children (M= 3.65, SD= 1.05) and deaf children (M= 3.30, SD= 1.14). Also, they felt less comfortable including children with behavioural difficulties (M= 2.80, SD= 1.23) and children with intellectual disabilities (M=2.51, SD= 1.24). Interestingly, teachers' responses towards deaf children were less favourable than their responses towards blind children; however both of them have a sensory difficulty. Possible explanation for this finding could be the

role of each sensory in learning, teachers' abilities and skills to teach each category, and teachers' experiences in teaching those children.

Additionally, it could be concluded from this section that teachers felt that inclusion could work in their schools, but were not convinced that "all children" should be included in regular classrooms and this mainly contradicts the philosophy of inclusion where all children should have the right to full education in regular schools. Interestingly, teachers' attitudes were less favorable about teaching children with intellectual disabilities; however this is the main category that the Egyptian ministry of education tries to apply inclusion to. Such results gave rise to many questions about teachers' understanding of disability in general and their understanding of behavioral problems and intellectual disabilities in particular and the effect of teachers' attitudes on the implantation of inclusion. All these points will be thoroughly highlighted in the qualitative phase.

6.2.5 Behavioural component of attitudes

This section aims at investigating teachers' intentions towards including children with SEN in their classes and their willingness to change their teaching styles to accommodate all children.

Examination of Table (6.13) below indicates that most teachers show very strong behavioural intentions towards the implementation of inclusion. There is a tendency among the majority of teachers to make adaptations to their classroom practices in order to support children's academic and social development. The majority of teachers (86.7%) were willing to change their teaching approaches and methods to be able to accommodate SEN children. This change has many facets like: using different ways in evaluation, adapting tests, adjusting the time and pace of a lesson, providing individual instruction for SEN children and encouraging social interaction among all children.

Additionally, the majority of teachers (90.2%) showed readiness to develop their skills to be able to teach children with SEN and also most of them (84.9%) were ready to participate in in-service training programmes to develop their teaching skills. Interestingly, nearly all teachers (96.5%) showed ethical responsibility to avoid using labels in the inclusive schools. Similarly 92.3% of the teachers showed willingness to respect and appreciate all children regardless of the differences among them. However, their readiness to accept the actual responsibility of teaching those children was not that strong (68.4%). Finally, teachers showed a high tendency for co-operation, for the sake

of children with SEN, either with the school administration (87.3%) or with the parents of SEN children (93.4%).

Table 6.15 Frequencies and percentages for the behavioural component of attitude

N	Items	S A	A	U	D	S D
1	change my teaching strategies to accommodate children with SEN in my classroom	139 48.8	108 37.9	18 6.3	12 4.2	8 2.8
2	Provide individual instruction for included children	99 34.7	112 39.3	29 10.2	28 9.8	17 6.0
3	Adjust the time and Pace of a lesson for included children.	100 35.1	129 45.3	27 9.5	22 7.7	7 2.5
4	Adapt tests for included children	127 44.6	112 39.3	20 7.0	16 5.6	10 3.5
5	Use individualized/different criteria when evaluating SEN children	117 41.1	124 43.5	26 9.1	13 4.6	5 1.8
6	encourage social interaction among all students in my classroom	146 51.2	104 36.5	18 6.3	7 2.5	10 3.5
7	be willing to participate in in-service training on teaching students with SEN	132 46.3	110 38.6	20 7.0	10 3.5	13 4.6
8	engage in developing the appropriate skills to teach students with SEN in the regular classroom	143 50.2	114 40.0	18 6.3	5 1.8	5 1.8
9	accept responsibility for teaching students with SEN in my classroom	99 34.7	96 33.7	30 10.5	28 9.8	32 11.2
10	avoid using labels to the most extent possible	202 70.9	73 25.6	4 1.4	5 1.8	1 .4
11	Respect and appreciate all children regardless of the differences among them	185 64.9	78 27.4	10 3.5	6 2.1	6 2.1
12	co-operate with the school administration in the decisions made concerning the SEN children in my class	146 51.2	103 36.1	18 6.3	9 3.2	9 3.2
13	Co-operate with the parents of SEN children	200 70.2	66 23.2	15 5.3	1 .4	3 1.1

6.3. Factors affecting teachers' attitudes

This part of the analysis sought to shed some light on the second research question: what factors have shaped Egyptian teachers' attitudes towards inclusion?

In order to examine the relationships between the attitudes components' (cognitive, affective, and behavioural) scores and the possible factors, one-way ANOVA was carried out, using attitudes components' scores as dependent variable. Gender, age, length of teaching experience, type of school, phase taught, qualification in special education [SE], in-service training in SE, and teaching experience in SE and the location of the school were the independent variables. This yielded no results of statistical significance for age, length of teaching experience, and location of the school. While the other factors revealed significant differences (see Table 6. 14) and those significant findings will be highlighted below.

Table 6.16 Means, SD, and F-values for attitudes components and the demographic variables

Variables	Cognitive				Affective			behavioural		
	N	M	SD	F	M	SD	F	M	SD	F
Gender										
Male	175	3.68	.43	11.87**	3.38	.84	14.46***	4.29	.49	5.42*
Female	110	3.50	.44		2.99	.85		4.14	.61	
Type of school										
regular	103	3.56	.48	1.84 (NS)	3.29	.88	4.73**	4.19	.57	4.35 **
Al-Azhar	93	3.68	.49		3.14	.87		4.12	.59	
special	56	3.54	.43		3.01	.86		4.38	.42	
Regular+ unit	33	3.67	.30		3.67	.63		4.43	.43	
Phase taught										
Primary	140	3.59	.45	1.10 (NS)	3.36	.89	6.68**	4.19	.55	1.84 (NS)
preparatory	100	3.66	.42		3.23	.76		4.32	.54	
Secondary	45	3.56	.45		2.82	.90		4.18	.51	
Qualification in special education										
No	225	3.60	.46	.341 (NS)	3.19	.86	4.44*	4.18	.56	5.98 **
BC	21	3.63	.29		3.70	.89		4.37	.47	
SE certificate	39	3.66	.37		3.18	.79		4.46	.40	
in-service Training in special education										
Yes	73	3.64	.37	.440 (NS)	3.36	.84	2.17 (NS)	4.43	.40	13.86 ***
No	212	3.60	.46		3.18	.87		4.16	.57	
Teaching experience in special education										
Yes	90	3.56	.37	1.43 (NS)	3.22	.84	.008 (NS)	4.37	.47	8.16**
No	195	3.63	.47		3.23	.88		4.17	.57	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. (NS)= not significant

- **Gender**

ANOVA results (see Table 6.14) indicated that statistically significant differences were found between male and female teachers in all the three components of attitudes. In the cognitive component ($F(df(1,283)) = 11.87$), $p < .01$, in the affective component ($F(df(1,283)) = 14.46$), $p < .001$. and in the behavioral component ($F(df(1,283)) = 5.42$), $p < .05$. Descriptive statistics showed that the mean scores of male teachers in all the three components of attitudes; cognitive, affective and behavioural ($M=3.68$; 3.38 ; 4.29 , $SD=.43$; $.84$; $.49$ respectively) were significantly higher than that of female teachers ($M=3.50$; 2.99 ; 4.14 ; $SD=.44$; $.85$; $.61$). This means that male teachers tend to hold significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusion than female teachers.

- **Type of school**

A one way ANOVA test was conducted to explore the impact of the type of school on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The results of ANOVA (Table 6.14) indicated that there were significant differences between teachers working in different types of schools (regular schools, Al-Azhar schools, special schools, and regular schools with mainstream units) in the affective component ($F(df(3,281)) = 4.73$), $p < .01$ and in the behavioral component ($F(df(3,281)) = 4.35$), $p < .01$. However, there were no significant differences between all teachers in the cognitive component ($F(df(3,281)) = 1.84$). Post Hoc comparisons using the Scheffe test indicated that teachers working in

regular schools with mainstream units held significant positive feelings towards inclusion ($M=3.67$, $SD= .63$) than teachers working in special schools ($M=3.01$, $SD= .86$) and Al-Azhar teachers ($M=3.14$, $SD= .87$). However, there were no significant differences between teachers in regular schools and their colleagues in regular schools with mainstream units in this component. Regarding the behavioural component of attitudes, the results of post-hoc Scheffe test indicated that teachers working in regular schools with mainstream units held significant positive behavioral intentions ($M=4.43$, $SD=.43$) than Al-Azhar teachers ($M=4.12$, $SD=.59$). However, there were no significant differences between the other groups in this component.

A part of these results was not expected specifically with Al-Azhar teachers. Given Al-Azhar teachers have some sort of experience in teaching some SEN children, it was expected that they will hold more positive attitudes towards inclusion or at least to have the same attitudes as teachers in regular schools with integration units. This point will be highlighted in the qualitative study. In our case where differences exist between the attitudes of teachers working in different types of organizations, a possible explanation could then lie in the very culture that characterizes each of these different settings. Such cultural influences could only be unveiled through the qualitative study.

- **Phase Taught**

The results of ANOVA (Table 6.14) indicated that there were significant differences between primary, preparatory and secondary teachers in the affective component of attitudes (F (df (2,282) = 6.68), $p < .01$) but not in the cognitive component (F (df (2,282) = 1.10) or the behavioral (F (df (2,282) = 1.84). Post-hoc comparisons using the Scheffe test indicated that the mean score for primary teachers ($M=3.36$, $SD=.89$) and that of preparatory teachers ($M=3.23$, $SD=.76$) were significantly higher than the mean score of secondary teachers ($M=2.82$, $SD=.90$). No significant differences were noted between primary and preparatory teachers. This result means that teachers in elementary stages either primary or preparatory hold more positive attitudes towards inclusion than secondary teachers. This result, however it is in the affective component only, is compatible with the holistic nature of primary education and is compatible with the literature which showed that primary teachers are more positive towards inclusion.

- **Qualification in special education**

A one way ANOVA test was conducted to explore the impact of the level of qualification in special education on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The results of

ANOVA indicated that there were significant differences between teachers who have no qualification in SE, teachers who have BC, and teachers who have special education certificate in the affective component of attitudes ($F(df(2,282) = 4.44)$, $p < .05$) and the behavioral component ($F(df(2,282) = 5.98)$, $p < .01$) but not in the cognitive component ($F(df(2,282) = .341)$). Post-hoc comparisons using the Scheffe test indicated that teachers who have BC degree in SE hold more positive feelings towards inclusion ($M=3.70$, $SD=.89$) than those who have no qualification in SE ($M=3.19$, $SD=.86$) and those who have special education certificate ($M=3.18$, $SD=.79$), while there were no significant differences between those who have special education certificate and those who do not have qualification in SE in the affective component. Additionally, the post-hoc comparisons for the behavioural component indicated that teachers who have special education certificate ($M=4.46$, $SD=.40$) hold more positive behavioural intentions than those teachers who have no qualification in SE ($M=4.18$, $SD=.56$). However, there were no significant differences between teachers who have BC degree and those who have special education certificate in this component. Also, there were no significant differences between teachers who have BC degree and those who have no qualification in SE.

- **In-service Training**

A one way ANOVA test was conducted to explore the impact of in-service training in special education on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The results of ANOVA indicated that there were significant differences between trained and non-trained teachers in the behavioral component of attitudes ($F(df(1,283) = 13.86)$, $p < .001$) but not in the cognitive ($F(df(1,283) = .440)$), or the affective component ($F(df(1,283) = 2.17)$).

Examination of the mean scores of trained and non-trained teachers (see Table 6.14) indicates that trained teachers hold more positive attitudes in the behavioral component of attitudes ($M=4.43$, $SD=.40$) than the non-trained teachers ($M=4.16$, $SD=.57$). Although such result should be taken with caution, there is a possible explanation for it. Given the behavioral component of attitudes is concerned with intentions to take actual actions to put inclusion into practice, like changing in lesson and time pace or teaching according to individual educational plans, it may be expected that training could increase teachers' understanding of such actions and this could explain why teachers showed more positive behavioral intentions.

- **SE Teaching experience**

Another one way ANOVA test was conducted to explore the impact of teaching experience of SEN children on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The results of ANOVA indicated that there were significant differences between teachers who have no experience of teaching SEN children and teachers who have such experience in the behavioral component of attitudes ($F(df(1,283)) = 8.16, p < .01$). However, there were no significant differences between them in the cognitive component ($F(df(1,283)) = 1.43$) or the affective component ($F(df(1,283)) = .008$).

Examination of the mean scores of teachers with and without experience of teaching SEN students (Table 6.14) indicates that, on the first hand, experienced teachers hold more positive behavioral intentions ($M=4.37, SD=.47$) than the non-experienced teachers ($M=4.17, SD=.57$). On the other hand, there were no significant differences between all of them in the cognitive and the affective components of attitudes.

Interestingly, most significant results were noted only in the affective or the behavioral components and not in the cognitive one. This could mean that all teachers share similar beliefs about the philosophy of inclusion, its requirements and its outcomes. Or, this could mean that those teachers do not have solid knowledge about the practicalities of inclusion which means that they think mythically about inclusion.

Also, it raised a big question mark about the quality of training and professional development programs in Egypt. The non-significant differences in the cognitive domain of attitudes in general and in the affective one related to training and teaching experience of children with SEN could mean that these training programs make no difference to teachers' beliefs or feelings about inclusion. Consequently, this assumption leads to another complex issue related to the nature of attitudes and to what extent attitudes can be changed by training or intervention programs.

Based on the above concerns, these findings should be interpreted carefully as with a large enough sample ($N= 285$), quite small differences can become statistically significant. Also, these findings indicate that there is a high probability that the results obtained happened by chance and that the social and personal factors investigated cannot be used as strong predictors of attitudes. Although statistical findings provide us with some directions or with a general overview of the issue under investigation, we should not "*rely too heavily on statistical significance- many other factors also need to be considered*" (Pallant, 2005, P. 219). Given the exploratory nature of the current

study, there is no need for more sophisticated statistical analysis. However, all these emergent issues will be thoroughly considered in the next qualitative study.

Also, these findings gave rise to another question about the validity of the psychological model of measuring attitudes which depends mainly on self-report scales where social desirability is inescapable. The assumption here is that the psychological model of measuring attitudes may not be enough on its own to explore teachers' attitudes towards complex issues like "inclusion" and "SEN" which necessitates using different qualitative approaches to explore such complex issues.

6.5 Analysis of teachers' perceptions about barriers to inclusion

This section of the chapter aims to illuminate the third research question: What are Egyptian teachers' perceptions about the barriers to inclusive education? It also serves to provide a background picture of the contextual conditions in which Egyptian teachers work.

Teachers' responses to this section are analysed and ranked according to the means from the highest to the lowest. For the purpose of presentation, the focus is placed on the barriers that received the highest and the lowest means. Interestingly, the 20 listed barriers got 15 ranks according to the means (see Table 6.15 below) as some barriers got the same mean. Therefore, all the barriers that got the same mean are presented as one rank.

Table 6.17 Means, SD and ranks of teachers' perceptions about barriers to inclusion

N	Barriers	M	SD	Rank
1	Classrooms do not accommodate children with disabilities	4.36	.84	1
2	Little Knowledge	4.33	.92	2
3	Lack of experience regarding Inclusion	4.32	.93	
4	Lack of resources and appropriate educational materials	4.32	.93	
5	Inadequate pre-service preparation of teachers	4.21	.97	3
6	Rigidity in curriculum design	4.21	2.6	
7	Inadequate in-service training for teachers	4.21	1.06	
8	Inadequate funding	4.18	1.04	4
9	Limited time for teachers to give sufficient attention to children with SEN	4.15	1.03	5
10	Absence of regulations that support inclusion	4.14	.99	6
11	the absence of educational policy for inclusion in Egypt	4.12	.99	7
12	Overload on the part of teachers	4.05	1.02	8
13	Behaviour management	4.05	1.03	
14	Class size or large teacher/pupil ratio	3.96	1.07	9
15	Teachers' negative attitudes	3.95	2.6	10
16	Non-acceptance by parents of children without SEN	3.87	1.10	11
17	Resistance among administrators	3.82	1.12	12
18	Non-acceptance by other children	3.77	1.13	13
19	Teachers' lack of regard for diversity of interests and abilities of children	3.74	1.40	14
20	Non-acceptance by parents of SEN children	3.61	1.22	15

It can be observed from Table (6.15) above that the structure of the classroom which cannot accommodate children with SEN received the highest ratings as a barrier to inclusion (M=4.36). The next highly ranked barrier includes three different things with the same mean (M=4.32); limited knowledge, teachers' lack of experience and lack of resources in the school and the classrooms. Similarly, the third barrier includes and intensifies a variety of other barriers like inadequate training either pre or in-service and rigidity of the curriculum with all of them have the same mean (M=4.21). On the contrary, non-acceptance by other children (M=3.77), teachers' lack of regard for diversity of interests and abilities of children (M=3.74), and non-acceptance by parents of SEN children (M=3.61) received the lowest ratings.

Although all these barriers will affect the movement towards the implementation of inclusion, it has been observed that teachers tend to throw blame on barriers that they have no control over (e.g. classrooms, lack of resources, insufficient training, etc.) more than on factors coming from within themselves (e.g. teachers' negative attitudes, teachers' lack of regard for diversity of interests, etc.). Such finding has echoes with the idea of attributions that are protective of the individual's self-esteem.

Interestingly, teachers' ranking of these barriers that emphasised on issues related to knowledge, experience and training could explain in a way the non-significant differences in the cognitive component of attitudes. The assumption here is that while none of the independent factors has affected teachers' beliefs towards inclusion, teachers still believe that the issues of training, knowledge and experience are the main barriers to inclusion, why? There is no clear answer because of the limited nature of the questionnaire. Therefore, there is a need for further investigation in the qualitative study.

6.6 Content analysis of the open-ended questions

Two open-ended questions were posed to the participants at the end of the questionnaire asking them about any other barriers to the implementation of inclusion and what need to be done or changed in order to put inclusion into practice in Egypt? They did not raise any new barriers. However, they suggested several things that could help in achieving inclusion in Egypt. The following themes were identified:

- **School and classroom physical context**

Seventy nine teachers (27.71 %) asked for changing the physical structure of the schools and the classrooms to be able to accommodate children with SEN specifically children with physical disabilities. They asked for reconstructing the playground areas,

school entrance, hallways, stairs or lifts and ramps. Additionally, the layout of the classroom, furniture, light, and boards were also highly recommended to be reconstructed to be more accessible to all children.

- **Class size**

A common response among 74 teachers (25.96%) was that class size should be reduced to fewer than 25 children if children with SEN were to be included successfully. Specifically, they stressed that not only the total number of children to be reduced but also the number of SEN children in the classroom should be three students or less. Additionally, they recommended including only one type of disability in the classroom. They reasoned that by lack of resources and teachers' inability to cope with children with different disabilities in the classroom. Moreover, there was a common complaint of the participants that increasing the number of students in the classroom would rather make it impossible for teachers to use collaborative activities like pair work and group work or even to find sufficient time to care for SEN children.

- **Resources**

For inclusion to be effective and "responsible", 71 teachers (24.91 %) asked for more educational resources. Specifically, they recommended providing the schools with all the different educational facilities that could support the education of each individual child with SEN. Furthermore, some teachers complained that the regular schools lack many of the basic educational resources and if inclusion happens now it will not work at all.

- **Teacher training**

Sixty three teachers (22.10 %) recommended that all teachers should be given pre-service and in-service training prior to the implementation of inclusion. Additionally, they recommended that this training should be a continuous process after the implementation to keep teachers informed with up to date information about inclusion and the different approaches of teaching in general and teaching children with SEN in particular.

- **Collaboration among teachers and specialists**

Sixty one teachers (21.40 %) were very keen to get experience and more information from their colleagues in special schools. They highly recommended collaboration and communication among all teachers for the sake of SEN children.

- **Curriculum and examination system**

Fifty three teachers (18.59 %) argued that for inclusion to be successful; the curriculum has to be reshaped to accommodate all children. Not only had they recommended changing the content of the curriculum, but also the aims of the curriculum. Additionally, they asked for adapting teachers' instructional ways to be suitable to the needs of SEN children. And finally, they asked for adopting individual differentiated examination system to suit the needs of all children.

- **Social beliefs about SEN**

Forty nine teachers (17.19 %) argued that there are some social beliefs which still common among some people about children with SEN that have to be changed to support the movement towards inclusion. For example, teachers mentioned that there are some parents who hide their children who have disabilities because they are worried about stigma. Some other teachers mentioned that children with intellectual disabilities are viewed negatively in the society and some people believe that those children are uneducable. Teachers called for raising the level of awareness among all people using all the possible facilities.

- **Challenging the competitive and bureaucratic educational system**

Thirty teachers (10.52%) commented that inclusion is a very good idea at least in its ethical message which complies completely with the teachings of our religion (Islam). Teachers wrote that our religion asked us to show sympathy, caring, mercy and passion towards people of need. However, they argue, inclusion will not be a reality, as one teacher wrote (inclusion will be an idea in the air), unless or educational system has been reformulated in a different way. They complained that in such a very competitive educational system, children with special needs will not find a room to compete and by the time they will withdraw or they will be excluded. Red tape and bureaucracy which dominates the scene of our education system at the moment do not represent a suitable culture for inclusion. Inclusion requires a more tolerated culture in which all children and teachers are appreciated.

The analysis of the open-ended questions indicates that teachers' emphasis on changing school and classroom physical context seems to be consistent with their acceptance of including children with physical disabilities. This indicates that teachers are not satisfied with the schools' and classrooms' structure because children with physical disabilities who are already included in regular schools face difficulties in getting to

schools. But what I can not understand is; what does the change of school structure do for the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities, whom are seen by all teachers as the least acceptable category for inclusion. The other thing which I cannot understand is if training is an important aspect of change, as 63 teachers (22.10 %) called for more training, why teachers' cognitions and feelings have not been affected by training (see section 6.3 above). Where is the problem? Is it within the teachers' context? Is it within the training context? Is it within the methodology context? These are all questions to be addressed in the qualitative study.

Finally, teachers' responses to the barriers scale and their responses to the open-ended questions as well justify largely the inconsistency observed in their responding to the statements of the attitudes scales. In responding to the attitudes scales, teachers had in their minds the practicality of the message carried by the statements for their practical classroom situations and school life. This highlights the role of context in shaping teachers' view of the world. This indicates that teachers' attitudes are not theoretically held assumptions or dispositions about a certain phenomenon. Rather, they are practice-generated and context-aware.

6.7 Conclusion

The results of the study indicated that Egyptian teachers tend to hold mildly favourable attitudes towards inclusive education. Also, however teachers believe in inclusion in principle, their views and attitudes varied widely according to disability type. This finding is in line with previous studies that were conducted in Egypt (e.g. Sadek & Sadek, 2000). Also, the results tend to comply with general western attitudinal studies (e.g., Avramidis et al., 2000; Gilmore, Campbell, & Cuskelly, 2003; Villa et al., 1996). Moreover, teachers continued to support the option of special education placements for some children with disabilities.

However, the present study cannot ascertain why teachers' responses were predominantly positive towards teaching some children with SEN while they were less positive towards some others. Therefore, the next qualitative phase would aim to determine teachers' understanding of SEN so that a reasonable explanation behind teachers' responses can be better understood.

Moreover, the analysis of the factors affecting teachers' attitudes provided a blurred picture of the effect of these factors on attitudes. Most differences were noted only in the affective or the behavioural component of attitudes. Such findings gave rise to many questions about the psychological model of measuring attitudes, the quality of teacher

training programmes in Egypt, the efficacy of the reductionist approach to the study of inclusion which emphasizes mainly on training and resources, and the quality of teaching experience of children with SEN. Also, the analysis of the barriers scale and the content analysis gave rise to questions about the cultural understanding of inclusion and SEN. All these issues are to be explored thoroughly in the qualitative analysis.

Finally, it should be taken into account that my attempt to give voice to teachers cannot capture their many subtle, yet critical, conceptions about inclusive practices through the questionnaire. Although the use of a questionnaire provided a quantitative approach for examining diverse inclusion beliefs, this method did not fully assess the complexity of inclusion, SEN and attitudes. The questionnaire acted as a passkey to teachers' lives, especially if we know that the research context in Egypt is questionnaire-based. So, it was quite beneficial to start from the familiar and move towards the unfamiliar, which is the use of semi-structured interviews.

Chapter Seven presents the second phase of the study. The focus in chapter seven will be a deep investigation into teachers' constructions of and attitudes towards inclusion. In addition, I will try to reflect on all the issues and questions which the survey succeeded in provoking. What is the Egyptian teachers' understanding of inclusion? What is the Egyptian teachers' understanding of SEN? To what extent can the quality of training and teaching experience affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusion? What are the other contextual or cultural factors that could affect teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion? However, the key findings presented here will be analysed and further discussed, along with those which will be obtained from the qualitative study, in the upcoming chapters.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Chapter Seven: Teachers' Voices Heard: Findings of the Qualitative Data Analysis

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained in the second phase of the study. Results include the qualitative data collected from the interviews with 12 teachers who had previously participated in the first phase of the study. The focus of this chapter is to address the following research questions:

1. What are Egyptian teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with SEN in regular schools?
2. What factors have shaped Egyptian teachers' attitudes towards inclusion?
3. What are Egyptian teachers' perceptions about the barriers to inclusive education?
4. What are Egyptian teachers' perceptions about the necessary changes to put inclusive education into practice?

The aim is to present teachers' attitudes and perceptions without extensive discussion. Chapter 8 presents an interpretation and discussion of the findings. This chapter is based on the findings of the analysis of the semi-structured interviews. The interviews were transcribed in full and analysed in terms of emergent themes on the one hand, and the research questions on the other. The analysis yielded five topics into which all the data could be grouped. These acted as main themes under which categories, sub-categories and codes could be grouped. Table (7.1) provides a short profile for the interviewees. Anonymity of the informants was preserved by using alphabetical letters to refer to them.

Table (7.1) shows that the interviewees represent a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Male and female teachers with or without qualification, training and experience in special education are represented. Also, teachers working in different types of schools and in different grades are represented. However, due to accessibility constraints, male teachers outnumbered the females.

Table 7.18 Teachers interviewed in phase two of the study

Participants	Gender	Qualification in SE	In-service training	SE teaching experience	Type of school	grade
A	female	BC in SE	Yes	Yes (short)	Special	Primary
F	male	No	No	No	regular	Primary
G	male	BC in SE	Yes	Yes (short)	special	Primary
H	male	No	No	No	Al-Azhar	Preparatory
I	female	No	Yes	Yes (short)	Regular + mainstream	Primary/ preparatory
K	male	NO	No	No	Al-Azhar	Preparatory/secondary
M	male	NO	No	No	Al-Azhar	Preparatory/secondary
S	male	MA in SE	Yes	Yes (long)	Regular + mainstream	Primary/ preparatory
T	female	SE certificate	Yes	Yes (long)	special	Secondary
U	male	NO	No	No	Al-Azhar	Secondary
Y	male	SE certificate	Yes	Yes (long)	special	Primary/preparatory
Z	female	NO	No	No	regular	preparatory

The presentation of the findings in this chapter attempts to capture the essence of teachers' perceptions of and attitudes towards inclusion in their words. The categories or themes are presented accompanied by actual quotes by teachers to substantiate the issues under investigation. However, where there is agreement amongst the informants, selective quoting is followed. The key themes were:

- Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion
- Socio-cultural context
- Teachers' perceptions about professional development
- Teachers' perceptions about barriers to inclusion
- Teachers' perceptions about change

Each theme comprises a number of categories. Each category is made up of a series of codes. Most of these categories and codes are interrelated and sometimes are in conflict with each other. After a brief explanation of the main themes there is a detailed analysis of the data where the categories subsumed under each theme are examined more thoroughly.

7.2 Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion

The theme 'teachers' attitudes towards inclusion' emerged out of the data analysis and is focused on three main categories. These main categories represent the three dimensions of the multi-dimensional model of attitudes adopted in the current study;

beliefs, feelings and intentional behaviour. Regarding beliefs, there are three subcategories; teachers’ conceptions of inclusion, teachers’ perspectives about the outcomes of the process of inclusion and teachers’ understanding of SEN/disability. The second category covers both teachers’ positive feelings and their fears. And finally, the third subcategory covers teachers’ commitment and readiness to support the process and their concerns or reservations. The theme is ‘bounded’ by conditions which relate to the other themes presented below. The three main categories are not unitary and contain codes and sub-codes which are sometimes in conflict with each other. The relationships between these codes are complex and represented diagrammatically in Figure (7.1).

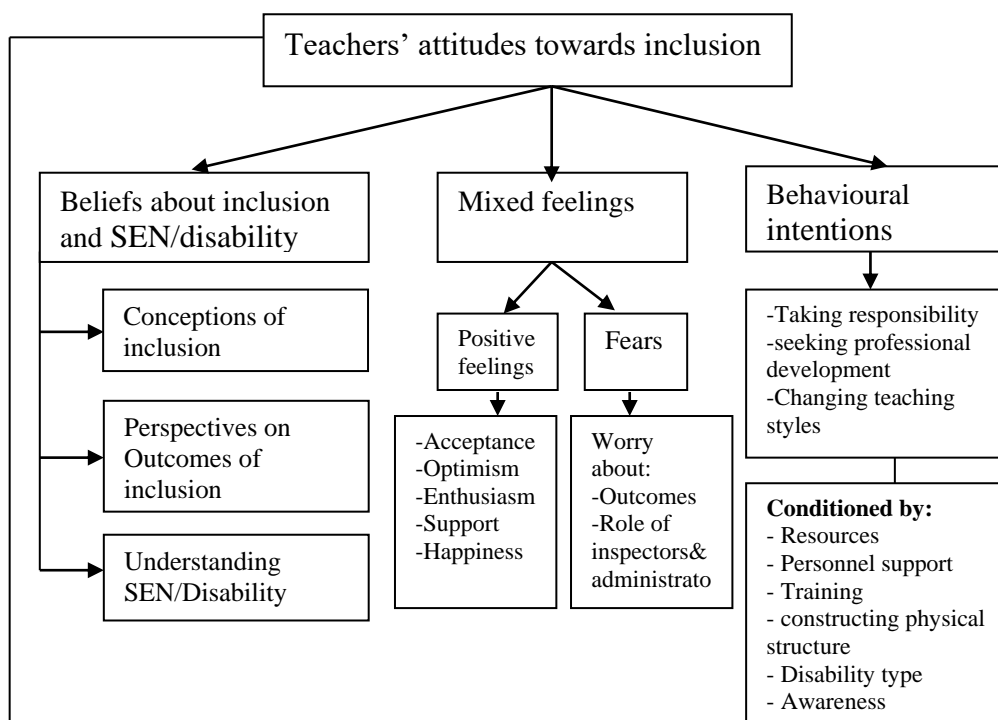


Figure 7.10 Diagrammatic outline for teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion

7.2.1 Teachers’ beliefs about inclusion and SEN/disability

The data analysis indicated that teachers hold a range of mixed beliefs about the nature and philosophy, outcomes, advantages and disadvantages, of inclusive education and about the nature of SEN/disability which represents the heart of inclusion. For the purpose of clarity, these beliefs will be analysed in three points as follows.

7.2.1.1 Conceptions of inclusion

Teachers’ responses to what they know about inclusion varied widely, reflecting from little understanding of inclusion to suggesting quite reasonable familiarity with the notion of inclusion. These views ranged between defining inclusion as educating students together in terms of placement and participation, discussing inclusion within

the rights discourse and finally viewing inclusion as a process or a long journey towards achieving social inclusion (see Figure 7.2). Each of these points will be highlighted by turn.

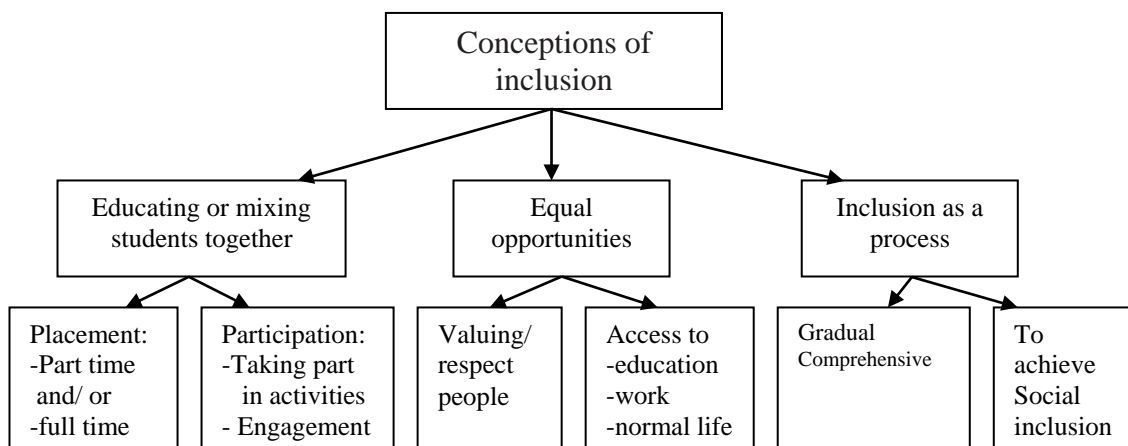


Figure 7.11 Diagrammatic outline for Teachers’ perspectives on the nature of inclusion

- **Educating students together: placement and participation**

Perhaps the most frequently mentioned view about inclusion was educating or mixing students together either on a full-time or part-time basis. This view is exemplified by the following responses.

“Inclusion is mixing and educating students with SEN with their normal peers in regular schools” (T/K).

“Inclusion means that children with SEN are included or mixed with their normal peers in study and activities in the regular school or in the same educational environment but this will depend on the child’s SEN As it may be full inclusion for some students like physical disabled and part time inclusion for others particularly mentally retarded (T/Z).

In addition to mixing students together, which reflects an orientation towards locational placement, some teachers were aware that educating students together is more than placement. They had a strong belief that inclusion is mainly about “*participation in different classroom activities*” (T/M). Teachers mentioned varying degrees of participation within the context of inclusion which ranged between simply “taking parts in some activities” to “full engagement in school life”. The data suggested that there were differences in the degree to which teachers could accept and support participation based on the type of disability and on the nature of the activity or the taught subject. While they strongly supported inclusion in social activities like playing, lunch time, etc. they were not in a full agreement about participation in academic activities.

“they[students with SEN] should participate in all social activities and the break but in academic subjects I prefer to withdraw them to a special class or a resource room to help them to understand the subject according to their abilities and not to affect the other students” (T/U).

Another teacher stated that *“it depends on his disability...children with physical disabilities can participate effectively in academic activities but for students with intellectual disabilities I think they can only participate in social activities... because we are looking to socialize them aren't we?” (T/A)*

The deep meaning of participation, engagement and belonging to school community, was highlighted by two teachers. A preparatory Al-Azhar teacher said *“inclusion means that the child with SEN participates in all activities and participates positively in the classroom and feels that there is no difference between himself and all the other students” (T/H).*

Another SE teacher said *“To place a child with SEN in a regular school without active participation in all activities, I could say this is a superficial inclusion...in the eyes of the public people we have made inclusion but in reality this is not inclusion. Inclusion means that the child feels beloved in the school and feels that he is one of the group” (T/G).*

It could be suggested from the teachers' responses that “educating students together” means two things. Firstly, it means “placing” typically developing children and their peers with SEN in the same environment (location) either on a full time or part time basis. And here comes the question to what extent can we put them together? For the majority of teachers those children should be placed with their peers on a part time basis based on their disability and the suitability of the activity. Secondly, it is a matter of “participation”. The notion of participation is a step further after placing. However this reflects an adherence to a functional integration approach, still teachers are not in full support of the idea of participation in academic activities, i.e. “curricular inclusion”. Also, participation as “taking part in” reflects integration ethos while participation as “engagement and belonging” reflects inclusion ethos. The theme that comes out of the analysis is why do teachers believe that some children are unsuitable for inclusive settings? This point is quite related to teachers' understanding and conceptions about disability and SEN which will be highlighted later.

- **Inclusion within the rights and equal opportunities discourse**

The second view which was common among most teachers was that inclusion is about rights and equal opportunities. Equal opportunities is an important and complex issue

and based mainly on personal, religious and contextual factors and this point will be highlighted in the discussion chapter.

Based on an Islamic religious belief about equality among all people, teachers believe that as we are all equal, so all children with SEN should be given every opportunity in this life like any other person. Most teachers have a strong belief that inclusion means *“the child live and coexist in normal environment and community and have equal educational opportunities as his normal peers with access to all educational facilities and to have the same working opportunities to be able to live a normal life as any other person in the community without any stigma. And I think this what we have to do according to the teachings of our religion which emphasize that we are all equal”* (T/M).

Additionally, all interviewees believe that all children should be valued and respected regardless of the differences. This view is exemplified by the following response.

“All people in the educational process should help typically developing students to understand that their peers with SEN are normal like them. They should respect them. If Allah (God) has deprived the child with SEN from something for sure he has granted him with another thing which we do not have. And I think this is the most important point in inclusion we have to value each other. Allah Says "O Mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. The most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you” (T/K).

The evidence here seems to indicate that teachers hold ideal religious beliefs about equal opportunities for everybody. This might be rooted in their belief system as Muslims because respecting people, treating them equally and giving them their rights is a fundamental principle in Islamic moral system which all Muslims should follow. But the emergent question here is: are teachers' ideological beliefs consistent with their beliefs at the practice level (teaching level)?

The data indicated that teachers' responses were inconsistent at this point. However all teachers have a strong belief that all children should have equal opportunities to education, at the practice level their views varied and were inconsistent. For example, they exempted children with intellectual disabilities from that right to be educated in the regular schools.

“All children have the right to education, and all children with SEN (except intellectual disabilities) have the right to be educated in the regular schools but with changing the whole system in our schools” (T/Z).

Based on this belief, some teachers believed that children with intellectual disabilities should be educated in special settings either in special classes in the mainstream school or in a special school. Such views are clearly represented by the following response.

“Yes it is their right but personally I prefer special school for children with intellectual disabilities or special class in the mainstream school they are not able to understand the complicated and dull academic subjects taught in regular schools. They are different and they need something different” (T/M).

They reasoned that students with intellectual disabilities may cause some harm to their typically developing peers and they themselves might be bullied by the others through mockery, calling names and sometimes hitting. For example, an Al-Azhar teacher justified the exclusion of children with intellectual disabilities and said *“because they may hurt their peers and cognitively they will not be able to understand the curriculum (T/K).*

Another SE teacher said *“I am concerned that the non-disabled students might bully or hit or laugh at their peers with SEN” (T/T).*

However, some teachers thought that those students might have the right to inclusion if they are ready intellectually and behaviourally, and if they could cope with the learning environment of regular classes.

“If the child’s mental abilities are quite similar to the normal or if he has been prepared or trained I think the regular school will be the best place for teaching those children. But if his disability is so severe I prefer to put him in a special place” (T/F).

The data suggested that teachers are more willing to accept children with mild intellectual disabilities, rather than those with severe ones. Additionally, the data raised some issues about differences. The majority of teachers see children with SEN/ and disabilities as different. However, their understanding of teaching is located in the deficit model. In a sense, this reflects some sort of inconsistency or confusion between the way teachers see the children and the way they see teaching those children. This issue will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

- **Inclusion as a process or a journey towards an ultimate goal**

Connected to the teachers’ perspectives about inclusion was the view that inclusion is a process or a journey towards an ultimate goal. There is enough evidence in the data that teachers believe that *“the main aim of inclusion in general and the educational process in particular is to include those people in society and to help them to get rid of all*

psychological problems, and to help them not to be a burden over the others' shoulders" (T/U).

Additionally, teachers believe that the inclusion process should be comprehensive and gradual at the same time. A SE teacher argued that *"inclusion should be comprehensive process. It is not only a curriculum, teachers, administrators, evaluation or placement. It is all of that (T/T).*

Another experienced teacher summarized this point very clearly saying *"the whole school should be inclusiveinclusion should be a gradual process" (T/S).*

By "gradual process", teachers mean to start with mild disabilities and on a part time basis. Once the process has been proved to be successful we can move towards full time inclusion and we can include children with severe disabilities. An Al-Azhar teacher said *"we should start with mild disabilities first and on an experimental basis and if this experiment is successful we can expand it and include some other children" (T/U).*

A SE teacher explained this gradual approach to inclusion as being *"a multi-stage process. Firstly, partial inclusion; a building within the regular school or a class within the building so all children can participate in activities, sports, breaks and lunchtimes and some children with mild SEN can participate in academic activities. And finally, full inclusion while the child with SEN can participate in all aspects of school life" (T/G).*

To sum up, it could be suggested that, teachers' understanding of inclusion is centralized around three issues or discourses; educating students together, equal opportunities and inclusion as a process. However the majority of teachers shared a common belief in all these aspects but there were some differences among them about the practical issues. Also, the analysis indicated that teachers believe that inclusion is a process not a state. Such process needs to be an ongoing one with the ultimate goal of achieving a coherent and inclusive society.

7.2.1.2 Perspectives on the outcomes of inclusion

Data analysis indicated that there is a range of perceptions about the outcomes of inclusion. Teachers identified some benefits for inclusion and also they identified some disadvantages for this process (see Figure 7.3). Broadly, teachers' perspectives about the outcomes of inclusion can be categorized into two groups; social and academic, as follows.

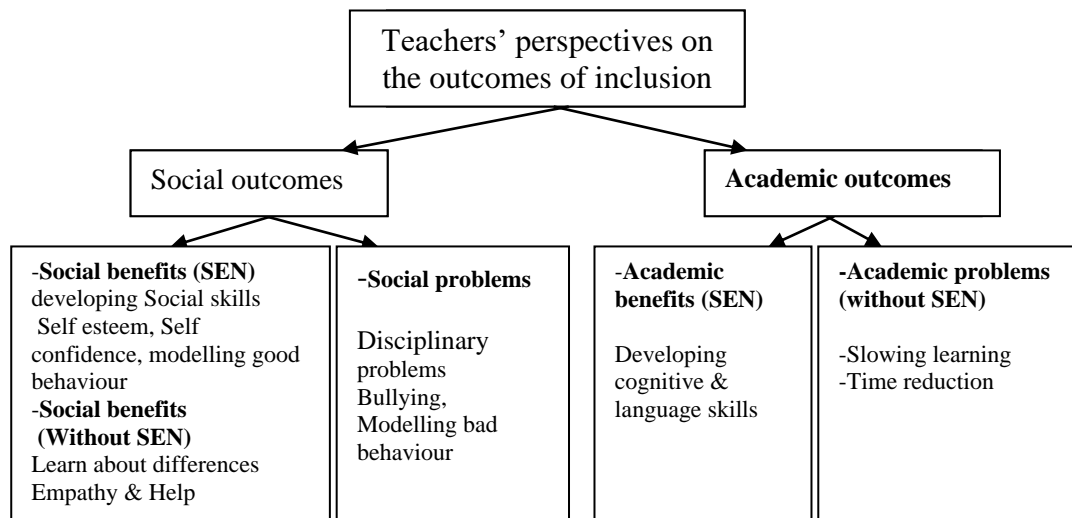


Figure 7.12 Diagrammatic outline for teachers' perspectives on the outcomes of inclusion

- **Perspectives on the social outcomes of inclusion**

Most interviewed teachers shared basic beliefs regarding the social benefits of inclusion for all students. On the first hand, they believe that children with SEN would acquire cognitive, linguistic and social skills through observing, modelling and interacting with more competent peers. This common view is exemplified by the following response.

“The SEN Child’s presence in a regular school gives him the opportunity to enrich his language through plying, and social interaction with his peers. In addition it gives him the opportunity to learn the right behavioural habits” (T/S).

In addition, being in a regular classroom will improve self-confidence and self-esteem of SEN children. *“The included child with SEN will benefit psychologically and socially. They will be self-confident and they can cope very well with the society” (T/H).*

On the other hand, most teachers believe that inclusion will be socially beneficial to children and students without SEN as well. One of the benefits of inclusion for children without SEN is that *“they will begin to learn and accept children for who they are and the differences that there are” (T/M)*

Another teacher said *“The normal children will know that there are different people with different characteristics and needs and then they will accept them and by the time all the society will start to accept those people as different not inferior. All children will love each other” (T/G).*

Additionally, teachers believe that another benefit of inclusion for non-disabled students is that, *“they will have positive feelings and will show empathy and compassion towards*

their peers with SEN, it may take some time but one day it will happen because this is the nature of the Egyptian people and this is what our religion asked us to do” (T/Z)

Another benefit of inclusion that teachers mentioned for children without SEN was that they would learn to help others. Teacher (I) reported how the typically developing children managed to help their disabled peer who has been recently included in their class.

“At the beginning I was worried that the presence of (child’s name) may have a bad effect on her peers but fortunately there was not. The first meeting between them was very nice. They bought her some chocolate and she did as well. They try to help her as much as they can. They feel that they are responsible about her (T/I).

On the contrary to such recognized social benefits of inclusion, some teachers believe that inclusion may cause some social problems. They recognized some social disadvantages of inclusion for children with SEN like bullying.

“Psychologically and socially it will be too difficult for Children with SEN in the regular schools. Sometimes normal children may laugh at, mock, hit, bully or insult their peer with SEN” (T/T).

Additionally, they recognized some problems for children without SEN. *“yes children with SEN could socially benefit by modelling behaviour from their normal peers. But the normal children may also acquire some bad behavioural habits from children with SEN” (T/A).*

The data analysis indicates that teachers believe that inclusion is socially beneficial to all children as the perceived social benefits of inclusion are more than the perceived negative effects. This finding is compatible with and supports the psychological-educational rationale for inclusion.

- **Perspectives on the academic outcomes of inclusion**

The academic benefits of inclusion for students with and without SEN were debatable. Teachers’ beliefs about the academic benefits of inclusion varied widely. At the forefront, they hold mixed views about the academic benefits for children with SEN. Their views were based mainly on the type of disability. They thought that students with physical, hearing or visual disabilities will achieve academically good and better than their peers in special schools or even than their typically developing peers if the regular schools are provided with all the necessary resources to meet the needs of those students.

“I think the deaf or blind children will benefit academically in inclusive settings as equal as their normal peers and sometimes they may surpass them. For

example Dr Taha Hussein he was blind but he managed to be the dean of Arabic literature. But of course this will depend on the school and its resources and facilities” (T/G).*

The most debatable point was the academic achievement of included children with intellectual disabilities. The majority of teachers believe that those children will not benefit academically from inclusion and they thought that special school will be better for those children. Teachers thought that the over-emphasis on academic achievement in mainstream learning, especially in the highly competitive educational system in Egypt, would make inclusion more difficult for those children. Teacher (U) commented, *“How can a child with intellectual disability achieve academically like normal peers in our competitive educational system? The curricula are so complicated and based only on theoretical information. How can those children understand such dull and sterile curricula?”*

Some teachers reasoned that *“subjects which demand high intellectual ability, like languages, math, might not be suitable but subjects or activities which have a strong emphasis on skill acquisition (non-academic subjects) might be suitable for those children” (T/M).*

However, two teachers believe that inclusion will be academically beneficial for children with mild intellectual disability. A preparatory regular education teacher put it this way *“The child with mild intellectual ability will benefit socially and academically, because if he is psychologically well I think he will learn well” (T/Z).*

This view was supported by the response of a teacher who is working in an inclusive setting where some children with mild intellectual disability are included. While talking about one of those included children, she reported that, *“however, she is behind her peers, but she is improving very well. There is a big difference between her level when she joined the school and her level now” (T/I).*

This indicates that the real experience of inclusion could make a difference. However most teachers perceive that those children may not be able to achieve properly in the mainstream setting, the experienced teacher viewed the child’s progress as a journey from where she started to where she is now.

Regarding children without SEN, some teachers perceived some detrimental academic effects on the students without SEN and this becomes more apparent when pupils with diverse ranges of ability especially talented pupils are taught within the same classroom. Those teachers noted different negative effects of inclusion, such as slowing down or

impeding the normal students' learning process and academic progress, the reduction of time for providing good teaching for the better students and an increase in social and disciplinary problems. One teacher put it this way, *“simplifying the curriculum to the level of SEN students, especially children with intellectual disability, will affect their normal peers so badly especially gifted students and gifted students may feel frustrated”* (T/U).

Another teacher stated that the effect of inclusion will depend on the age when the child is included and argued that the earlier the child is included the better. *“In early stages there are no negative effects at all. Sometimes in late stages like secondary school normal children may feel that their peers with SEN are affecting their learning or they may slow their learning”* (T/K).

It could be concluded that the academic outcomes of inclusion are debatable which reflects teachers' mixed attitudes towards curricular inclusion.

7.2.1.3 Teachers' understanding of SEN/disability

The data analysis indicated that teachers hold different conceptions about SEN/disability. These conceptions can be broadly categorized into two main categories: terminological issues about disability/SEN and conceptual issues about the sources of the problem (see Figure 7.4). The two categories will be analysed by turn.

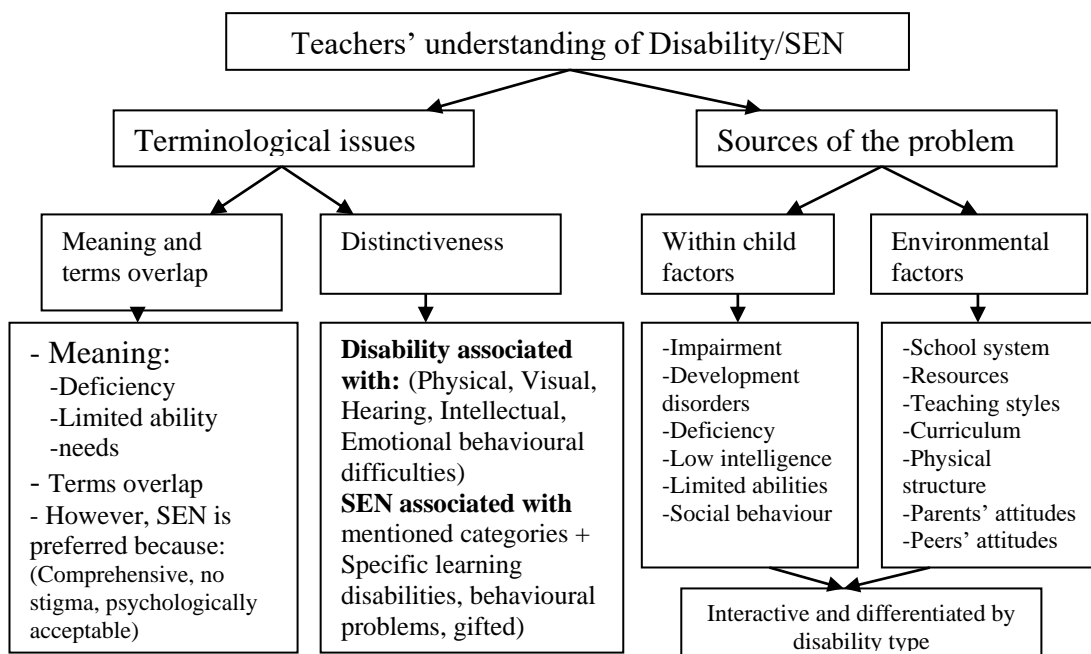


Figure 7.13 Diagrammatic outline for teachers' understanding of disability

- **Terminological issues**

There was a common tendency among all teachers to overlap between the meaning of the term “special educational needs” and the meaning of the term “disability”. The overlap between terms used to describe special educational needs and disabilities was noted from such comments as *‘SEN is a socially correct word to replace terms such as disabled or disability’ (T/H).*

In addition, the majority of teachers think about disability and SEN in a categorical way. However the term SEN was preferred by all teachers, both disability and SEN were used interchangeably to refer to the traditional categories of disabilities. During the interviews when teachers were asked about what is disability or SEN; their common response was that *“disability means to have a limitation or deficiency in a certain aspect mental, physical, visual or hearing. Also SEN refers to the categories or the groups which we all know (I mean visual impaired, hearing impaired, physical disabled, and intellectual disabilities)” (T/Z).*

Another teacher said *“Disability means deficiency in something and SEN will give the same meaning, you know there is no big difference because any person with a disability will be included under the term SEN” (T/F)*

However teachers think about SEN/Disability in a categorical way; they did not recognize all types of children who are deemed to have SEN according to different classification systems including the Egyptian one itself. All teachers recognized the following children as having SEN: physical disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment and intellectual disability. Surprisingly, the majority of teachers did not recognize Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) as a SEN or a disability. Teachers used to use words like behaviour problems, challenging behaviour or similar words. Also, teachers reported that they have no problem with the inclusion of such children. Additionally, I have noticed that EBD was either included under the umbrella term ID or it was recognized as minor problem related to behaviour problems or impoliteness. The following responses present a representative summary of the views of many teachers.

“Children with behavioural problems are every where in our schools and they are already included and it is easy to control them by exploiting their power, making use of their energy, praising them and making friendships with them” (T/Z).

Only two teachers reported that children with EBD are not suitable for inclusion. They gave a similar response. One of them said *“I think inclusion will not work at the moment for children with severe ID and children with EBD”* (T/S).

Those teachers are highly knowledgeable about SEN as the first one is doing his PhD and the second is doing a master degree in this field and both are familiar with terminology used in the textbooks.

Despite the terminological overlap mentioned above, some teachers believed that “SEN” is quite different from “disability” as SEN refers to many other people who do not have disabilities because this term is more comprehensive. Some teachers believed that SEN is an umbrella term that encompasses both children with disabilities and some others without disabilities. In reflecting on the qualitative differences between the two terms one teacher stated that *“There is a difference between SEN and disability. A person may have a SEN however he has no disability..... For example gifted children have special educational needs however they do not have any disability”* (T/S).

Another teacher commented on the categories of SEN and said *“.....but I do not consider a child who has a learning problem or a behavioural problem to have a disability however he might have a SEN”* (T/F).

Such responses showed that teachers strongly associated behavioural difficulties and learning difficulties with special educational needs. However, disability was associated most strongly with intellectual impairments, followed by physical impairments and sensory impairments.

The data analysis indicated that all teachers preferred to use the word SEN rather than the word disability. They gave many reasons for this preference. They preferred SEN because it is more comprehensive, more acceptable psychologically, as it does not hold feeling of stigma in part of those people. The following quotations clarify this point. *“Personally I do not like the word disability, the word SEN is much better, it is nice word”* (T/I). Another teacher said, *“The term SEN is more comprehensive and it does not hurt disabled people psychologically and emotionally”* (T/H).

- **Sources of the problem**

The second main point in teachers understanding of disability/SEN is related to their perspectives on the sources of the problem. Where is the problem located? It is debatable whether SEN/disability is within the child or within society. There are different theoretical approaches for theorising SEN/disability. The two main approaches

are the medical or deficit model which attributes difficulties to within child factors and the social model which looks for features outside the child. However, there is enough evidence in the data that all teachers hold what I call the mixed view or interactive approach for understanding disability. They sometimes concentrated on within child factors and sometimes on environmental factors. But this was mainly differentiated by disability type. There was more emphasis on within child factors for intellectual disability, while there was more emphasis on environmental factors for other groups of disability. This view is exemplified by the following response.

“For mental retardation the problem is within the child. He cannot learn. But the school is responsible for the other categories; I mean children with physical disabilities or hearing impaired or visually impaired children. Those children just need support. Our schools are not prepared enough for inclusion, no resources and no facilities” (T/Z).

However most teachers believe that the impairment could cause a problem, they believe that this impairment or the “within child problem” is not a reason for not educating or socializing such a child. They mentioned some other factors like, teaching styles, school building, school system, and attitudes of those who interact with the child. This view is exemplified by the following response

*“Deficiency or impairment is not the problem in itself. The evidence is that we have too many great scholars who had impairments... like Taha Hussein who was blind, Alaqad** who was hearing impaired. Both overcame this impairment and were among the best Egyptian scholars in the 20th century. The main problem is that our schools are not equipped and resourced for the accommodation of those students” (T/K).*

In recognizing the within-child factors and the environmental factors, teachers differentiated between children based on disability type. This was clear from the reasons which they raised regarding the unsuitability of different types of children for inclusion. When they were asked about the reasons for not educating or including children with SEN in mainstream schools in general, their responses indicated that it is *“the lack of preparation of the schools, lack of resources, inaccessibility of schools and curriculum, lack of teacher preparation and teachers’ and peers’ negative attitudes” (T/S).*

However, they emphasised on the role of within-child factors in addition to the environmental factors in the case of including children with intellectual disabilities.

“Unfortunately, our schools are not prepared for including children with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, those children are not mentally able, they lack means of communication and their behaviour is harmful to normal students so they will not be able to contact and communicate with normal students” (T/M).

Based on such understanding of disability, teachers' responses towards including children with SEN in regular schools varied widely according to the type and severity of disability. There was a tendency among all teachers to prefer children with physical or sensory disabilities rather than children with intellectual disabilities. The following response presents a representative summary of the views of many teachers.

“Of course there is no problem at all with students with physical disabilities. Also, it is okay to include children with hearing or visual impairment but with assistance in the classroom. But based on my experience for many years in different types of special schools I think it is so difficult to include children with intellectual disabilities. They are different. I prefer to place those children in special classrooms attached to the regular school” (T/Y).

It could be concluded that, teachers' responses cannot be labelled as reflecting the deficit model or the social model, rather they reflect an interactive approach for understanding disability which recognizes both the within child factors and the environmental factors. Also, the data indicated that teachers are constrained by a variety of contextual factors that made them reluctant to support the inclusion of certain types of children with SEN.

7.2.2 Teachers' feelings about inclusion

Based on such mixed beliefs about inclusion stated above, teachers showed a range of mixed feelings and affective responses as well towards inclusion. The majority of teachers showed positive feelings towards inclusion. Teachers' responses indicated that teachers support inclusion and feel optimistic about it and they think it is a good idea. There was a wide range of responses from teachers regarding acceptance of the policy to include children with a disability into regular classrooms. This view is exemplified in the following responses.

“Inclusion is an excellent idea and I strongly support it.... We have to include children with the society as early as possible. If the child spent his life excluded in a special school it would be so difficult to include him in the society in the future and moreover he will feel lonely so I have to include him as early as possible to avoid these problems in the future. Really Exclusion is socially wrong. It can make excluded people get mad” (T/F).

“Inclusion can build a nation. The benefits of inclusion will be for the whole society.....Really I support inclusion; it will change the face of our society” (T/M).

Additionally, teachers were enthusiastic to the extent that they consider inclusion as “a necessity so as not to make a gap between the individuals of a society” (T/K).

On the contrary, some teachers expressed some feelings of fears. They were suspicious and worried about the outcomes of the process especially in our educational system which does not have the infrastructure that inclusion requires. *“To be fair however I like inclusion but I am worried about the outcomes on the long run. We may affect the learning of normal children badly especially for gifted students and on the same time we may not give students with SEN the best service in the regular school. I don’t think that our schools have the basic requirements for education generally so what about inclusion requirements??(T/Y)*

Additionally, teachers’ emotional responses to the people they perceived as responsible for educational decisions were related to their fears or concerns about inclusion. Teachers were worried about the role of head teachers, inspectors, administrators and policymakers in general (for more about this issue see section, 7.5.2 Interpersonal barriers). They described these groups as unaware of the practical requirements of inclusion and as out of touch. Teachers felt that school administrators are unaware of inclusion or are unlikely to consider their interests when establishing policies for inclusion. A special education teacher said, *“I think that too many head teachers, inspectors and administrators do not have any idea about inclusion. They have not been trained or prepared and by the end unfortunately teachers only will take the whole responsibility and they will be blamed if anything happened however they have not been consulted before” (T/A).*

7.2.3 Teachers’ intentional behaviours

In spite of teachers’ mixed beliefs and feelings about inclusion, teachers showed quite positive intentional behaviours towards it. However such intentions were not explicit, they can be comprehended from their responses to many things related to the practice of inclusion. For example, the majority of teachers showed readiness to take and accept responsibility of teaching or educating students with SEN with some exceptions in their regular classroom. The major exception was children with ID.

“Yes I am happy to have a child with any disability except intellectual disabilities in my classroom but I do need support from a specialized teacher, I need resources... etc” (T/Z).

Also, teachers showed readiness to seek professional development to be able to accommodate children with SEN in their classes. One teacher said *“and I am so ready to participate in any training programmes that might help in achieving inclusion” (T/A).*

Another teacher who had some experience with inclusion said *“Of course we need more training” (T/I).*

Also, teachers were ready to adapt and change their classroom practices and teaching styles to accommodate children with SEN. As one teacher said *“ it is a matter of teaching strategies.... if teachers are creative and could be able to change in their teaching methods I think they will find inclusion easily and actually this is what I am trying to do with my students” (T/M).*

However some teachers were very keen to change their teaching styles to accommodate children with SEN in their classes, they have no idea about some practical issues for achieving such a task like individual educational plans for example. Most interviewed teachers reported that they have not used such plans and even some others have not even heard about the term. The response of a preparatory regular education teacher exemplified this view.

“We did not use such individual plans. This may be because we do not have children with SEN at the moment. All what I used to do personally is that I try to change in my mode of teaching and try to slow down so weak children can catch me” (T/Z).

Actually this point raised some questions about the accuracy of teachers' responses to the questionnaire that preceded the qualitative fieldwork. Teachers were asked directly in the questionnaire about their intention to use individual educational plans with children with SEN and the majority of them showed very positive intentions. Surprisingly, the qualitative data analysis indicated that most teachers do not know how to do it.

Some other perspectives that emerged from the participants' comments about inclusion are also worth mentioning. They are brief, but fundamental in impact. They can be broadly categorized under the rubric term of “conditions”. Teachers' comments or concerns at this point represent conditions for achieving inclusion. However some of these conditions are related to other themes of the study, they will be mentioned briefly here to be analysed latter in detail. First, the biggest issue was the notion of “exception or but” which is from the very beginning against the principles of inclusion. Not all SEN students have been recognized as suitable for inclusive education. *“All children with SEN (except intellectual disabilities) have the right to be educated in the regular schools” (T/H).*

The second important point is about the local environment which is suitable for inclusion. While most teachers believe that inclusion depends mainly on the nature of

the child's need and the readiness of the school, this teacher went a step further and argued that inclusion requires an appropriate environment. The more qualified the environment the more successful inclusion will be.

“Inclusion will not be successful in all environments or communities. I mean inclusion can be successful in environments with high socio-economic level. Because the awareness of people who live in low socio-economic level environments is quite low” (T/Y).

The data here indicated that the role of the local community in creating an inclusive culture is important and this point will be highlighted in the discussion chapter.

To sum up, it could be suggested that most teachers reported fairly positive attitudes about inclusion but at the same time they have many concerns either personal or administrative. Generally, teachers' attitudes were conditioned by providing the school with enough resources and personnel support, reconstructing the physical environment in the schools, considering the type and severity of disability and suitability of the activities. Additionally, teachers understand disability as a product of both within-child and environmental factors. Also the data indicated that teachers think about disability as a matter of difference; however their attitudes towards including children with SEN/disability were constrained by the product teaching model which is the dominant one in the Egyptian schools.

However this description of teachers' responses showed how do teachers understand inclusion and highlighted the complexity of their attitudes, still it did not say why do teachers respond in this way? Why do teachers believe that some children cannot be included? How can we explain the inconsistency between their passion and empathy towards children with SEN and their reservations towards including some of those children in the mainstream school? Actually all these questions need more in-depth analysis into teachers' responses that requires a holistic view of all the data. This will be done in the discussion chapter (Chapter 8) to go beyond the text and look in the context.

7.3 Socio-cultural context

The analysis of the interviews showed that there are different socio-cultural contexts that affect teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion and affect the movement towards the implementation of inclusive education in Egypt. This theme reflects on the common socio-cultural beliefs about disability and about the common views, beliefs, conditions and practices in the broader social context; specifically in the family, school and local community contexts. Actually this point was not explicit in teachers' responses; rather it was implicit in their collective way of thinking. Teachers'

responses showed that there are some common socio-cultural beliefs about disability in the Egyptian context which could support or undermine the movement towards inclusion. Those beliefs are in conflict with each other. These beliefs could be classified into two domains; religious beliefs and social views about different social contexts. This theme is represented diagrammatically in Figure (7.5).

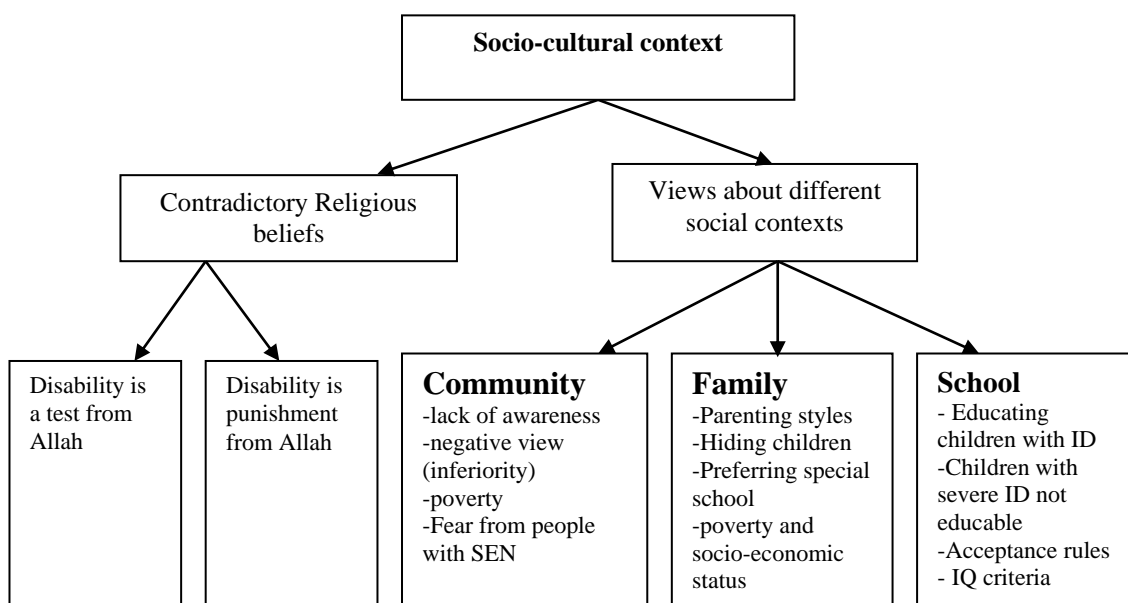


Figure 7.14 Diagrammatic outline for the socio-cultural context theme

7.3.1 Contradictory religious beliefs

Regarding the religious beliefs, the majority of teachers highlighted that there are some common contradictory religious beliefs about disability. The first common belief views disability as a test from God “Allah” to test peoples’ level of religiosity, patience and confidence in Allah. Those who succeed in this test will get a very great reward in the hereafter. The following response presents a representative summary of the views of many teachers.

“disability is a test from Allah to certain people to know their level of patience or at least this is the meaning that the disabled child should know and also this is the meaning that his peers should know as well so they can accept him” (T/Z).

This belief supports inclusion in a way that those people who hold such belief will feel proud of themselves or of their kids to show patience and submission to God’s will. And they will try to do their best to achieve success in their life.

On the contrary, some teachers stressed that disability is sometimes conceived as a sort of punishment. Those teachers reflected that some parents believe that if they have got a disabled child this means that Allah is punishing them for something wrong which they

have done in their life. Therefore, they feel ashamed and stigmatized and this feeling is transferred unconsciously to their kids. Consequently, those parents hide their children and those children do not get the chance for learning. But to make it clear this view was mainly related to intellectual disabilities.

“Actually some people hold strange and wrong views about disability. If a family has got a child with disability especially with intellectual disability they feel stigmatized and they feel as Allah is punishing them for their sins and they will not send their child to school” (T/Y).

Such belief undermines education generally and inclusion particularly. Those people who hold this belief will feel ashamed and they will try to keep themselves away from people.

It could be concluded here that there are two main contradictory religious beliefs about disability. One of them, which views disability as a test from Allah, is expected to support inclusion and the other one, which sees disability as a punishment, is expected to undermine inclusion. However teachers did not follow the second view, it seem wise to conclude that such views have affected teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion. Realistically, teachers are part of this society and they cannot assume that they do not hold similar beliefs. The implication here is that, religious beliefs about disability, either positive or negative, affect teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion and also affect the movement towards inclusion.

7.3.2 Views about different social contexts

With respect to social views about social contexts, I have noticed that most of these views are mainly related to intellectual disability. As stated above, most teachers have no problem with inclusion for children with physical and sensory disabilities so long as the schools are prepared and resourced. But, when it is related to intellectual disability teachers have many concerns and they also reflect on the common social beliefs and practices.

These views are centralized around three contexts; community, family and school context, however they are inter-correlated. With respect to community, most teachers stated that disability, especially intellectual disability, is still viewed negatively because people are not aware of the needs of children with SEN. However most Egyptian people are tolerant and empathetic, still too many people view disability negatively or deal with SEN people wrongly with inferior view believing that such people do not have a big role to play in society.

“First of all inclusive education requires a very high level of awareness in side of all people. Honestly most people lack such awareness. We just support them but we do not believe that they can do something useful” (T/A).

Some teachers reflected on the issue of fears. Some people still get scared of individuals with SEN especially those with ID. The answer of one special education teacher summarises this view clearly.

“When you meet somebody with intellectual disability from the first sight you see him as a mad person. However you feel in your heart that you would like to help him, at the same time you fear him and you do not approach him. And this is very common. However I have seen some people like this who are very friendly” (T/G).

In addition, some teachers reflected on another social belief related to peoples’ views about the educability and the importance of educating students with ID. Actually this belief is related to the community context and the school context but it is clearer in the school context based on the acceptance rules in the schools. Teachers stated that *“Some people think that education or schooling is not the main target for children with ID” (T/K).*

Although such a view was not explicitly reported by most teachers, their comments gave me some plausible explanations for this view. One teacher said it is mainly related to the schooling system which accepts only children with IQ above 50.

“I think lack of people’s awareness of the importance of educating students with ID is related to the acceptance rules in our schools. You know children with IQ lower than 50 are considered uneducable and they are not accepted in special schools. They are either kept at home or brought up at social institutions” (T/T).

Based on this, teachers tend to prefer children with mild or moderate ID for inclusion with many reservations. *“You know, intellectual disability has different degrees. Personally I would prefer mild to moderate level for inclusion. Severe ID cannot be included. First we have to give them a chance to join the special school before we think about inclusion” (T/T).*

With respect to the family context which is the mediator between the school and the wider community, some teachers reflected on parenting styles which have a negative effect on educating students with SEN generally. They stated that parents deal with their children with SEN wrongly either with over protection or over sympathy. Such parenting styles affect parents’ views about education in general. They may do their best to educate their children or they may feel frustrated and do nothing at all, rather than health care. As one SE teacher put it, *“the way parents brought up their children with ID is ridiculous. They are very sensitive. They care only for health issues and ignore educational issues” (T/Y).*

What makes the situation worse is that some parents hide their children purposely and deprive them from their right to education. A SE teacher said, *“We still have some parents who hide their kids... how can education or inclusion work with such beliefs”* (T/A).

In addition, some teachers reflected on how the socio-economic level of the family could affect parents' beliefs about education in general and about inclusion in particular. During the field study, teacher (G), told me a story about a girl whose mother preferred to send her to a special school for ID just because the family is poor and they can not afford the expenses of the regular school.

“This girl has been diagnosed as having mild intellectual disability and she has been referred to our school. The girl does not have intellectual disability I am sure... she might have a specific learning disability in reading or something like that no more... but because the family is so poor they preferred to send her to the special school. Also, the family can get some benefits from this as the ministry give some financial support to the families who have children in special schools. In addition, the family could make a good use of the talent of their daughter. This girl is very talented in arts (drawing and painting). Last year in an exhibition for SEN children in United Arab Emirates she got a very good amount of money for one of her drawings” (T/G).

However this is only one case, it holds a message to the policymaker about the educational system, specifically about the admission policy, the identification system, the referring system etc. Additionally, it conveys a very sound social message about the possibility that the low socio-economic level of the family could lead the family to deprive their children from the rights to education in general and to education in regular schools in particular.

To sum up, teachers reflected on some common religious and social beliefs about disability which affect the movement towards inclusion and which affect their attitudes towards inclusion as well. However most of these beliefs apply to all children with SEN, they are mainly associated with intellectual disability. Therefore, children with intellectual disability were not accepted for inclusion. The data indicates that there are many contextual factors that affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, giving support to the social constructivist view of attitudes (Eiser, 1994).

7.4 Professional development: Training and experience

Continuous professional development was seen by most of the teachers as the key factor to increasing inclusion opportunities for pupils with SEN. Professional development in this context refers broadly to training and experience. The data indicated that pre-service training (PST), in-service training (IST), and experience with inclusion have

played a role in shaping teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. This theme has many features through the analysis. It has many facets related to barriers to inclusion and to changes required to put inclusion into practice. And it also has a relation with teacher's attitudes. These facets will be highlighted here, however some parts will be analysed more thoroughly in barriers to inclusion.

At the very beginning, all teachers indicated that ongoing professional development will help them to competently cater for children with special needs in their classes. A regular education teacher experienced in inclusion said *"if we would like inclusion to succeed we should have very qualified and prepared teachers who are able to teach those students"* (T/S).

However, most teachers stated that their PST was not enough to prepare them for inclusion. Regardless of when they had undergone their PST teacher training, they all felt inadequately prepared for inclusion. For example, when asked about their experience of SEN training during their PST, teachers commented *"I must admit it was very limited, it was just like some common ideas about SEN children. It is something that whets your appetite but never makes you feel satisfied"* (T/G).

One of the reasons to be blamed was the shallowness of the components of the pre-service training programmes. A primary general education teacher put it this way *"Honestly we, I mean regular education teachers, are not prepared to teach those children. Our pre service academic programmes were not enough at all. When we were in the faculty we heard nothing about the SEN"* (T/F).

Allied to the concept of limited provision during PST was a recurring theme that such training was based solely on theoretical issues surrounding the teaching of children with SEN. *"At the university, they just pour theories which have no relation to the reality? Even those lecturers I do not think that they have been to the field before"* (T/A).

Regarding in-service training, although most teachers believe that in-service training is helpful, they have some concerns about it. All of them stated that training was inadequate and irrelevant, monotonous and theoretical. The comments of one teacher provide a particularly useful illustration of the perceived inadequacy of training programmes or courses.

"Once, I have taken a training course about Special needs. A lot of it was not relevant to what we do in teaching in classrooms here because they are theoretical not practical" (T/T).

Teachers were looking for regular, continuous, practical and intensive training sessions in order to be able to implement inclusion successfully.

“Our training programmes are not really successful programmes they are just routine stuff, just to say we have done training. We went to sign in the morning and afternoon and that is it. If we are serious and we are looking for the success of inclusion, training should be carefully planned and organized and should be continuous” (T/Y).

It is worth noting that although teachers felt inadequately prepared for inclusion and they criticized in-service training, most of them showed willingness and readiness to participate in training sessions either in or outside the school. They were looking for more knowledge related to specific disabilities and more training about how to teach students with different disabilities.

“Any human being needs training in what he is doing as long as he is alive. For my self, although I am a special education teacher and I think I have some experience in teaching SEN students, still I need more knowledge and training I mean practical serious training not theoretical routine training....and I am so ready to participate in any training programmes that might help in achieving inclusion” (T/A).

Additionally the data analysis indicated that teacher training and experience played a role in shaping teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion. Teachers who have some sort of experience with inclusion felt that training and real experience made a difference for them as they began to feel self-confident and showed a positive behavioural intentions regarding taking more training. One of the experienced teachers with inclusion reported how the real experience and training have helped her and supported her in the inclusion programme.

“You know at the beginning of the project I was so worried but with the assistance of my colleagues and with the training I began to feel self-confident and I would be so happy if I can get more training. Now I think I have a reasonable experience and I can participate in new inclusive projects” (T/I).

Similarly, in his comments about the role of training and experience in changing teachers’ attitudes, a secondary teacher with experience in inclusion said *“when we started the first project for resource rooms, most teachers were hesitant. By the time they get more experience and more training and they began to show more tolerance with inclusion” (T/S).*

Additionally, the data showed that training has been approached in two ways. Some teachers viewed training primarily as a general training for inclusion. This view is exemplified by the following response.

“Comprehensive training is better. Teachers should be trained on how to differentiate learning according to the needs of the child. So I think the specific-disability training will not work. The most important thing is how to be able to differentiate your teaching styles and strategies. Actually this is what I am doing now although I do not have children with SEN in my classes. I try to change my teaching strategies at least into four levels so all students can follow me” (T/K).

Some others viewed training as specific-disability training to help them to cater successfully for a certain category of disability. One teacher said *“Training should be based on the work requirements, I mean if you have a child with mental retardation you should have training about teaching to children with mental retardation....and so on ” (T/G).*

The data indicated that teachers approached training in two ways. The first way reflects a general pedagogical training to prepare teachers to work in the inclusive environment where teachers should be able to accommodate all children regardless of their abilities. The other way reflects a specific-disability training where the teachers should be specialized in a certain area of disability to provide the best possible service for children in this category. The first approach reflects the ethos of inclusion, while specific-disability training is more rooted into the integration model. However, none of them is adequate on its own. Both of them should be in place in order to put inclusion into practice.

A final brief but important point about in-service training does worth mentioning. Three teachers called for involving administrators and head teachers in the same training that teachers undergo. Those teachers believe that head teachers and administrators may be less informed about the daily practices of inclusion than regular classroom teachers need them to be. So, administrators should attend teacher in-service training sessions to better understand the immediate concerns of the classroom teachers regarding inclusion.

“....administrators, head teachers, inspectors and all those people need training. We are just calling for teacher training although you may find that your school head teacher or your inspector knows nothing about inclusion or special educational needs” (T/A).

7.5 Teachers’ perceptions about barriers to inclusion

The teachers involved in the current study discussed a range of barriers to inclusion which should be surmounted in order to establish inclusive education in Egypt. Based on the analysis, a fairly wide range of barriers can be identified. For the purpose of analysis they will be categorized into four main categories: structural-organizational,

personal, interpersonal and socio-cultural barriers. All these categories are not unitary and contain codes and sub-codes which are sometimes in conflict with each other. The relationships between these codes are represented diagrammatically in Figure (7.6). All these categories and codes are believed to interact and collaborate to affect the ways teachers understand inclusion, teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and finally the implementation of inclusion.

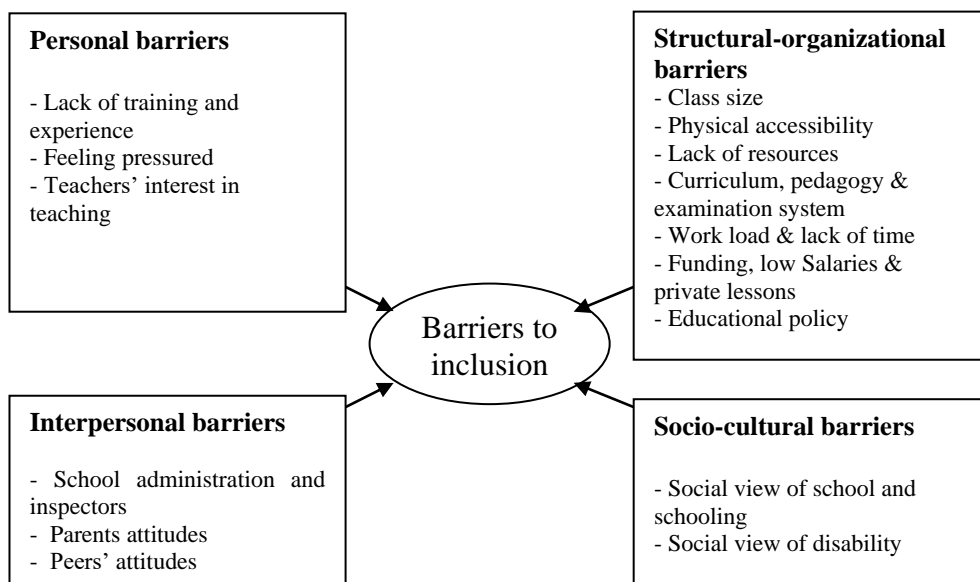


Figure 7.15 Diagrammatic outline for teachers' perceptions about barriers to inclusion

7.5.1 Structural-organizational barriers

Structural-organizational barriers refer to factors related to the educational system and school context and daily practices like: class size, physical accessibility, lack of resources, curriculum and examination system, workload and lack of time and funding, low salaries and private lessons and Absence of an educational policy for inclusion.

- **Class size**

All interviewed teachers identified a dilemma in seeking to meet individual needs in the context of large pupil–teacher ratios which characterized the mainstream classes in most Egyptian regular schools. Most teachers were worried that class size would significantly affect the extent to which inclusion is successful.

“Class size is a very big problem, do you think inclusion can work with class size of 40 to 50 students. We actually face lots of problems with regular students in such class size and I think it will be worse if we put some more SEN students in such classes” (T/Z).

Additionally, one of the teachers working in the inclusive school reflects this issue as well as she said *“we have two girls with mild intellectual disability who are included in*

a very large class (about 40 children) where there five other students with specific learning difficulties who have to go the resource room as well. It is too much” (T/I).

Class management was another issue that most teachers attributed to the class size. Teachers felt that it will be difficult to control these large classes in the case of inclusion. One teacher stated that *“you know our classes are very large and it is not easy to control such number of students” (T/F).*

- **Physical accessibility**

All teachers interviewed had a strong belief that the way Egyptian schools were built is not suitable at all to include SEN students.

“Our schools are not designed or equipped in a way that gives SEN children the opportunity to live in because there was a dominant understanding that those children must be isolated in special schools” (T/S).

Another teacher said *“currently our schools are not accessible to SEN children. I will give you an example. We used to have a physical disabled girl in the school. Every day her father had to carry her to the third floor and he had to come afternoon to collect her from the third floor because there is no lifts in the school and she cannot use her wheelchair in many areas of the school as well” (T/Z).* The same story was reiterated by two other teachers in two different schools.

Another teacher went further to say that all educational organizations from nursery schools to universities and moreover all the society’s organizations are built only for able people. He said *“I have never found physical adaptation in any building to be suitable for SEN people” (T/H).*

- **Lack of resources**

There is enough evidence in data that all teachers felt ill equipped to meet the wide range of SEN students’ needs in today’s classrooms as a result of the inadequate resources. Most teachers were concerned that Egyptian schools are not adequately resourced with all the educational facilities that support the education of SEN students *“We do not have special equipments which we can use to teach those children” (T/Y).* Another teacher said *“the school is not equipped with educational resources that can help teachers to do their job. We need materials like computers or whatever to help those children (SEN students)” (T/A)*

Actually from my personal experience and my informal conversations with some teachers and with the manger of the SE Department in the Ministry of Education I could

say that most Egyptian schools are inadequately resourced. All teachers interviewed were unsatisfied with such a situation.

- **Curriculum, Pedagogy and examination system**

I think that all issues related to curriculum, pedagogy and examinations are highly correlated, so I will present them together. There is a great evidence in the data that the majority of teachers believe that curriculum and examination system represents a big barrier to inclusion. Interestingly, no teachers were concerned about the general aims of the curriculum as they believed that these aims should be the same for all children. However, the majority of them were concerned that the content of the curriculum couldn't be delivered to all SEN students. The majority of teachers interviewed expected difficulties in providing SEN students with curriculum content identical to that of their non-disabled classmates. This was based on their belief that the educational priorities for those children are the acquisition of self-help skills and personal self-management and therefore the curriculum will be difficult for them. A secondary special education teacher exemplified this view.

“I think the general aims of the curricula are not the problem. But it is impossible to give the same syllabus to students with intellectual disabilities. How can they understand it, you know the content of the curriculum for those students depends on teaching them good behaviours and habits, but to give them such complicated materials I do not think it could be wise” (T/T).

Some other teachers view this issue according to disability type and the type of the academic subject. What a secondary Al-Azhar teacher said represents a good example for this view.

“Visually impaired or blind students can understand all the curriculum of literary subjects like languages, history, religious studies and Qur'an but they will face some problems in scientific subjects like mathematics and physics. The problem will be with intellectual disability. I think it will be too difficult to provide those students with the same syllabus” (T/U).

However some teachers recognized the aims and the content of the curriculum, they were dominantly oriented towards the content of the curriculum which is represented in the textbooks in Egypt. The majority of them used curriculum and textbooks interchangeably as in the last two quotations. Such view of the curriculum made teachers more interested in the delivery of the curriculum to achieve the aims of the policymaker which are achievement-based. A preparatory teacher said *“the curriculum in our schools is so complicated and we have to finish it at certain time” (T/Z).*

Additionally, delivery of the curriculum makes teachers more concerned about two roles: a managerial role and an instructional one. The managerial role could be noticed from their resistance to include children with intellectual disability. A teacher said *“it is not easy to control a large number of students especially if you have some children with intellectual disability” (T/H)*.

The instructional role is based mainly on very traditional teaching styles that have to be changed as a secondary Al-Azhar teacher said *“The way most teachers teach nowadays is not suitable for SEN students. Most teachers use traditional lecturing methods” (T/M)*.

Moreover, the movement towards the inclusion of SEN in the regular schools in Egypt is deterred by the examination system according to teachers’ responses. The clash in focus between the teaching syllabus represented in the course book and the official documents and the examination requirements was highlighted by most teachers. The data indicated that the focus of exams in Egypt is just to assess students’ memorization of the content of the textbook. Therefore, teachers were concerned that some students cannot achieve this aim. An Experienced SE teacher said *“exams come in one format to check students’ level of memorization of the text. Thus, students with SEN especially those with intellectual disabilities cannot meet these criteria. So we should think about other alternatives in assessment and evaluation” (T/T)*.

Additionally, examination pressure on teachers is heightened by parents’ and students’ obsession with exams results, principals’ concern with the image and position of his/her school and inspectors’ expectations. Consequently, teachers’ were concerned about the expectations of parents of non-disabled children about their children’s achievement.

“You know for parents, exam results represent an evidence of their children’s learning. And if their sons got low marks I am the first one to be blamed and of course the school policy of inclusion will be blamed as well” (T/U).

- ***Workload and lack of time***

The majority of teachers thought that they will be overloaded with more work and they will not have enough time to support the learning of SEN students. They identified not having enough time mainly because of the amount of time students with SEN demand for planning educational materials and behaviour management. A regular education teacher said *“I do not think I will have enough time to prepare different materials for SEN students” (T/Z)*.

Moreover, some other teachers thought that they will sacrifice the normal students if they spend more time with SEN students. *“of course if I have a child with SEN in my class I will have to give him extra attention to assure that he is fitting in and sometimes this will take attention away from other students” (T/U).*

Another issue related to the problem of workload is the shortage in teaching staff and teachers' time tables and schedules. When asked about barriers to inclusion, a teacher said *“the shortage of teaching staff and teaching schedules, you know teaching schedules are often changeable from time to time and this affects teachers routine and causes problems to them. In addition the teacher teaches about five periods and sometimes six a day???” (T/M).*

Additionally, teachers were worried that they will be overburdened by having to perform many roles. In addition to the instructional roles like preparing the lesson plans, preparing teaching tools, etc, they are also required to do some daily routine tasks like controlling the students in the morning queue and checking attendance. This leads to the feeling that they cannot provide children with SEN with good service. A primary teacher said, *“How can I care for a child with Intellectual disability for example whereas I have to teach such a big number of classes and take part in administrative affairs” (T/F).*

- **Funding, low Salaries and private lessons**

Those three barriers are highly correlated, so I preferred to present them together. Many teachers felt that money is a barrier to the success of inclusion. One teacher said *“funding is a major problem. Realistically inclusion cannot work without a reasonable budget” (T/Y).*

Additionally, lack of funding was the main reason given by most participants for the lack of both human and material support. Also, funding is frequently suggested by teachers as a means to support structures and systems for inclusion. *“We need more funding to be able to meet the needs of SEN children and to buy educational materials for them” (T/F).*

The issue of low salaries is well related to private lessons and both of them are highly related to the main issue of funding. It emerges as a concern for most teachers with the majority of them complaining that they have insufficient income to support their life and their family needs. Teachers' salaries in Egypt can hardly afford a decent living for teachers. This makes teachers try to compensate this through extra work in the afternoon or private tuitions or lessons. Of course teachers cannot find any opportunity to seek

professional development. The comment of one secondary teacher reflects such a devastating atmosphere.

“After 22 years experience my salary is 450 Egyptian pounds per month. Of course I am married with a family. How can we live and satisfy the needs of our family. The only way is private lessons or another afternoon part-time job” (T/U).

The data indicates that private lessons could constrain teachers’ motivation to work and students’ motivation to learn. Teachers will not find an opportunity to seek professional development and consequently this will affect their efficacy in teaching and will affect students’ learning.

However, some teachers showed a humanitarian approach believing that it is not just a matter of money; rather it is a matter of moral responsibility and commitment.

“Of course “low salaries” is a big issue, but what can we do? This is the reality. Yes we need too much money to support schools in general and inclusion in particular but as long as we accept to do this job we have to fear Allah and do our best. Honestly, if we try according to our limited sources but to be motivated and expect reward from Allah we could achieve this project” (T/Z).

The previous quotes suggest that teachers need to be motivated to support inclusion. Also, this indicates that the absence of good incentives is a barrier to the successful implementation of inclusion.

- **Absence of an educational Policy for inclusion**

Currently, there is no policy or legislation which would support inclusive education in Egypt. Some teachers reported that the absence of a clear policy for inclusive education and lack of regulations and circulations is a big barrier to inclusion.

“Unfortunately there is no educational policy for inclusion. The rule is that all children with SEN would be educated in special schools but the exception that those students could be educated in regular schools if possible” (T/S).

Teachers also argued that the formal educational policy is based on the two models; regular and special which, in their view, will enhance exclusion not inclusion.

“The policy of the Ministry of Education is to teach normal students in regular schools and to teach students with disabilities in special schools. However policy makers used to say some useless slogans in the media about SEN students but this is the reality” (T/G).

Also, teachers mentioned that the educational policy for children with special educational needs does not include all children. This policy claims education in special settings for children with SEN who can learn. Learning according to the governmental policy means academic achievement. Based on this understanding of learning, some

children cannot learn which means they have no place in the educational system at all. A special education teacher said *“children with intellectual disabilities are still classified as educable and non educable. Unfortunately this is the ministry policy, teachers have no choice. Non-educable children according to this classification system have no space in schools at all”* (T/A). Therefore, teachers asked for adopting a policy at the country level and constructing some legislation and regulations to support inclusion.

7.5.2 Interpersonal barriers

Interpersonal barriers refer to the influence of the people with whom teachers deal during the educational process like: the school administration and inspectors, the parents, and the peers. Following is a detailed description of how teachers perceive these barriers.

- **School administration and inspectors**

Teachers mentioned that the school administration could be a potential barrier to the implementation of inclusion. The majority of teachers reflected on the current difficulties which they face with school administration. They expected that these difficulties might get worse in the case of inclusion. This view is exemplified by the following response.

“School administration can frustrate the teacher and reduce his motivation to teach. For example head teachers and inspectors have not got any training or experience in the field of special needs. How can they lead or guide this work. I am concerned that there may be some clashes or conflicts between teachers and head teachers” (T/A).

Another teacher commented on the current role of the administration and inspectors and said *“inspectors and head teachers are mainly concerned with the teacher’s preparation notebook and even they are inflexible at all. For example the schedule for this month (February) is so busy. I asked the head teacher to reschedule the lessons of February and March so they can be reasonable and affordable to pupils. He was worried and said no. He justified his decision as not to be blamed by the inspector* (T/f).

Additionally, teachers were worried about their professional career because the administration gives higher bodies formal reports that could affect teachers’ annual reports. One teacher commented *“You know the annual reports depend mainly on children’s achievement and memorization. Whatever you have done for children with SEN will not support your annual report”* (T/G).

The data here suggests that the absence of effective educational leadership in the school context is a potential barrier to the implementation of inclusion. All personnel working in the school should collaborate together to create a school culture that cares for the education of all children.

- **Parents' and peers' attitudes**

Teachers anticipated that both parents of students with and without SEN may not view inclusion favourably. On the first hand, teachers were concerned that parents of students with SEN may prefer the special school where their children can get a specialized service. Also, teachers mentioned that parents would be concerned that their children's educational needs would not be met in the general education classroom. A special education teacher said *"I think that parents of children with SEN will not support inclusion. They may prefer the special school where their child is doing well with his special teacher"* (T/Y).

Teachers mentioned another reason that could make parents of SEN children tend to prefer special schools; that is, to obtain some financial and academic benefits. In Egypt, all children enrolled in special schools are legally defined as disabled or as students with SEN which entitle them to some financial and or academic benefits. On the other hand, children with SEN enrolled in mainstream schools are not legally defined as disabled, which means they are not eligible for such academic and financial benefits. Therefore, teachers were concerned that *"some parents of SEN students will prefer the special school to get financial benefit of the governmental support to such families"* (T/A).

Another sort of benefit is the rules of university admission (applicable to visually-impaired) where those students can get exemption to join university with less scores in comparison to their typically developing peers. The only criteria for joining university in Egypt are the student's scores in the secondary school. Students with visual impairments get 5 % off. For example, if a certain faculty requires a certain score in the secondary school certificate, visually impaired students are entitled for 5 % off from this percent. One teacher working in a special school for visually impaired reported *"you know ... some parents are so eager to get a place for their children in special schools to get benefit of the 5 % in the university admission rules. I have seen some parents who produce false medical reports to the school to prove that their children are visually impaired just to get benefit of the 5 % off"* (T/T).

On the other hand, teachers were concerned that parents of children without SEN may resist as well, based on a belief that including children with SEN in the regular schools may deteriorate their children's learning. *"I think parents of normal children will not accept inclusion. They will say my child's learning will be affected"* (T/Z).

Moreover, some teachers believe that non-disabled students negative attitudes could preclude the successful inclusion of students with SEN. A special education teacher said *"Normal students may laugh at their peers with SEN. They may laugh at them, or bully them"* (T/S).

7.5.3 Personal Barriers

Personal barriers refer to factors related to the teachers themselves such as lack of training and experience, feeling pressured or stressed, lack of teachers' interest in teaching and teachers' attitudes. Following is a detailed description of how teachers perceive these barriers.

- **Lack of training and experience**

Considerable evidence in the data has indicated that both general and special educators feel inadequately prepared to serve students with SEN in general education classrooms. Specifically teachers have reported that they have insufficient skills and training to adequately serve children with special needs. One teacher said *"I could say that teachers in regular schools do not have the sufficient abilities and skills to teach SEN students because they have not got training"* (T/S).

Generally, teachers' were not satisfied with their professional training programmes either pre or in-service. They criticised these programmes for being highly theoretical, limited, and sometimes monotonous (see section 7.4 professional development). However, during the interviews teachers reported that they can teach children with mild disabilities.

"It is not difficult to teach children with mild difficulties like slow learners, children with specific learning disabilities, children with speech problems. I remember that I had a student who had speech difficulties but he was very clever. I used to ask him to write his answers instead of talking to avoid any troubles. He used to get the highest scores and now he is a famous physician" (T/Z).

Additionally, some teachers stated that they can teach children with mild sensory difficulties like visually or hearing impaired either by their own or with some assistance. *"I used to teach some blind children in my classroom because my subject is theoretical and they can understand me very well"* (T/M).

Regarding children with visual impairment, teachers' lack of training means mainly lack of skills on how to use Braille. Similarly, teachers' concern about deaf children was mainly about their inability to use the sign language. Teachers' major concern was the absence of training regarding children with severe intellectual disabilities. *"Yes I can teach blind children but I do not know how to use Braille. But I cannot teach children with severe intellectual disabilities. I have never got any training about this"* (T/U).

Another teacher said *"teaching children with hearing impairments requires some skills in communication and using sign language. If teachers do not have such skills it will be a problem. Teachers have not got nay training about this. I think it might be a good idea to have a sign language interpreter in inclusive classrooms"* (T/Y).

Finally, the absence of real experience of inclusion was another significant factor that affects the movement towards the implementation of inclusion. The following response represents a common view among most teachers.

"We do not have any experience with inclusion. Of course it would be difficult for me and for teachers who have not got such experience as well to teach those students" (T/K).

The data suggests that teachers' lack of skills to teach some children with SEN was attributed mainly to the low quality of pre-service and in-service training programmes. Also, the qualitative data clarified some ambiguities in the questionnaire findings. The questionnaire findings indicated that teachers were concerned that they do not have the necessary skills to teach SEN students. Their response was not clear due to the generic use of the word SEN. However, in the interviews teachers were given the opportunity to reflect more upon this point and the data indicated that their responses were mainly differentiated by disability type and severity as highlighted above.

- **Feeling pressured or stressed**

All teachers felt that the current Egyptian educational policy which overemphasizes the importance of academic achievement represents a great barrier to inclusive education movement. They all reported that they will experience too much stress for academic results. Indicative of that stress was a frequent reference to accountability, responsibility, inspection and administration problems, examinations, parents' expectations etc.

The issue of responsibility was considered from opposing perspectives. Being responsible for the regular class children as well as for a child with a disability was a dilemma for many teachers. Teachers' understanding of responsibility seems to contradict the equal opportunities discourse about inclusion. Although teachers believe

in the right of SEN children to be educated in the regular schools, they have some concerns regarding typically developing children. An experienced Al-Azhar teacher provided one of many similar comments when he said: *“We have to consider the rest of the class. Non-disabled students should not suffer because of a disabled colleague in their class taking up too much of their teachers’ time and effort”* (T/U).

Additionally, teachers were concerned that they were already under stress because of the great emphasis placed on accountability and meeting the standards of administration and inspection system as stated above in the interpersonal barriers to inclusion.

- **Teachers’ lack of interest in teaching**

Teachers pointed out that some teachers choose education as a profession because this is the only option for them as there are no other jobs. If some teachers are not interested in teaching in general, they will not have the interest in teaching students with SEN or at least they will find teaching those students more difficult.

“Not all teachers like teaching....You know many teachers work just for money because they can not find another job however they are not qualified for such a job. I believe that teachers who are able to give are those who love their jobs” (T/Y).

Another teacher commented *“some teachers are not interested in this job. They just cover the shortage in staff”* (T/H).

Another teacher referred to the issue of transferring teachers from regular schools to special schools, which is always based on financial incentives, rather than qualification and personal interest. *“Some regular education teachers are moved to work in special schools not because they are qualified to do this job or because they like teaching those children. Unfortunately they just look for some financial incentives no more”* (T/G).

However this point is related to the special education model; it indicates that the absence of personal interest and intrinsic motivation towards teaching in general, and teaching children with SEN in particular, is a potential barrier to the success of the implementation of inclusion. Also, although financial incentives could be used to motivate teachers to do a good job, at least they should be qualified first and interested in doing this job.

- **Teachers’ attitudes**

Teachers’ attitudes either implicit or explicit could be a potential barrier to inclusion. While most teachers showed slightly positive attitudes, these attitudes could be considered selective and pragmatic at the same time. A common response among most

teachers was that they are committed to inclusion in principle but for some not all children.

“Yes Inclusion will be great for most children. But I think special school will be much better of children with intellectual disabilities” (T/H).

Some teachers explicitly declared that teachers’ negative attitudes and behaviours are barriers to inclusion. A special education teacher said *“teachers’ negative attitudes could undermine the whole process” (T/T)*. (For more about attitudes see section 7.2 above).

7.5.4 Socio-cultural barriers

Socio-cultural barriers refer to barriers in the broader social context. They include factors like: social view of school and schooling and social views of disability. Following is a detailed description of these barriers.

- **Social view of school and schooling**

School as a social institution plays a major role in bringing up new generations through processes of socialization and education. However all teachers believe that this is the role that the school should play, unfortunately they were concerned that this is not the reality at the moment. The majority of teachers believe that the current Egyptian schooling system represents a big obstacle for the implementation of inclusion. They argued that the school has lost its social role.

“Unfortunately students do not like to go to school. They just go to school to meet the attendance conditionsand we are speaking about inclusion. Schools should be reformed first” (T/U).

Another teacher was frustrated, reporting that *“we force our kids to go to schools, the school has become undesired place to go to I do not know why” (T/I)*.

Some teachers attributed the failure of the school to the nature of the highly informative competitive curricula which according to teachers leave no space for activities that could enhance their creativity. One teacher said *“the curriculum in our schools is sterile ... all what we do “sorry what we have to do” is to fill kids’ minds with information. No activities” (T/Y)*.

Some teachers attributed this dilemma to the incompatibility between Educational policymakers’ declared aims and the realities of teaching and learning in the schools. A primary teacher said *“we have to follow a specified teaching plan and given topics. Any drift away from the ministry’s plan puts teachers in trouble” (T/F)*.

Another teacher reflected on the pre-service programmes which are theoretical and not related to the schooling system. *“What we are doing in schools now is completely different from what we learnt in university. We are in a competition. Filling children’s minds with information, private lessons and by the end useless certificates. We should teach students to be good citizens in the future (T/H).*

- **Social view of disability**

One of the most frequently stated barriers across all the interviews was lack of awareness or the social views and attitudes towards disability. According to the interviewed teachers, some people are not aware of the difficulties and needs of children and adults with SEN and they are not aware of the importance of education for them. However most Egyptian people are tolerant and empathetic, still many people view disability negatively or deal with SEN people wrongly either with over protection and over sympathy or with inferior view. The answer of one special education teacher summarises this view. *“First of all inclusive education requires a very high level of awareness in side of all people. Honestly many people lack such awareness” (T/A).*

Another teacher commented on the collective social behaviour *“people deal with persons with SEN in a wrong way, For example, some people sometimes laugh at persons with intellectual disabilities. I think this is because of ignorance. And the problem is that such behaviour is not compatible with the teachings of our religion that asked us to show sympathy and respect to those people” (T/M).*

Such views seem to contradict the ideal Islamic views about disability which underpinned teachers’ socio-ethical discourse about inclusion. However, the answer of one teacher could explain this conflict. While this teacher believes that the social view of disability is a barrier to inclusion, he commented *“this bad view is because that we are away from religion. We do not understand our religion very well. If the person is a good believer he will accept his disability. And if people follow the great manners of our prophet our behaviour would be excellent” (T/S).*

Another teacher from Al-Azhar supported this view saying *“the main problem is the social behaviour in our society. And I think religion is not to be blamed for this issue. Our religion calls for equality, sympathy and mercy. For example, there is no difference between the disabled and non-disabled in the rules of Islam, the worship and heritage rules. The problem lies in our understanding of religion and sometimes in our ignorance of religion” (T/K).*

The data indicates that the social attitudes towards the people with disabilities could be a potential barrier to the implementation of inclusion. The way teachers reported these views and attitudes reflected their dissatisfaction with such attitudes. Whenever teachers reported these issues, they used to confirm that such attitudes and understanding is not compatible with the teachings of Islam. This could mean that people's social behaviour and beliefs have been tainted by secular practices. Also, this showed how the social and cultural factors could play a role in the construction of disability. The interesting point here is that there is a kind of incompatibility between the social construction of disability and the ideal religious construction of disability. In some cases people may show good behaviour towards disabled people and in some other cases they show bad behaviour. This means that the broader social context, the religion context, disability context and education context should be considered in the analysis of the construction of disability.

The analysis showed that there is a variety of perceived barriers that could affect the implementation of inclusion. All types of barriers were shown to be related, and they interacted together to affect teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion.

It should also be noted that a distinction between the categories of barriers is not clear-cut. The boundaries among these categories are hypothetical. What might be considered as structural-organizational at a certain time could be considered interpersonal at other times.

An example for the "inter-contextuality" and "interconnectedness" amongst this variety of barriers is "curriculum and examination system" which indicated to be a multi-sided phenomenon and proved to be related to other variables, as the analysis suggests. Despite this "interconnectedness" among variables, there was some sort of conflict between these barriers. For example, there is a conflict between teachers' roles and parents' expectations.

7.6 Teachers' perceptions about change

During the interviews teachers discussed factors that could support the movement towards inclusive practices. Four key factors, representing four main categories, emerged through the data that could contribute to change. These factors are societal awareness, developing educational policies, organizational and structural changes in schools, and teachers' commitment. The relationships between these categories are represented diagrammatically in Figure (7.7). All these categories and codes are

believed to interact and collaborate to affect the ways teachers understand inclusion, teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and finally the implementation of inclusion.

It is worth mentioning here that this theme is highly correlated with the barriers theme. However, I prefer to present each separately for the purpose of clarity. Also, there are some points in the change theme that need to be highlighted. Considerable evidence in the data indicated that teachers tend to ask for overcoming barriers whenever they were asked about change. The response of a special education teacher exemplified this common view among all the teachers.

“Personally I do not resist change. We can not stand still for ever we have to change. This is life. But to move from the current status to inclusion I think all personnel in schools including teachers should believe in it, and secondly we have to overcome all the barriers that I have mentioned before” (T/S).

Below is a detailed analysis of the four key factors that could support the supposed change.

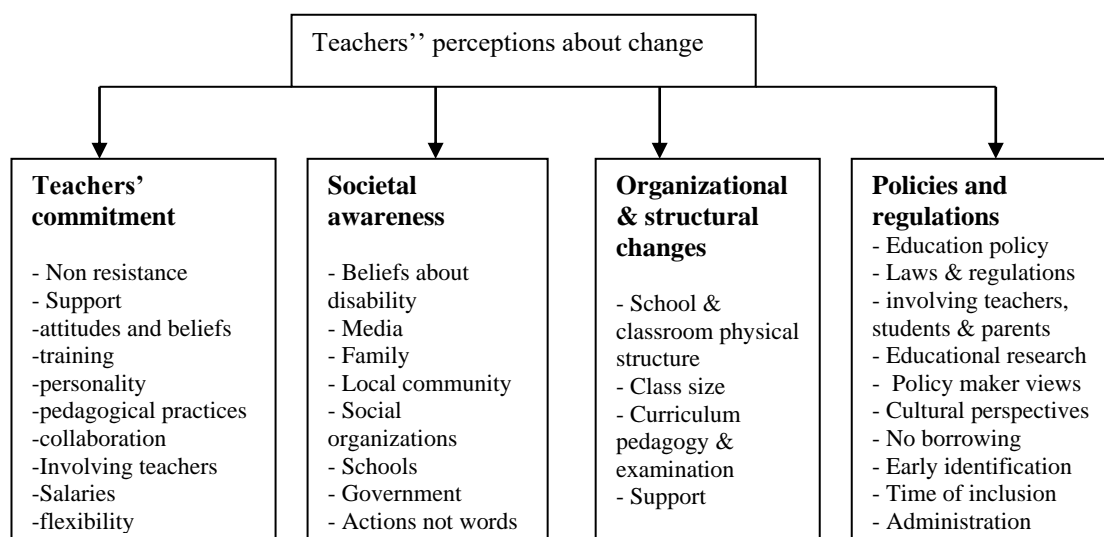


Figure 7.16 Teachers' perceptions about change

7.6.1 Societal awareness

The majority of the interviewees believe that the social view towards disabled people should be changed. Teachers asked for increasing the awareness level of the needs of people with SEN among all the members of the community. In this respect, teachers suggested several means and roles that can support movement towards change like media, religious counselling, governmental orientation, parents, and the local communities. The following quotations represent these views clearly.

“The society views should be changed. There are several means to do that for example media, training programmes, conferences, public speeches and lectures,

workshops. All people should be aware of the conditions and needs of people with SEN so we can reach a loving, caring and co-operative society” (T/Y).

“It is not wise to start the inclusion policy without raising peoples’ awareness because people will reject it. Social attitudes must be changed” (T/T).

Most of the teachers concentrated on the role of the media in achieving change because it is widespread and it has been successful in some other previous social programmes. One teacher called for a media campaign to increase our understanding of the needs of the people with SEN.

“There should be very good media coverage about this issue. For example, when we made media campaigns for family planning and regulation, they were very successful are not they? And this requires a comprehensive awareness that should start at the family first. And also the media should concentrate more on the positive aspects and abilities of people with SEN” (T/U).

Some other teachers concentrated on the role of social institutions and organizations and the government in particular in enhancing this change. This view is exemplified by the following response. *“All society institutions and organizations have to acknowledge those people right to live like anyone. And I think this is the responsibility of the state’s institutions and the government” (T/H).*

Also, teachers asked for more collaboration and support from local communities. *“We have to encourage local communities to participate especially parents, businessmen...etc” (T/M).*

Additionally, teachers asked for a more positive role for the family. They believe that increasing social awareness of the needs of disabled people should start at home. They emphasised on preparing non-disabled children especially at the family to help them accept their peers with disabilities.

“The non-disabled peers’ attitudes and perceptions towards their disabled peer should be changed. They should be aware that this person is not inferior. Rather, he is privileged and of course he may have some abilities which we do not have and this process is mainly the parents’ responsibility at home” (T/Z).

Also, a main part in the local community involvement and participation is parents’ involvement and support which was mentioned by the majority of teachers as crucial to the success of inclusive education in Egypt. Teachers believe that parents can represent a very good source of support to teachers and schools. Parents can provide schools with different forms of material and moral support. One teacher’s statement exemplified this belief. *“Parents could participate in supporting schools. I mean in providing schools with resources and other facilities” (T/U).*

Also, teachers believe that parents' participation in the education process through consultation with teachers, giving advice, taking part in educating their kids some skills beyond the classroom could facilitate the inclusive education process and could free up the teachers' time for instruction in support of academic skills in the general education classroom. This view is exemplified by a regular education teacher response who said *"I think parents can share the responsibility of educating those children with teachers, they can teach their children some skills at home like dressing and eating skills for example. Also, parents can give their views or even they can give a hand if they have any experience"* (T/I).

Moreover, some teachers believe that religious counselling can make a difference. They believe that religious counselling could be beneficial to both disabled and non-disabled children.

"Religious counselling would play a role in increasing social awareness and encouraging those people to accept their conditions and to feel proud that they can challenge the impairment, also students without disabilities could be advised that their peers are just different" (T/G).

While the majority of teachers were mainly concerned about increasing the whole society level of awareness about the needs of disabled people, some teachers specifically concentrated on the school context which is a part of the broad social context. As a special education teacher said *"Inclusion requires mainly high social awareness of the needs of people with SEN from all people in schools; teachers, administrators, psychologists, social workers etc. There should be a department in schools to guide students to the different branches and sectors of learning that seem to be suitable to their needs, abilities and their interests as well"* (T/A).

Finally, while the majority of teachers believe in all the mentioned procedures to achieve social awareness and commitment, some of them placed more emphasis on actions rather than speech, reiterating the famous proverb 'actions speak louder than words'. The response of a secondary Al-Azhar teacher exemplified this view.

"If we would like to change we should not only give speeches we should act as well. For example, we should not say to any body do not through rubbish in the street.... do notdo not.... The street is already unclean and there is no provision of bins. If we cleaned the streets and provide bins and at the same time punished who ever breaks the law I think the behaviour can be changed. The same process applies to inclusion and to every aspect of life of course" (T/M).

7.6.2 Policies and regulations

Teachers hold different views about the importance of educational policies and legislative frameworks in achieving inclusion. Some teachers were oriented towards achieving change by a top-down policy. Therefore, they asked for setting a higher educational policy and a legislative framework that supports and facilitates inclusion. Teachers believe that there is a need for a high educational policy from the ministry of education in addition to laws and regulations that control work within educational departments and schools. This view is clearly exemplified by the following response.

“I think setting some regulations that support inclusion is something very important. I mean inclusion should not be something for entertainment or something optional some people can take it and some others can leave. So there should be a clear policy for the ministry of education for inclusion and there should be legislations that must be followed in order to achieve inclusion process” (T/S).

On the contrary, some teachers were more oriented towards bottom-up processes of change and asked for a more positive role for teachers, parents and students.

“Inclusion would work better of course if there is a governmental educational policy and certain legislations that could support this process. But we should not rely only on legislations and policies teachers should be creative and initiative otherwise this process will not work” (T/M).

Also, those teachers reflected on the role of teachers in the process of change. While any process of change in Egypt is always a top-down process, those teachers were reluctant with this view and called for considering teachers', students' and parents' views before change.

“Teachers' and students opinions and views should be explored and respected before any change. But the reality is that some experts sit down and put a plan and all of us have to follow it. They do not consider the realities in the schools” (T/H).

Additionally, teachers believe that the educational policy should take into account the results of educational research and implement these results. They also believe that policymakers should seek advice from professionals instead of depending on the individualistic view of the minister or some of his counsellors, who are sometimes out of the field of education.

“The policy maker should respect and appreciate educational research and try to implement the results of this research. Theses and articles should not be put on shelves to collect dust. We should make the best use of researchers, professors and universities in general” (T/G).

In the same vein, some teachers criticized the educational policy and asked for changing the policy makers' views and conceptions about education in general and disabilities in particular. They believe that the policy maker is guided by certain beliefs and conceptions about disability and SEN which affects his decisions. Therefore, if change is to be in the right direction it is necessary that these conceptions should be changed first. This view is exemplified by the following response.

“The policymakers’ ways of thinking and views about children with SEN need to be changed because they have the power to take any decision about schools and teachers” (T/T).

Such beliefs about the role of policymaker led to a feeling of frustration and pessimism among some teachers about the current status of the educational system in general. One teacher said *“believe me there is no aim for education now in Egypt. They just give the student a material to keep by heart and memorize and that’s it. But the labour market controls our choices. For example, I advised my daughter to study medicine for two reasons: firstly, her knowledge and beliefs about Allah may increase; and secondly, she may find a job in the future” (T/Z).*

Teachers here are reflecting on the absence of personal choice in study. Most students do not study what they like. Their score in secondary school leads them to a certain faculty in which they may have no interest.

Interestingly, some teachers stressed on considering the cultural perspectives of our society and not depending on borrowing ideas from different cultures in setting educational policies. This view is exemplified by the following response.

“Education is not a field of experiments. If a certain experiment or approach has been successful in another country say for example The USA we should not take it and implement it blindly and stupidly. Certainly it will fail by the end because every society has its views and resources” (T/F).

On the practice level in schools, teachers proposed some changes that need to be done and to be supported first by the higher educational policies to facilitate and control performance in schools. One of the regulations that could support inclusion in schools is early identification of disabilities. Teachers believe identification should be at very early stages and the aims of identification should be oriented towards supporting the child within the school, rather than referring him to a special school.

“The identification system is so primary we mainly depend on the role of the psychologist, IQ tests and some medical examination to identify disability which is very limited. There should be some kind of active observation and along-term follow up to the child. The problem is that we identify or diagnose disability to

refer the child to a special school not to give him support in the school this should be completely changed” (T/G).

However such issues seem to be related to the school context but I think they are mainly related to the educational system context. This is because of the highly centralized educational system where schools and teachers have to follow higher plans. There is no space for teachers or head teachers to take the initiative.

The time for inclusion is another issue that most teachers believe that the policymaker should consider in setting the educational policy. They believe that inclusion should be the rule not the exception. A secondary teacher said *“The educational policy should consider the timing of inclusion very seriously. Inclusion should start as early as possible, I think even from nursery because the aim of inclusion is mainly social behavioural one. If I excluded the child in this age it will be so difficult latter on in primary or secondary school” (T/K).*

Additionally, some teachers asked for readdressing teachers’ professional development and employment rules. Teachers believe that not every one can be a teacher. A teacher should have certain qualifications and personality characteristics that facilitate his job.

“Not every one can be a teacher. The teacher creates and brings up a whole generation and if he fails the whole generation will fail. Teacher’s personality is very important. And we have to stop favouritism in employing teachers” (T/U).

Finally, and as stated previously, teachers believe that there is a need for urgent change in the school administration system. Teachers believe that head teachers and administrators should believe in inclusion and also support it so the process can succeed. Teachers reported that head teachers and administrators should be flexible and have the leadership characteristics and not to be authoritative and interested only in traditional issues which are not related to children’s development. A primary teacher said *“head teacher should be more flexible. They should avoid emphasising on trivial things and try to show more interest in learners’ social, emotional and academic development” (T/F).*

The evidence here indicates that change is not only one direction; top-down or vice versa. Change should be two-way process. Top-down policy should be supported by considering teachers’, students’ and parents’ roles. Additionally, the context should be considered. This point actually supported the debate that inclusion is a culture and context based phenomenon. While teachers call for reconstructing and reformulating the

educational system before implementing inclusion, they stressed on doing this based on national and cultural ethos, rather than borrowing from others.

7.6.3 Teachers' commitment

Because teachers are guided by their values, beliefs, and attitudes towards change, they must be convinced that a particular change is worthwhile and understand the reasons for it. There is enough evidence in the data to show that the majority of teachers had a strong belief that inclusion will not work without a commitment to change by the persons who will serve as the change agents, mainly teachers and head teachers. Interestingly, teachers do not resist change in itself but they are looking for more external efforts to support change in general and to help in building teachers' commitment towards inclusion in particular. This view is exemplified by the following response.

“We like to change the current situation but we can not do change ourselves. We cannot stand still all the life we have to change. But this is the responsibility of the state and the ministry of education” (T/H).

The non-resistant approach was clear from teachers' positive intentions towards the implementation of inclusion and their willingness to take responsibility of children with SEN and their readiness to adapt their teaching styles to accommodate those children in their classes (for more details see section 7.2 above).

In addition, the majority of teachers believe that there are some needs for teachers that should be fulfilled in order to build a high level of commitment among teachers to be able to achieve the supposed change. The majority of interviewed teachers call for changing the common beliefs and perceptions about disability among some teachers. The response of a secondary special education teacher exemplified this view. *“Teachers' perceptions about disability must be changed. And their negative attitudes and mockery behaviour must be changed as well” (T/T).*

Therefore, they asked for intensive training programmes to challenge teacher's assumptions about disability. *“Unfortunately, the way some regular teachers view students with SEN does not support inclusion. They think that all those students are mad so it is important to make intensive training courses sessions for those teachers to keep them informed about SEN and the different approaches for teaching SEN students” (T/A).*

Involving teachers in the whole process is another aspect that could participate in building teachers' commitment. The majority of teachers believe that *"the teachers' role should be considered very seriously by the policymaker in decisions related to children because this will increase teachers' commitment and feeling of responsibility As one teacher said"* (T/H).

Supporting teachers financially and ensuring for them a decent standard of living could help in building their commitment as well. *"Teachers should be supported financially otherwise they will have to look for additional work which of course will affect their performance in the classroom"* (T/S).

Giving schools and teachers some sort of flexibility to run the school performance instead of the highly centralized approach which forces all teachers in the country to follow the same plan and approach can also increase teachers' feelings of responsibility and commitment. The response of a secondary special education teacher exemplified this view.

"Unfortunately teachers have no chance to put individual educational plans to children with SEN but they have to follow the rigid plan of the ministry of education. Of course this will not work with inclusion. Teachers and head teachers should be allowed to put their own plans that suits the needs of children in their schools and that suits their resources as well" (T/T).

It could be concluded from this section that teachers' commitment towards change is not simply a matter of personal choice that can be built by some workshops and training programmes. Rather, it is a complicated issue that requires much support both internal and external. Teachers' role in the process of change must be considered very seriously from the policymaker. Also, to facilitate confidence and competence, teachers need systematic and intensive training that includes research-based best practices in inclusive schools. Also, teachers' life should be secured in order to do a good job. According to the insights gained from teachers' responses, there are different things like financial support, emotional and psychological reward, intrinsic motivation and religious commitment that could motivate teachers to support inclusion policy.

7.6.4 Organizational and structural changes in schools

As stated above in barriers theme, there were many organizational and structural barriers that should be surmounted in order to implement inclusion. Despite the similarity in the names of codes and categories, what are presented here are mainly

teachers' suggestions about changing these issues. Following is a detailed description of these suggestions.

- **School and classroom physical structure**

The majority of teachers believe that changing the physical structure of the schools and the classrooms is a necessity in order to be able to accommodate children with SEN, specifically children with physical disabilities. Currently there are too many places, for examples, entrances, halls, toilets, etc. which are not accessible for SEN students. *“The stairs of the school and the hallways should be changed to be more accessible to students with physical disabilities. Also there should be a lift in any school”* (T/M)

Another teacher said *“educational buildings should be designed in a way that makes movement easy for every one and every facility especially toilets should be accessible to every child”* (T/H).

Some teachers realized that it is too difficult to change the structure of schools completely. Alternatively, they asked for adapting the current structures in one way or another to be suitable for the needs of those students. As one teacher said *“Of course we can not change everything. At least the main entrance of the school should be accessible to children with physical disabilities. And say for example if we have three or four children with physical disabilities in the school we can place them in ground floor classrooms”* (T/Z).

Additionally, the layout of the classroom, furniture, light, and boards were highly recommended to be reconstructed to be more accessible to all children. One teacher said *“the desks of children with physical disabilities should be adjustable not fixed like the others or there should be a space in the classroom that allows those children to sit in their wheelchairs in the classroom”* (T/H).

Teacher (F) added *“there should be enough light and different kinds of boards should be used because to help children with low vision. Alternatively children with low vision and children with low hearing should sit in the first rows so they can see the board clearly and hear the teacher properly”*.

- **Class size**

A number of participants commented on the need for smaller classes to successfully cater for students with SEN. One teacher put it as a condition for successful inclusion when he said *“if we would like inclusion to be successful pupil–teacher ratios must be reduced. Class size should be reasonable”* (T/S).

Another teacher commented and recommended a certain number of children in the classroom and a certain number of children to be included stating *“we could manage if the number of students is around or below 25 and the number of SEN students is no more than 3 in the class. Otherwise it will be so difficult and unprofitable”* (T/U).

Teacher (Z) agreed that the class size is a big issue but it is not easy to resolve it at the moment. Alternatively, she asked for *“reducing the number of students in the classes that include children with SEN”*.

- **Curriculum, pedagogy and examination system**

In analysing the data, curriculum was conceived of in terms of aims, goals, content, and pedagogy and examination system. However, there was too much emphasis on the content which means textbooks. It is easy to notice that from the different quotations mentioned below. The majority of teachers were not concerned about the aims of the curriculum as they believed that these aims should be the same for all children. The notion of the good citizen was in the heart of their responses. As one teacher put it *“we are all looking for good citizens, so I do not think that we need to change the aims of the curriculum for SEN students”* (T/K).

Some other teachers shared this belief but called for differentiated goals to be achieved according to the abilities of those children on the classroom and practice level. This view is exemplified by the response of one regular education teacher.

“The aims of the curriculum should be different. I would like the talented child to be creative but regarding the disabled child I would like him to be socialized and accommodated in the society not to be a burden on the others’ shoulders. So I think the procedural aims and the content of the curricula should be different for children with SEN” (T/Z).

Regarding the content of the curriculum (textbooks), teachers have three views according to type of disability. The first view indicates that curricula mustn't be changed for children with physical disabilities. *“I think the curriculum (textbook) is not a problem at all for students with physical disabilities. Because they can understand it very well and their intellectual abilities are good”* (T/H).

The second view indicates that curricula should be adapted and simplified and this is applicable to sensory (visual and hearing) impairments. This view is exemplified by the following response *“I think that the current curriculum should be adapted for children with hearing or visual impairment”* (T/I).

Teacher (F) agreed and added *“There are some parts of the curricula that require observation which means they will not be suitable for the visually impaired children so these parts should be adapted. Also, the curricula should be summarized and freed from useless information to be suitable for the hearing impaired children because the non-disabled child feel bored sometimes so what about the deaf or hearing impaired one”*.

And the third view indicates that there must be special curricula for children with intellectual disability.

“We can not simplify the curriculum because this will affect the non-disabled student badly. There should be a special curriculum for children with intellectual disability” (T/Y).

Interestingly, some teachers were reluctant with the curricula in general and called for clearing these curricula from unnecessary information as one teacher said *“Curricula are full of useless information and sometimes include information which is not suitable to the abilities of some children. These curricula should be cleared from useless filling first” (T/T).*

However teachers' responses varied about the suitability of the content of the curricula to the abilities of children with SEN, most of them had a strong belief that it is matter of teaching styles and strategies. In pedagogical terms, they believe that it is the teacher's responsibility to change, adapt and vary in his teaching methods to be able to accommodate children with SEN. As one teacher put it *“there should be some sort of flexibility in teaching. We have to avoid lecturing system. Teachers should be creative and change their teaching styles to support children with SEN” (T/M).*

Teacher (K) added *“Teacher should use differentiated teaching methods to overcome the difficulties of the curriculum. I think the good teacher should classify students in the classroom into three or four levels and try to teach according to these levels because we are different and as a teacher I could not expect that all students will understand the lesson on the same level”*.

With respect to evaluation and examination, most teachers were unsatisfied with the current evaluation policy in general and asked for reforming this policy. The response of a regular education teacher exemplifies this view.

“The traditional evaluation system which depends only on memorization will not work with disabled children. Probably we can use activities and evaluate those children through these activities. And I think there is a need for setting new criteria for evaluation” (T/I).

Consistent with their views about the content of the curricula, teachers have three views about the examination system. All teachers believe that exams should be the same for students with physical disabilities because the curriculum is the same. Teachers who believe that the curricula can be adapted to suit the needs of some children with SEN suggested providing those students with an adapted form of the exam or test that suits their abilities.

“The content of the test should be the same for students with physical disabilities to guarantee fairness and equality. But the method should be different for children with visual and hearing impairment. For example we can examine the visual impaired orally. And we can examine the hearing impaired by sign language. We do not have to follow one strict form of written exams” (T/T).

And few teachers called for a special evaluation system for children with intellectual disability. *“There should be special evaluation system for children with intellectual disabilities; I mean special tests that match the nature of their curriculum” (T/Y).*

A final important point about curricula and examination system is teachers’ perspectives about changing the parents’ and the schools’ expectations of children’s academic performance. Teachers thought that the schools’ and parents expectations of the SEN children’s academic performance should be changed. They also believe that educational departments should relieve them from the stress of maintaining a fixed minimum standard of achievement for all students. The response of a secondary Al-Azhar teacher exemplified this view.

“We expect that all students should achieve very high scores, it is silly, we are different and thus our performance should be different. I am not expecting that all SEN or even normal could be doctors and engineers. This is our system and parents expectations as well. We should think in other way. We should develop vocational education, agricultural, industrial and commercial. I do not know what’s wrong of being a carpenter or a plumber ...etc” (T/U).

The data here indicates that teachers are not in full agreement about curricular inclusion. Such responses reflect integration ethos rather than inclusion ethos where every child has the opportunity to participate in the curriculum. However, teachers showed a high sense of differentiation which is considered to be one of the main principles of inclusive education. Additionally, data indicated that teachers are constrained by the policymaker’s aims and this could explain teachers’ tendency towards traditional teaching methods that emphasised mainly on delivery of the curriculum and management of the classroom.

- **Support**

All the teachers interviewed hold a strong belief that inclusion will not work without support. Their argument centred around two forms of support; human and material. Regarding human support, all teachers said that the regular classroom teachers need helping hands. *“There is no problem with inclusion at all if there are enough resources both professionally and materially”* (T/H).

The potential sources of human support for these teachers were special education teachers, teacher assistants, head teachers, and colleagues. As a special education teacher said *“head teachers should be flexible and open-minded. They should encourage and support teachers to overcome the daily problems of inclusion. And also using assistant teachers may be helpful and useful especially in big classes”* (T/G).

However the “teacher assistant” notion was considered as a source of support, some teachers were suspicious that the presence of a teacher assistant in the classroom will have many side effects and will affect the progress of students. One teacher said *“It is not logical to have a teacher assistant in the class. He may distract the attention of normal students”* (T/K).

Additionally, some teachers were very keen to get experience and more information from their colleagues in special schools. They highly recommended collaboration and communication among all teachers for the sake of SEN students. *“There should be collaboration between special teachers and regular teachers. Regular teachers should be able to seek advice and consult from the special colleagues”* (T/S).

The second form of support is the material support. All teachers asked for providing inclusive schools with all the appropriate teaching and educational materials required based on the type of SEN of included children. One teacher put it this way *“schools should be provided with all the teaching materials that could help the teacher to do his job appropriately”* (T/Z).

One teacher who had worked in an inclusive setting reported a satisfactory level of support and believed that inclusion without this support could not have been possible.

“I always find resource room teachers very helpful. Honestly I couldn’t do it without their support. One special teacher helped “F” [an included child] in reading and another one helped her in math” (T/I).

Also, teachers argued that support either human or material will save teachers’ time and reduce pressure that teachers may feel from the additional workload in the classroom. This view is exemplified by the following response.

“I think the support that teacher can get from his colleagues and from the material resources as well could help him in doing a very good job and also it will save some of his time and efforts” (T/F).

7.7 Reflections on the findings and conclusion to the chapter

This chapter has presented teachers’ perceptions about inclusion. The analysis revealed that teachers hold heterogeneous perceptions. They cover a wide and a broad selection of topics and aspects. The range of perceptions teachers articulated about inclusion, SEN/disability, cultural context, their attitudes and their perceptions about barriers and change indicates that teachers did not draw upon particular theoretical claims made by the literature despite the fact that these perceptions have their representations in inclusion and disability theories. Some of these perceptions reflect progressive thoughts about inclusion (e.g. participation, equal opportunities). Others reflect the traditional approaches of integration.

Additionally, the data indicated that teachers’ conceptualizations of inclusion and disability are affected by the cultural context. Their perceptions are shaped by their Islamic religious beliefs about equality and equal rights so most of their responses reflect a socio-ethical discourse. However, there are some other beliefs that were not consistent with the ideal religious beliefs which could be foci of the broader Egyptian cultural context. Also, the data has showed that teachers tend to hold mixed attitudes towards inclusion as they tend to associate it with positive and negative attributes at the same time. However, such attitudes could be considered slightly positive as the positive attributes were more than the negative attributes.

The qualitative analysis of barriers to the implementation of inclusion highlighted the role of the contextual factors more clearly and supports the argument that barriers to inclusion is not simply an issue of resources; rather it is a very complicated issue that encompass too many inter-correlated contextual factors that should be addressed very carefully in order to implement inclusion effectively. Additionally, investigation of these contextual factors helps to enlighten the picture and gain insight into what constitutes teachers’ theories and what affects their daily routines.

Moreover, the findings indicate that change should be comprehensive to address all these issues. Of course teachers are not working in a vacuum. They are working in a certain context which constrains them. Therefore, change should include the broader social context, the educational system context, school and classroom context and teachers’ context with their understanding and perceptions about the whole issue.

Actually all these emergent issues need a more in-depth view and reading into teachers' responses that requires a holistic view into all the data. This will be done in the discussion chapter, which I will turn to now, to go beyond the text and look at the context.

Notes:

* Taha Hussein, The dean of Arabic literature. He was blind and completed his studies in Al-Azhar, Cairo University and *Sorbonne* University. Latter he was the minister of education in the early 1950s in Egypt.

**Alaqaad, one of the best Arabic writers in the twentieth century. He had a hearing impairment and because of this he left school after the primary stage. But through self learning he was able to write several books in Arabic literature, Islamic philosophy in addition to several novels.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Chapter Eight: Interpretation and Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a thorough interpretation and discussion of the key findings of the research. The presentation of the findings starts by summarising and reviewing the findings of the study obtained from both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, illustrated in detail in chapters 6 and 7, and giving answers to the research questions. This chapter takes into account the literature on inclusive education (see chapter 3) and teacher attitudes (see chapter 4). A range of themes emerged from the findings of the study. These are:

1. Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion
2. Understanding SEN/disability
3. Understanding inclusion
4. Factors associated with teachers' attitudes
5. Barriers to inclusion and movement towards change

A discussion of these themes will be addressed in detail by the following sections of the chapter.

8.2 Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion

The questionnaire results of this study suggest that teachers in Egypt tend to hold mildly favourable to favourable attitudes towards inclusion. Accordingly, the mean of the participants' response towards all the three components of attitudes ranged from a minimum of 3.23 to a maximum of 4.23 on the three scales (ranged from 1-5) measuring the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitudes as high mean scores indicate positive attitudes (see Table 6.2).

Broadly, the results obtained from the interviews with 12 teachers were consistent with the results of the questionnaire but with further and in-depth additions. However, there were some inconsistencies and anomalies which will be highlighted during the discussion where relevant. The data indicated that the majority of teachers believe in the philosophy of inclusion, support SEN children's right to be educated in the mainstream school, believe in the benefits of inclusion for students with and without disabilities (especially the social benefits), have positive emotional responses towards children with different SEN and show positive intentional commitment to accommodate those children in their classrooms.

This finding is corroborated by previous research which reported favourable attitudes among teachers (Avramidis et al., 2000; Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Rojewski & Pollard, 1993; Villa et al., 1996; Ward et al., 1994) towards inclusion. Also, this finding is in accordance with the previous Egyptian studies (Sadek & Sadek 2000; Tufelis, 2001). Interestingly, however there is no inclusive educational policy at the meantime in Egypt, teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are moderately positive. This can be explained by the effect of the social context, specifically religious values and beliefs, on teachers' attitudes. Teachers' responses reflected either explicitly or implicitly the Islamic religious values where all people should be treated equally and in a respectable manner, however their actual practice might not be compatible with such beliefs due to different personal and contextual factors.

Supporting the overall positive attitudes towards inclusion is teachers' positive perspective regarding the expected outcomes of inclusive education. On the one hand, the results of the questionnaire, and more clearly the results of the interviews, indicated that teachers believe that inclusion is socially beneficial to all children as the perceived social benefits of inclusion are more than the perceived negative effects. They believe that children with SEN would acquire cognitive, linguistic and social skills through observing, modelling and interacting with more competent peers and their self-esteem and self-confidence could be improved. Additionally, students without disabilities would learn about and accept differences, show empathy, help and support their peers with disabilities. This finding is compatible with and supports the psychological-educational rationale for inclusion. Also this finding concurs with the findings of (Place & Hodge, 2001; Hodge et al., 2004; Luk, 2005; Pijl & Hamstra, 2005). For example, Hodge et al., (2004) concluded that students without disabilities assisted a classmate with disabilities in various class activities as they took turns as peer helpers.

On the other hand, teachers' perspectives regarding the academic benefits of inclusion for students with and without SEN were mixed. The questionnaire results showed that teachers were suspicious about the academic outcomes of the process. Due to the use of the generic term SEN in the questionnaire, this result was not clear. However, the results obtained from the interview clarified this issue and showed that teachers hold mixed views about the academic benefits for children with different SEN. Their views were based mainly on the type of disability. They thought that students with physical, hearing or visual disabilities will achieve academically good and better than their peers in special schools or even than their typically developing peers if the regular schools are

resourced with all the necessary needs of those students. However, the majority of teachers believe that children with intellectual disability will not benefit academically from inclusion and they thought that special school will be better for those children.

This finding does not concur with the results of (Avramidis et al., 2002) which showed that there was an evidence of overall positive academic outcomes in the inclusive school which they investigated. This may be due to the nature of children included in that school as they may not have intellectual disabilities. Egyptian teachers' concerns or fears about the outcomes of inclusion for children with intellectual disabilities or even the perceived deteriorating effects of inclusion on the achievement of some children without disabilities could be due to the over-emphasis on academic achievement in mainstream learning, especially in the highly competitive educational system in Egypt. Education in Egypt has been described as product driven not process driven (Gahin, 2001). In this sense, teachers are not to be blamed as they are expected to fulfil the policymakers' aims of education which are mainly higher academic achievement.

The data indicates that teachers adopted a discourse which was more focused on the social and emotional development of children which is compatible with their understanding of inclusion as a journey towards achieving social inclusion (see chapter 7). However, they were constrained by achievement and academic outcomes discourse which is the main priority in the Egyptian educational system nowadays. Teachers, students and parents are obsessed by the exams outcomes because they are the only criteria for pursuing higher education. Though teachers adopted the social outcomes discourse (philosophy or ideology), they may act within the academic achievement discourse (practice) as long as education is seen in Egypt in terms of desirable academic outcomes (national examinations). Such practice may lead to exclusion because there will always be students who cannot be accommodated within the existing system. In the Egyptian case, the data indicated that the problem is in conceptualizing education not inclusion. The dilemma here is there is a need to rethink "education" within a broader understanding that reflects all children's aspects of development instead of concentrating mainly on cognitive development.

Despite these overall favourable attitudes, teachers' appeared to be concerned about the lack of instructional skills of general education teachers and about the academic outcomes of inclusion. Uncertainty and concerns were also expressed about the lack of support, resources, training, time, curriculum and pedagogy, collaboration and social attitudes and beliefs about disability. Therefore, teachers in the current study supported

the inclusion of certain categories of children with SEN rather than adopting a zero-rejection model of inclusion. This does not mean that they do not support inclusion but it means that they are constrained by a number of variables that forces them to adopt such pragmatic attitudes. In Smith and Smith (2000) words “*we like inclusion but*”.

The results of this study concur with Scruggs and Mastropieri’s (1996) meta-analysis which included 28 survey reports conducted from at least 1958 through 1995. This research synthesis of teachers’ attitudes towards integration studies reported that, although two-thirds of the teachers surveyed (10,560 in total) agreed with the general concept of integration, only one-third or less believed they had sufficient time, skills, training and resources necessary for implementing inclusive programmes. Additionally, teachers’ orientation towards the integration model can have some support from the new shift in thinking about inclusion (Cigman, 2007; Low, 2007; Warnock, 2005).

Furthermore, teachers continued to support the option of special education placements for students with disabilities. This finding is in line with (Romi & Leyser, 2006) who reported that however student teachers’ showed very strong support for the philosophy of inclusion, they tend to prefer the special education placements for some students with SEN. Teachers’ support for the placement option in special education classrooms is not surprising, considering the continued debate among professionals (Croll & Moses, 2000; Kauffman, & Hallahan, 1995; Low, 2007; Slee, 1993; 2006) about the most appropriate placement for students with disabilities.

A final note that is worthy to be mentioned here is the degree of consistency and inconsistency in teachers’ responses. However the questionnaire did offer some insights into teachers’ perceptions of inclusive education, there were some contradictions in teachers’ responses in the questionnaire which could not have been fully understood without the in-depth interviews. For example, however teachers supported inclusion of children with SEN in the mainstream schools, they preferred the special settings for educating some of those children. The in-depth discussions about the meaning of inclusion and understanding of disability in the interviews clarified such contradictions. Such inconsistency had been noted in previous research (e.g. Lambe & Bones, 2006) who explained this inconsistency by the lack of familiarity and experience about inclusion among the participants. Such inconsistency in teachers’ attitudes have also been recognized by different researchers as indifferent, intermediate, incoherent, ambivalent or ambiguous answers and they have frequently been attributed to the methodological weakness of the measurement instruments (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) or

to the latent role of attitudes (Krosnick et al., 2005) especially when they refer to complicated issues, as with the case of inclusive education. Another possible explanation for the inconsistency in teachers' responses on the attitudes scale is that their beliefs and attitudes towards inclusive education might not be firmly established. Additionally, social desirability may have played a role in the completion of the questionnaire. This includes the possibility that the respondents perceived the researcher's opinion to favour inclusive education, which social desirability led them to endorse.

Additionally, the inconsistency between the questionnaire and the interviews in some issues, as highlighted through the discussion, could be due to teachers' limited ability to express their views clearly in the questionnaire. Also, the use of the generic term SEN in the statements of the questionnaire might have blurred teachers' responses.

8.3 Understanding SEN/disability

This theme is discussed through the following three sub-themes:

1. What is disability: terminological and cultural issues?
2. Disability context
3. Disability and the dilemma of difference

8.3.1 What is the disability? Terminological and cultural issues

The qualitative data analysis showed that teachers tend to use the words "SEN" and "disability" interchangeably. However, they associated behavioural difficulties and learning difficulties with special educational needs and associated intellectual impairments, physical impairments and sensory impairments with disability. Additionally, teachers tend to prefer certain categories of children for inclusion in their response to the affective component of attitudes in the questionnaire (see chapter 6). However, the qualitative results showed that the greatest concern for teachers was children with intellectual disabilities. All other children were welcomed in the mainstream schools, of course with support.

These findings together supported previous findings that teachers would exclude some children and would prefer special setting for some children with SEN (Alghazo & Gaad, 2004; Center & Ward, 1987). However, there was lack of consistency on the type of SEN teachers would not include in the mainstream school. Unlike the popular view that children with emotional and behavioural difficulties were teachers' greatest concern (Avramidis et al., 2000; Clough & Lindsay, 1991; Heflin & Bullock, 1999; Stoiber et al.,

1998), in Egypt, children with severe intellectual disabilities were seen to be teachers' greatest concern. Moreover, children with behavioural difficulties were not recognized as a concern for the majority of teachers.

Perhaps it is not surprising that children classified as having intellectual disabilities are less favoured for inclusion because teachers' attitudes have been consistently negative towards the inclusion of students whose disabling characteristics are likely to require extra instructional or management skills (Center & Ward 1987; Chazan, 1994). Although children with mild to moderate degrees of intellectual disabilities have been successfully integrated into regular classes with appropriate support services (Parmenter & Nash, 1985 in Center & Ward 1987) and actually they are being integrated on an experimental basis nowadays in Egypt, teachers appear to feel that their own lack of experience and resource support, coupled with the possibility of having to cope with more behavioural troubles in the classroom and fear of failure to meet the needs of those children in regular schools, preclude the effective inclusion of these children.

This may probably be due to inexperience arising from teachers' lack of knowledge and information about the methods to use in meeting needs or some underlying stereotypes. Vaughn et al., (1996) noted that teachers' negative attitudes may be the result of their inexperience in teaching children with SEN.

Moreover, teachers attributed their doubts regarding the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities to the lower academic performance of the class as a result of necessary adjustments in teaching to cater for the abilities of SEN students. Similar doubts and concerns have been reported by some other previous studies (Angelides 2004; Florin, 1998; Koutrouba et al., 2006). For example, Angelides (2004) stated that many teachers appear negatively oriented towards inclusive education and pupils who experience difficulties in schools because they do not serve their interests (i.e. quiet class; cover the curriculum, high outcomes). The implication here is that teachers' concerns and fears need to be considered seriously.

Also, teachers' less favourable attitudes towards children with hearing impairment in comparison to children with visual impairment could be due to the fact that Egyptian teachers are not familiar with sign language and appropriate approaches to the education of students with hearing impairment. Moreover, children with visual impairment have been successfully included in Al-Azhar for a long time and they can learn orally without causing too much concern for teachers.

However, in attempting to find out why Egyptian teachers would not segregate children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, there appeared to be some cultural undertones. Firstly, what is known in the western writings as emotional behavioural difficulties (EBD) was not recognized by the majority of teachers as a unique category of disability or SEN. Students who have behavioural problems were recognized by most interviewed teachers as troublemakers or children with less acceptable or impolite behaviour which does not cause a major concern for teachers as they represent a manageable reality in teachers' daily life as stated by teacher (Z).

This could be explained by the fact that special educational provision in Egypt is provided only for children with intellectual, visual, and hearing impairments. All other children who are considered disabled in other contexts are not recognized by the majority of teachers in the current study as disabled, however they might be included under the umbrella term SEN. *"I do not consider a child who has a learning problem or a behavioural problem to have a disability however he might have an SEN"* (T/F).

Also, this could be explained by teachers' interpretations of the terms emotional and behavioural difficulties. Or this could be due to the vagueness of the terminology used in policy documents as most of these terms were constructed in different contexts, mostly western, and carried over to the Egyptian context (see chapter 2). Another explanation here is that children with severely problematic behaviour are not identified by teachers as a distinct group because they might be included under the umbrella term of intellectual disabilities in Egypt as I have noticed in my field work in special schools for intellectual disabilities.

It is worth mentioning here that, after analysing the data I found that there is some sort of inconsistency in the Egyptian context with its two levels; policy and practice. Children with SEN are recognized mainly in the policy and research contexts not in the practice one. I mean that policymakers and researchers use similar terminology to the common one in the international context (See chapter 2). However, in the practice level, there are no visible children who are classified as SEN children. I am not saying that there are no children with SEN in the mainstream Egyptian schools; rather I am saying that those children are invisible. However, the policy context is moving towards making those children visible which will create the old problems that have been countered by the educational systems that preceded the Egyptian one in inclusion movement which will consequently, in my view, lead to exclusion not to inclusion. This is because they

are moving towards identifying children not towards developing the current practice and improving schools.

The two teachers who recognized children with EBD as problematic for inclusion are well trained teachers and have a good research experience in the SE field as one of them is doing his PhD and the other is doing his MA in SE. Such research experience could explain the views of those two teachers. Also, from my personal experience as a researcher in the field for about 10 years now, I could argue that all those children are invisible in our schools. For example, there is too much research about children with different SEN in the mainstream schools, however, those children are not known as such. Reviewing such research I found that all the researchers go to the schools with a package of psychometric tools to identify a certain sample for their research. However, those children are not known before or even after the research as disabled or as children with SEN.

The non recognition of children with learning problems (Specific learning difficulties or disabilities) and children with behavioural problems (emotional behavioural difficulties) reflects inclusive ethos and supports the argument that such forms of disability are socially constructed. That data analysis showed that children deemed to have any educational or behavioural problems are taught in the mainstream schools without any classification or even any support except what teachers themselves do to accommodate those students. However, those students represent the main body of special education in other contexts, e.g. US. For example, Vaughn and Fuchs (2003) stated that students classified as learning disabled in the US is over 50 percent of all students identified for special education.

In this, these findings support the argument of many authors (e.g. McDermott and Varenne, 1995; Slee, 1997) that, the problem with the educational legislations and educational practices in general is that they tend to disable any child who cannot cope with the available system in the schools, without too much effort to challenge this system. Additionally, this supports Ingstad & Whyte's (1995) argument that "disability" is culturally constructed. Also, it supports Rispler-Chaim's (2007) note that quarrels around the right term or definition for "what is disability?" or "who are people with disabilities?" are not only semantic in nature. Political, economic and cultural dimensions can also play crucial roles in this regard. What is and is not viewed as disability depends on cultural criteria. These findings hold some theoretical implications about disability and inclusion which will be presented in chapter (9).

While children with learning and behavioural problems are classified “disabled” in certain contexts, they are not in some others. Whyte and Ingstad, (1995, p. 10) argued that *“disability in Europe and North America exists within, and is created by, a framework of state, legal, economic and biomedical institutions.* In the same vein, McDermott and Varenne (1995) argued that American education has numerous made-to-order general categories for describing children in trouble, for example: deprived, different, disadvantaged, at risk, disabled. They, further, argued that disability has become a potent cultural fact for most American lives, and this is sometimes for the better and often for the worse. *“Decades ago, Americans sent their children to school, and some did well and others not. Those who did not do well lived their lives outside of school without having to notice any particular lack in themselves”* (p. 332).

Obviously, following Slee (1997), my intention here is not to deny the existence of severely problematic behaviour in relatively small numbers of children even if it has not been recognized by most teachers in the current investigation. Rather, the indication here is that SEN discourse and practice (especially in terms of categorization) could undermine the movements towards inclusion. This finding supports Slee’s (1997) argument that the special education discourse regarding ADHD transforms pupil disruption to pupil dysfunction. *“Thereby we return to an essentialist frame where the impaired pathology of the child is the problem to be managed. Accordingly, disruption is not a complex problem in an interactive matrix of the multiple identities of the child, youth culture, pedagogy, curriculum, school culture and organisation, race, gender and class. It is not, according to this theoretical fix, about political economy. It is individual pathology which becomes the site for chemical intervention”* (p.414).

Taken collectively, these findings support the argument of many authors (e.g. Ainscow, 2007; Ballard, 1995; Booth & Ainscow, 1998; Fulcher, 1989; Kisanji, 1998; Slee, 1996, Lipsky & Gartner, 1996; Thomas & Loxley, 2001) that the way in which students come to be designated as having special educational needs is a social process that needs to be continually challenged. They, further, argue that the continued use of the ‘medical model’ of assessment, within which educational difficulties are explained solely in terms of a child’s deficits, prevents progress in the field because it distracts attention from questions about why schools fail to teach so many children successfully.

The implication here is that the social construction of disability varies from one context to another. Therefore, there is a need to challenge epistemological foundations of disability and special education if we would like to move towards inclusion. As Slee

(1997) articulated it “*the failure of the educational academy and educational policy-makers to apply theoretical analysis to the epistemological foundations of special educational practices has been detrimental to the project of inclusion*” (p.407). To gain a thorough understanding of these issues, further research is required to explore how such classified categories of disabilities like, EBD, ADHD,...etc. are socially constructed in different contexts. The benefits of such research will affect the educational and rehabilitative provision that is suitable to a given context rather than imposing one size of provision for all cultures.

8.3.2 Disability/SEN context

It is debatable whether SEN/disability is within the child or within society. There are different theoretical approaches for theorising SEN/disability (see chapter 3). Data analysis in the current study indicated that teachers’ responses cannot be labelled as reflecting the deficit model or the social model. Rather, they reflect an interactive approach for understanding disability which recognizes both the within child factors and the environmental factors. There was more emphasis on within child factors for intellectual disability, while there was more emphasis on environmental factors for other groups of disability. This could be explained by a variety of contextual factors that constrained teachers and made them reluctant to support the inclusion of certain types of children with SEN. In terms of educational provision, teachers believe that even children may have some problems but it is the school responsibility to accommodate their needs. In this, this finding is supported by the argument of (Gutierrez & Stone, 1997; Tomlinson, 1982) to pay attention to environmental and individual variables, not instead of them and even to challenge both of them to gain a better understanding of disability.

Also, these findings add a research-based evidence to support the interactive approach of understanding disability/SEN. This approach views the level of need as the result of a complex interaction between the child’s strengths and weaknesses, the level of support available and the appropriateness of the education being provided (Frederickson & Cline, 2002; Keogh et al., 1997; Skidmore, 1996). Therefore, we need to examine not only the child but his or her particular social environment in order to understand his special educational needs.

The role of the social-cultural perceptions about disability cannot be underestimated in affecting the movement towards inclusion. The contradictory religious beliefs about disability reported in the current study supports this argument. While the view that

disability is a test from Allah is expected to support inclusion, the other one, which sees disability as a punishment is expected to undermine inclusion. The implication here is that, religious beliefs about disability, either positive or negative, affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and also affect the movement towards inclusion.

Similarly, Kisanji (1993) argued that inclusion and exclusion may be influenced by cultural perceptions of disability. He discussed the way exclusion is influenced by cultural perceptions of disability, sometimes seen to be the result of witchcraft, curses, punishment from God or the anger of ancestral spirits. Sometimes children are hidden away by the family to avoid the feelings of shame. He, further, argued that the approach to inclusion of any group of SEN students may be affected by economic circumstances but is always affected by particular personal and cultural beliefs.

8.3.3 Disability/SEN and the dilemma of difference

One of the main themes in the current study was teachers' conceptualization of children with SEN as different, regardless of their attitudes towards the inclusion process. Teachers' conceptualization of difference was embedded in their reflections about issues of equality and equal opportunities which are inherited in the Islamic religious values. Issues of equality and difference are complicated issues and are culturally based to the extent that these terms might be misleading if used out of the construction context. Given that inclusion and disability are western constructs that have been the product of a certain ideology about equality and difference, so these western constructs of equality and difference should be reviewed first. Additionally, the Islamic ideology of equality which was the base for teachers' views in the current study should be highlighted to better understand teachers' conceptualizations of disability and inclusion.

In his critical analysis of dilemmas of difference, inclusion and disability, Norwich (2008b) argued that the basic dilemma of difference is whether to recognize or not to recognize differences, as either way, there are negative implications or risks associated with stigma, devaluation, rejection or denial of relevant opportunities. However I agree that these are problematic issues that always require a decision which will not be in many cases for the interests of all people, I argue that issues about the dilemmas of differences and disability should be viewed from the socio-cultural perspective. Being different does not always means being stigmatized. As Billing argued "dilemmas are revealed as fundamentally born out of a culture which produces more than one possible ideal world,... social beings are confronted by and deal with dilemmatic situations as a condition of their humanity" (Billing et al., 1988: P.163 cited in Norwich, 2008b).

According to Whyte and Ingstad (1995), a fundamental theme in the contemporary western discourse on disability is the assumption of the desirability of equality, understood as sameness or similarity. Such approach could create lots of problems. Drawing on the Stiker's (1982) approach in analysing the history of impairment in Western society, Whyte and Ingstad, (1995) argued that intolerance of innate differences and individualism which denies the social nature of persons is a possible consequence of the western pursuit of equality. Also Stiker criticised the western approach and stated that that the love of difference leads to humane social life, while the passion for similarity brings repression and rejection.

Another issue related to the dilemma of differences is the idea of humanity and personhood (Whyte & Ingstad, 1995). They tried to explain how biological impairments relate to personhood and humanity and to culturally defined differences among persons and raised the question are people with impairments valued differently than other members of society? They argued that being different means not only being less but also being devalued and dehumanized. They also argued that *"individuals with certain kinds of impairments or biological characteristics may not be considered human in certain contexts. Or rather, there may be a point at which such an individual's humanity is in doubt"* (P.10).

The approach of Whyte and Ingstad (1995) could be used as an analytical framework to look at the issues of differences and equality in the Egyptian Islamic context. However, it is worth mentioning here that this was not the main aim of the study, rather it is a foci of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Since teachers have articulated disability and inclusion within a socio-ethical-religious discourse about differences and equality, so I think it is worthy to highlight these issues so it may guide our future discourse about disability and inclusion. So what are the Islamic underpinnings of equality and differences?

Humaid (2009) stated that Islam openly declares that all people; men and women, able and disabled, poor and rich...etc. have an equal status and value before God, and piety alone differentiates one individual from another. Islam asserts equality among people, that is because Islam respects a human for being a human not for any other reason. Also, any differences in race, colour, or language have no effect on the human dignity or the application of shariah laws. According to Islam, such differences are signs of God's greatness, omnipotence and His being the only lord deserving worship. Additionally, such differences have their practical advantage in human life as they are the means of

identification and recognition. This argument is supported with the following verse from the Holy Qur'an:

*“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you” (49, 13) *.*

This verse indicates that the noblest of human beings in the sight of God is the most deeply conscious of Him (Ali, 1996). Also, God's measure of a human being's worth relies not on physical attributes or material achievements, but on spiritual maturity and ethical development (Bazna & Hatab, 2005; Hamza, 1993). This message has also been clearly conveyed by the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) when he said:

*“Verily, God does not look at your bodies or your appearances, but looks into your hearts” (Muslim, 1990, 2564) **.*

Additionally, the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) has taken an extra step to stress the necessity of applying the above stated view towards people with disabilities. For example, the story of Julaybib, as reported by Bazna & Hatab (2005, p. 20) shows the extent to which the Prophet, consistent with Islamic teachings, took active steps to make the Muslim society inclusive of the weak and disadvantaged. Julaybib was described as an ugly and dwarfed man. His lineage was not known, which in the tribal society of the time was a serious disadvantage, since people relied on their tribal structure and family ties to succeed. Julaybib was a good Muslim but, because of his perceived serious physical and social disadvantage, He was shunned away from society. The Prophet went to the family of the most eligible unmarried woman in Medina and asked her parents if they would marry her to Julaybib. The act of marrying Julaybib to a desirable woman would ensure Julaybib total inclusion and immersion into society in the short as well as the long term. It was also a deliberate act to remove any stigma that society might have placed on Julaybib because of his disadvantage. Julaybib fought bravely alongside the Prophet and was killed in battle. The Prophet buried him himself and said: “He [Julaybib] is of me and I of him”, thus proclaiming this disadvantaged man as being like a member of his family. This story represents a good implication for social inclusion. Also, the above stated examples comprise Islam's position and attitude towards evaluating mankind.

Based on this, to show compliance with the Islamic teachings, all Muslims have to respect the other whoever he/she is. This could explain why most teachers valued children and showed much sympathy towards them. However, at the same time they

rejected including some children not because those children are inferior, rather because they believe that those children can get better educational service in another context or teachers' were constrained by other structural barriers. This means that the educational context is morally rich to welcome all children, despite of the limited facilities and the educational resources.

Additionally, teachers' emphasis on valuing and respecting children supports the argument of Whyte and Ingstad (1995) that personhood should be viewed as being not simply human but human in a way that is valued and meaningful. However there is no single answer for any culture about the significant characteristics of a person, the personhood of person in the Islamic contexts could be achieved by his obedience to God and by his good deeds, regardless of any ability or skill. In this, we can find in the Islamic contexts lots of "natural integration" (Ingstad and Whyte 1995) of disabled people as members of families and communities. In our case, inclusive education, I could argue that there is too much "natural inclusion" in Egyptian schools; however it might be irresponsible, given the low quality of education in Egypt at the meantime. The implication here is to try to improve the quality of education in general and try to improve the schools to be able to accommodate the needs of all children regardless of any differences. Instead of moving towards identifying children with different difficulties, we need to move towards questioning the low quality of education and try to improve it.

However, we should take into account that to be treated equally or with justice does not always mean that each is the same. In this, people's needs, strengths, abilities and disabilities need to be accommodated and considered as opposed to subjecting all to a single standard that may only be suitable for a few. Therefore, Islam does not advocate the absolute equality because this may lead to ignoring individual differences and the natural variety among humans which may lead to unendurable complications. The very diversity is a great source of good for mankind that the Islamic religion has realized (Humaid, 2009).

To summarize, I could say Islam affirms the absolute spiritual and human equality of every single person. Differences do not hold any feeling of inferiority or superiority. However, in jurisprudential matters, Islam promotes the substantive equality of men and women, able and disabled...etc., recognizes their unique strengths and capabilities. Allah has differentiated among people in terms of money, understandings, abilities and all other visible and invisible abilities and powers so they can use each other to serve

and help each other. In this, ideas of autonomy and independence, one of the recurring themes in the American and European conceptualization of disability (Whyte & Ingstad 1995), could have different connotations. Murphy (1987) asserts that these issues are universal aspects of all social relationships and that dependency is a problem that all disabled people must confront. However, he argued that reliance upon another person may be encompassed by love and a feeling of mutuality. This means that dependency may have different values and implications (Whyte & Ingstad, 1995). They also suggested that in some cultures, sociality (family and community membership may outweigh individual ability as a value. In the Islamic context, social connectedness is a great value. All people help and accept help from each other according to the Prophet Mohammed saying

“A faithful believer to a faithful believer is like the bricks of a wall, enforcing each other.” While (saying that) the Prophet clasped his hands, by interlacing his fingers (Muslim, 1990, 2585)

Teachers’ conceptualization of children as different and their sensitivity towards issues of respect and value of children regardless of any physical impairment which was based on the Islamic philosophy of differences supports the argument of Whyte and Ingstad (1995) that the anomalies that may be seen as inhuman differ greatly from one society to another, and they do not correspond directly to biomedical definitions of impairment. Such differences should be reflected in the educational process. According to Florian (2008), inclusive education is distinguished by an acceptance of differences between students as ordinary aspects of human development.

8.4 Understanding inclusion

The qualitative data analysis indicated that, Egyptian teachers’ hold different conceptions about inclusion, reflecting from little understanding of inclusion to suggesting quite reasonable familiarity with the notion of inclusion. Teachers’ perspectives about inclusion were based primarily around the level of participation a child with SEN could achieve and whether this would be detrimental to the rest of the group or indeed beneficial for the child. These findings concur with the results of (Morley et al., 2005) who found that teachers’ perceptions about inclusion as a matter of participation were mainly determined by the type of disability and the type of activity taught.

However, in the current study, participation reflected two different meanings. The first means “*taking part in activities*”, which reflects integration ethos (Avramidis et al., 2002); whereas the second is related to “*emotional engagement and belonging*”

(Bayliss, 1998) or “*valuing diversity*” (Ballard, 1995) which are at the heart of inclusion

Additionally, inclusion seemed to be regarded by the majority of the participants in the current study as a process, in which inclusion as a principle could be achieved if features of the inclusive process, such as resources, training, appropriate support, adapting the curriculum and the examination system, were developed more extensively or even completely changed. These findings concur with the results of (Morley et al., 2005) who stated that inclusion was perceived by the participants in their study as a journey towards an ultimate goal. Additionally, the findings of the current study support the argument of many authors (e.g. Booth & Ainscow, 1998) that inclusion as a continuous process that aims at reducing barriers to the participation and learning for all citizens.

Moreover, the data analysis showed that most teachers in the current study adopted a socio-cultural-religious discourse in their understanding of inclusion. Such discourse was not motivated only by the political correctness of the term, but also this discourse was mainly embedded in their religious commitment or at least in their interpretations of the religious values and principles. Based on an Islamic religious belief about equality among all people, teachers believe that as long as we are all equal, so all children with SEN “*should be given every opportunity in this life like any other person*”. Teachers are ideologically guided by their Islamic religious beliefs about equality. This was clearly evidenced by the ethical discourse that dominated the participants’ views through the interviews as one of Al-Azhar teachers concluded after explaining the importance of showing respect towards all people regardless of any difference “*and I think this what we have to do according to the teachings of our religion which emphasis that we are all equal*” (T/M).

This finding may be unique by the current study as, to the best of my knowledge, I have not found any interpretation of the term inclusion within the religious discourse. This discourse enhances and supports the calls for considering inclusion and SEN within a cultural model (Devliger, 2005; Ware, 2003) that takes into account the common values about disability in any given context which consequently will affect the way educational provision is provided in that context.

However, we should take into account that the discourse of rights and equal opportunities is not simple because it keeps the door open for many interpretations (see section 8.3 above). As Florian (2008) argued that there are many interpretations about

what constitutes educational rights, as well as how these should be assessed, evaluated and so on. In the current study, despite of teachers' overall positive emotions towards children with SEN, their concerns about the detrimental effects of inclusion upon non-disabled children reflect a conflict inherent in the current understanding of inclusion as part of a human rights agenda that demands access to, and equity in, education.

The dilemma that arises here is how can schools achieve and promote equity and excellence (Avramidis et al., 2002; Clark, Dyson, Millward & Robson, 1999; Florian, 2008; Morley et al., 2005, Reynolds, Sammons, Stoll, Barber & Hillman, 1996) at the same time? In terms of teachers' understanding in the current study, to achieve equity they believe that all children have the right to be included in the regular school but achieving excellence is not possible as the existence of SEN children is expected to create some problems especially in terms of academic achievement. Such tension in teachers' views requires, as suggested by (Avramidis et al., 2002), a reconstruction of the common understanding of effectiveness. They raised the question; should a school be seen as effective if it produces good academic outcomes, irrespective of its social outcomes? Are the two sets of outcomes independent of each other?

In this regard it has been argued that it is difficult to separate the academic and the social outcomes (Reynolds, 1995). Obviously, the policy climate of any given context would affect any decisions in this regard. In the Egyptian context where there is a substantial concern for academic achievement (Hargreaves, 2001) it is expected that the social outcomes may be neglected in favour of the academic outcomes.

To go beyond this debate, the sociological perspective of school effectiveness (Angus, 1993; Proudford & Baker, 1995) can be considered. The main theme of this approach is that the idea that the process of schooling cannot be divorced from the social, cultural and political dimensions of the local and broader context in which the school is embedded. The current study supports this approach, to a large extent, as it showed that the majority of teachers discussed inclusion within the moral discourse which is one of the main characteristics of the Islamic culture in Egypt as has been highlighted above. Also, this supports Ware's (2003) argument that inclusion should be framed through more humane understanding of disability.

This indicates that measuring the effectiveness of a certain school in a certain context with the criteria of a different context may be misleading. In the case of inclusion, measuring the Egyptian schools ethos of inclusion in terms of the reductionist approach which emphasizes mainly on resources, accessibility... etc. Egyptian schools would

never been considered inclusive. However, considering Egyptian schools within the moral values and ethos that underpinned teachers' responses in the current study, I could argue that Egyptian schools and teachers have a different sense of inclusion. The implication here is that such factors that underpin the inclusive philosophy should be the focus of future research.

Collectively the findings showed that, in terms of philosophy, the majority of teachers were oriented towards inclusive ethos. They showed much respect, passion and sympathy towards all children regardless of their disabilities which reflect a high level of inclusive ideology. This could be explained by the effect of the broader social context in shaping people's understanding of social phenomena. The majority of teachers are morally oriented towards what I call a "*value discourse of inclusion*" based on their religious beliefs about equality and respecting human beings which are a salient feature of the Islamic culture. This explanation is supported the argument of Long (2000) that "*education is affected to a great extent by general cultural influences since pupils and staff bring their existing beliefs and values to schools*" (P.162). Additionally, teachers' orientations towards inclusive ethos support the argument of Thomas and Loxley (2001) that, inclusion does not set boundaries around particular kinds of disability. Rather, it is a framework within which all children, regardless of ability, gender, ethnic or cultural origin, can be valued equally, treated with respect and provided with real opportunities at school.

However, in terms of practice, teachers were oriented towards the integration model. Their orientation towards the integration ethos could be explained by the effect of many contextual constraints which they identified as barriers to the development of inclusive education. Additionally, the long history of two track model of education in Egypt; regular and special might have affected teachers' perspectives regarding the suitability of inclusive settings for certain children.

This finding supports the results of Avramidis et al., (2002) who found that the participants in their study were more enculturated into the integration model than into the inclusion model where most not all children were recognized as suitable for inclusion. They, further, argued that inclusion presupposes a significant restructuring of mainstream schooling to accommodate all students irrespective of type or severity of need. The current study seems to support their argument to some extent. However, my study went a step further and showed that in addition to restructuring mainstream schooling there is a need for reconstructing teachers' understanding of disability/SEN.

The implication here is that there is a need to move beyond the debate of disability. In addition to reconstructing schooling system in a way that accommodate the needs of all students whatever their needs, there is a need to deconstruct our ways of understanding disability itself and deconstructing the epistemological foundations of special education in general. The child deemed to have SEN is still viewed as a “special” and in many cases is not valued in the same way as the non-disabled peer.

Also, the schools still opt towards the academic achievement of students rather than concentrating on the whole development of the child. There is an urgent need for deconstructing our understanding of disability as a matter of natural differences among human beings. The role of education at this point will be about human development as well as cognitive development of children based on their abilities. In this, inclusive school should be about all students not only about disabled students (Reid, 2005). We need to challenge the “epistemologies of special education” or to deconstruct traditional forms of knowledge lurking behind codes of practice in different contexts to avoid re-runs of old theatre (Slee & Allan, 2001).

8.5 Factors associated with teachers’ attitudes

The literature review indicates that there are many interrelated factors that affect teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Salvia & Munson, 1986). Though the findings of the current study supported previous findings that teachers’ attitudes are associated with a variety of child-related variables, teacher-related variables and educational environment related variables, there was lack of consistency on the type of factors that are more related to teachers’ positive attitudes.

Additionally, most of the reviewed literature about environment related variables emphasized mainly on the school and classroom context. However the findings of the current study support this argument, the study has taken this issue a step further and argued that there are many other contextual factors related to the educational system and to the socio-cultural context that affect teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion and could affect the implementation of inclusion. Therefore, all these contextual factors will be discussed together instead of focusing only on the school and classroom contexts. The relations between all the factors affecting teachers’ attitudes are represented diagrammatically in Figure (8.1).

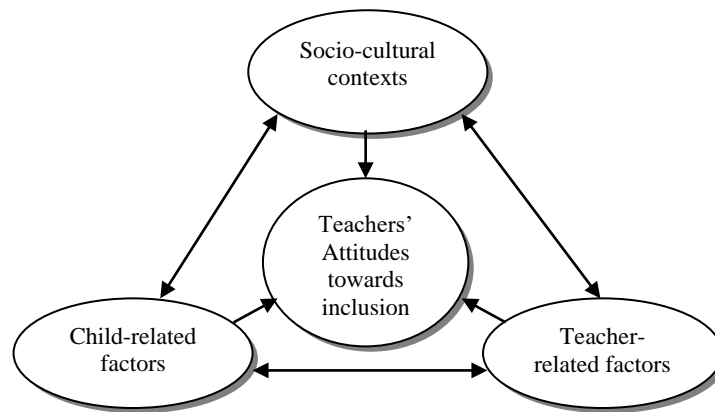


Figure 8.17 Factors associated with teachers' attitudes towards inclusion

8.5.1 Child-related variables

In terms of child-related variables, the results of the study showed that teachers' attitudes have been affected by the type and severity of disability. Broadly, the findings of the current study supported previous attitudinal research which indicated that attitudes towards inclusion vary directly with the type and severity of the disability categories represented (Morley et al., 2005; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Rose, 2001). Moreover, teachers' attitudes were affected by their understanding and construction of each disability as explained and highlighted in section (8.3) above.

8.5.2 Teacher-related variables

In terms of teacher-related variables, the results of the questionnaire and interviews showed that variables, such as age and length of teaching experience were not related to the participants' attitudes. Broadly, the results for these background variables were consistent with earlier reports in the literature.

However, the questionnaire results in the current study revealed that male teachers held more positive attitudes towards inclusion. This finding tends to be surprising for two reasons. Firstly, it does not concur with most of the previous studies which revealed no significant gender differences (e.g. Avramidis et al., 2000, Beh-Pajoooh, 1992; Bradshaw & Mundia, 2006; Sadek & Sadek 2000) and it also contradicts the results of some few studies that revealed gender significant differences in favour of female (Meegan & Macphail, 2006; Papadopoulou et al., 2004; Romi & Leyser, 2006). Secondly, this result was not consistent with the qualitative data analysis. The interviews analysis did not show differences between male and female teachers as both of them tend to hold similar attitudes. One of the possible explanations for these contradictory results could be the inconsistency of teachers' responses on the questionnaire.

Indeed, reviewing the relevant literature (e.g. Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Hannah, 1988; Jamieson, 1984) showed that gender and some other demographic variables cannot be regarded as strong predictors of teachers' attitudes. Therefore, it is impossible to conclude from the findings of the present study whether gender, taken independently, is a significant variable in the formation of positive attitudes of Egyptian teachers towards teaching students with SEN. Future studies should aim to determine differences in attitude between male and female teachers by attempting to qualify the reasons why their attitudes are favourable or unfavourable.

Additionally, the results of the questionnaire indicated that primary and preparatory school teachers held significantly more positive attitudes towards to inclusion compared to secondary teachers. This result, however it is in the affective component only, is compatible with the holistic nature of primary education and is compatible with the literature (e.g. Chalmers, 1991; Cornoldi et al., 1998; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996) which showed that primary teachers are more positive towards inclusion. Cornoldi et al., (1998) suggest that factors that could be contributing to the primary/secondary difference are the more demanding curriculum at the secondary level and the greater time spent by primary teachers with their students. Moreover, the results of the current study showed that the main teacher-related variables that are associated with teachers' attitudes are experience and training. Following is a discussion of each.

- **The role of experience**

The results of the questionnaire showed that experience in working with children with SEN did differentiate between teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. More specifically, it was found that Egyptian teachers with experience in working with children with SEN held more positive attitudes towards their inclusion than their colleagues without relevant experience. This finding has been supported by studies conducted in other countries (e.g., Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Kalyva et al., 2007; Gilmore et al., 2003; Stoiber et al., 1998; Van Reusen et al., 2000) which found that teachers with more experience in teaching children with SEN held more positive beliefs about inclusion than teachers with less relevant experience.

Additionally, the results of the interview indicated that teachers' attitudes, self-confidence and self efficacy increased significantly with their actual experience in teaching children with SEN in an inclusive setting (e.g. T/I). This finding is in line with the results of LeRoy and Simpson (1996) which indicated that the confidence of teachers both in their teaching efficacy and in successful inclusion increases together

with their experience in teaching children with SEN. Also, the teachers who had experience in teaching children with SEN were more positive than teachers without such experience, probably because they felt that they could make a difference (Janney et al., 1995; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005).

However, the interview data analysis showed that teaching experience of children with SEN in special settings was not related to positive attitudes, rather it led sometimes to negative attitudes (e.g. T/Y). Such finding could be due to the nature of these experiences or due to the effect of the special school context on teachers' attitudes and perceptions. Lampropoulou and Padelliadu (1997) argued that the nature of teaching experiences may alter perceptions as negative encounters may reinforce negative perceptions while positive experiences may result in more favourable perceptions. Similarly, Koutrouba et al., (2006) found that a large percentage of teachers acquired a negative experience from working with SEN students. Correspondingly, teachers developed a negative stance towards the inclusion process. Such results indicate that there is a need for enhancing positive experiences with inclusion and overcoming all the barriers that could create negative experiences which could lead to negative attitudes.

- **The role of training**

A further important finding of this study refers to the influence of professional development programmes (Pre and in-service training) in the formation of positive attitudes towards inclusion. The results indicated that both pre-service and in-service training programmes played an important role in forming teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. However, there was some sort of inconsistency between the questionnaire results and the interview results regarding the role of each type of training. The questionnaire results showed that the effect of pre-service training was greater while the interviews results showed that in-service training was greater.

On the first hand, the questionnaire results showed that teachers who have got a BC degree in SE hold significantly more positive attitudes (both the affective and the behavioural component) than those with little or no pre-service training. Consistently the results indicated that teachers who have got in-service training hold more positive attitudes (only in the behavioural component) than those who have not got such training. Interestingly, the significant differences were in the behavioural component which reflects a sense of "confidence or ability to do". As most of the behavioural scale items were about classroom practices which require some sort of training for example "I will provide individual instruction for included students, I will use individualized/different

criteria when evaluating SEN students”. So teachers’ responses to such items may reflect the way they have been affected by the training programmes which they have got. On the other hand, the interviews analysis showed that both pre-service and in-service training have played a role in developing teachers attitudes, however the role of in-service training was greater. This could be explained by the direct effect of in-service training on teachers’ attitudes as it touches their daily problems and guide them how to deal and interact with SEN children. Given that some teachers in Egypt may face the problem of unemployment for a while especially after graduation, so the effect of pre-service training may not be strong enough to develop their attitudes.

The effect of training on teachers’ attitudes is hardly surprising given the abundance of attitudinal studies in the literature confirming the role of training in forming positive attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Avramidis et al., 2000; Leyser et al., 1994; Lifshitz et al., 2004; Shade & Stewart, 2001; Van Reusen et al., 2000).

It is worth mentioning here that in-service training was only effective when it was carefully planned and continuously provided as we can see from the responses of teachers (S) and (I) who were working in a mainstream school that was implementing inclusion at the time of the study. This suggests that short ‘overview’ courses may not be sufficient to produce substantial positive changes in teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001; Martinez, 2003). The results here challenge the taken-for granted fact that training leads to positive attitudes. The current study argues that the quality of training is the major factor in determining its effect. Superficial or routine training will not make a difference. Therefore, the Egyptian educational authorities need to rethink training programmes away from low level technical response to need, towards longer-term reflective training programmes (Bayliss, 1998). Such training results in the acquisition of ‘generic’ teaching skills that allow teachers to modify their practice in ways that meet the needs of all learners within ‘inclusive’ frameworks.

Additionally, the qualitative data analysis showed that, trained teachers in mainstream settings with experience in inclusion (T/I and T/S) and some Al-Azhar teachers (T/K and T/M) have adopted what Florian (2008) called inclusive pedagogy. They stated that they use “different teaching strategies to accommodate all children with different levels”. In this, this finding supports Florian’s (2008) argument that “*it is what teachers do, rather than what they are called, that gives meaning to the concept of inclusive education*” (p.202).

Additionally, rather than concentrating on the differences between learners, it might be more helpful to think in terms of learning outcomes. Interestingly this was reported by teacher (I) who viewed the development of an included child in terms of the child's development rather than concentrating on comparing her with her peers only *“but she is improving very well. There is a big difference between her level when she joined the school and her level now”*. Here, the typology of learning aims developed by Kershner (2000) to enhance achievement, active learning and participation and for responding to individual differences could support inclusive pedagogy. Her model clarifies the link between the teacher's role and learning in making sense of individual differences, without relying on disability categories. In this model, learning is defined as a holistic notion in which the teacher ‘uses a combination of strategies to set appropriate work’.

Tendency towards inclusive pedagogy among some teachers indicates that effective teaching strategies could work with all children rather than associating certain teaching strategies with a particular type of SEN. Similar conclusions have been reached by (Cook & Schirmer, 2003; Lewis & Norwich, 2005). For example, Lewis & Norwich (2005) suggested that teaching strategies might be arranged along a continuum from high to low intensity, rather than being arranged according to their association with a particular type of special educational need.

However teachers have many choices to make about what to do when students experience difficulty, these choices are influenced and constrained by many factors. One of the main factors is the role of the professional training that they have received, and how well it has prepared them to take up the challenges of teaching diverse groups of students who vary on many dimensions, and to work with and through other adults. Again, there is a need for rethinking teacher training from regular/special to inclusive where all teachers are trained to be able to meet the needs of all children.

8.5.3 The socio-cultural contexts

The significance of the role of context has been one of the main themes emerging from the study. The findings of the qualitative data analysis indicated that teachers' conceptualizations of inclusion and disability and attitudes towards inclusion are affected by the cultural context. The results indicated that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion cohered around a series of three interconnecting contextual levels. These are: first, the wider social and cultural context; second, the state-wide educational level; and third, the school and classroom contextual level. These contextual levels are not discrete.

Rather, they are intertwined together forming a web of reciprocal interactions and influences as illustrated in Figure (8.2) below.

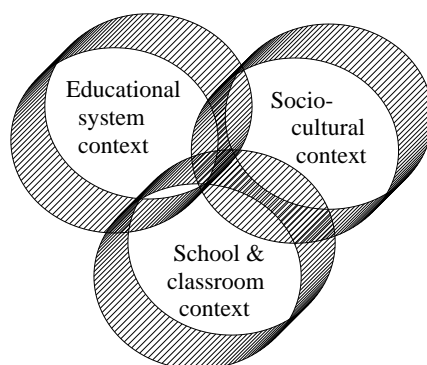


Figure 8.18 Socio-cultural contexts associated with teachers' attitudes towards inclusion

In terms of using socio-cultural contexts as a framework for understanding similarities and differences in teachers' attitudes, the results of the current study support, to a large extent, Eiser's (1994) and Carrington's (1999) view of attitudes as a social constructivist and context-dependent phenomenon. Eiser (1994) stated that mainstream psychological research on attitudes has taken the 'individual self' as both the starting-point and the focus of analysis, resulting often in a 'psychologising' about social issues without articulating how social interaction makes psychological processes the way they are. He, further, argues, there is an interdependence of the 'individual' and the 'social'; in other words, attitudes should not be viewed as solely personal, but as arising out of interactions with others in the system (e.g. educational system, school, etc). Additionally, the results of this study concur with the results of (Gahin, 2001) who found that teachers' beliefs had been influenced by the wider social and cultural context, the educational system context, the school contextual level, the classroom contextual level and the activity.

In terms of the role of the wide social and cultural context in the shaping of teachers' attitudes, an example of a social and cultural influence that has strongly been represented in the findings has been the role of religious values and beliefs in shaping teachers' attitudes. The Egyptian social context is very rich with a variety of mixed values and beliefs about disability. This may be due to the long Egyptian history where many civilizations flourished from pharaohs until nowadays.

The main culture is the Islamic Arabic one at the meantime, however religious diversity is respected. Given that social beliefs and attitudes are consciously or unconsciously transferred to most people in any certain context, it is expected that the contradictory religious beliefs about disability reported in the current study (see chapter 7) have

affected teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. These contradictory religious beliefs could enable or constrain the movement towards inclusive education. The belief that views disability as a test from God "Allah" to test peoples' level of religiosity, patience and confidence in Allah supports and enables inclusion in a way that those people who hold such belief will feel proud of themselves or of their kids to show patience and submission to God's will. Consequently, they will try to do their best to achieve success in their life. However, perceiving disability as punishment could lead to exclusionary social practices. As parents who hold such belief might feel ashamed and stigmatized and this feeling is transferred unconsciously to young kids. Consequently, those parents hide their children and the children do not get the chance for learning. While the first part of these beliefs is unique to the Egyptian socio-cultural context, the other part which represents negative social attitudes towards disability is supported by other research findings (e.g. Kisanji, 1993; Singal, 2005). In his review of the Indian literature related to barriers perceived in the development of inclusive education, Singal (2005) mentioned that social attitudes towards disability and lack of awareness are among the major barriers towards the development of successful inclusion. These findings indicate that the individuals' beliefs and attitudes are influenced by the dominant beliefs in the society they live in.

Despite of the reported mixed beliefs about disability and teachers' reservations about including children with intellectual disabilities, teachers showed a great deal of sympathy and respect towards children which overweighed their reservations. This moral commitment towards children seem to be a common feature among most teachers, however it was salient in certain school contexts like Al-Azhar schools. This could be explained by the effect of the Islamic culture on people's thoughts, feelings and behaviours in general; however this effect may vary from school culture to another. The distinctive nature of the Islamic culture is that it is embedded in religion.

Religion in Egypt is a framework of many aspects of social life. Islam is not a religion in the same sense that Christianity or any other religion or philosophy is. Islam, for Muslims, is much more than a moral philosophy of life, system of belief, or spiritual order; it is a 'complete and comprehensive way of life' (Geertz, 1971, cited in Cook, 2000). The Qur'an addresses not only personal faith and theology but also religious and cultural regulations for the individual and the community. One of the religious experiences that might have supported positive attitudes could be the social contact with disabled people in the five daily prayers in the mosque. In the mosque you are supposed

to see all kinds of human beings; different colours, different abilities, different languages etc. Additionally, the dilemma of difference is simply addressed in Islam as a feature of the human nature with nothing to do with the human dignity which is reserved for every single human being (see section 8.3). One of the Islamic regulations for Muslims social life is showing respect to everybody as understood from the following verse.

“Ye who believe Let not some men laugh at others. It may be that the latter are better than the former: Nor let some women laugh at others: It may be that the latter are better than the former: Nor Defame nor be sarcastic to each other, Nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after he has believed: and those who do not desist are indeed doing wrong. Ye who believe avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it ... But fear Allah: For Allah is Oft-returning, most merciful) (49:11-12)

Additionally, the effect of the social and material environment surrounding a school organization on the schooling system can not be ignored. Bird and little (1986) argued that the demands made on the schools by states, school districts, and communities are numerous and diverse and vary in power and consistency. Some are looking for grades, others for test schools, others for visible competence in children, and others for character and intellect qualities. All these demands exert greater influence on teachers and teaching. In the current study, family and parenting contexts, as foci of the broader socio-cultural context, represented a demand on the Egyptian schools. In response to such demands schools' norms of instruction may differently emphasize on curriculum and achievement.

The current study showed that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion seem to be affected also by the system and the school culture in which they are employed. The qualitative data analysis showed that mainstream teachers working in schools with integration units and Al-Azhar teachers were more positive towards inclusion compared to teachers from other schools. In the case of the mainstream schools with integration units, this could be due to the availability of material and human support in such schools. Additionally, it could be argued that the positive attitudes reported by teachers working in schools with integration units had developed as a result of working in a setting with an inclusive ethos. These results are in line with the results of (Avramidis et al., 2000; Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; LeRoy & Simpson, 1996; Luk, 2005; Villa et al., 1996) who concluded that teacher commitment often emerges at the end of the implementation cycle, after the

teachers have gained mastery of the professional expertise needed to implement inclusive programmes. Additionally, this finding concurs with (Clough & Lindsay, 1991; Janney et al., 1995; LeRoy & Simpson, 1996; Koutrouba et al., 2006) who argued that providing schools with adequate and appropriate resources and materials, adopting teaching materials, restructuring the physical environment to be accessible to students with physical disabilities and reducing class size are instrumental in the development of teachers' positive attitudes.

Another possible explanation for the current findings could be due to the distinctive nature of the culture of the educational system. As illustrated in the context of the study (see chapter 2), the Egyptian educational system has two distinctive systems; the secular system and Al-Azhar system, which in a sense represent two different cultures. Ali (1989) argued that after establishing the secular educational system in Egypt, Egyptian society began to 'divide into two distinct halves' (Ali, 1989, p. 97). One half retained the traditional system imbued with Islamic teachings, while the other half modelled itself after Europe. According to Ali (1989) this division was not simply an ideological difference between traditional religious schools and those of 'modern civilization', but that it extended far deeper into the Egyptian awareness. He further argues 'both sides implanted and produced personalities carrying two different cultural styles' (Ali, 1989, p. 97). Based on Ali's argument, I could argue that such diversity in educational backgrounds which creates subcultures in one context could explain to some extent the mixed views and attitudes about disability and inclusion.

Most of that previous research regarding the school context or the school-related factors that could affect teachers' attitudes emphasized on the physical readiness of the schools, recourses, and support etc. (see chapter 4). However the importance of such factors in developing positive attitudes among teachers cannot be underestimated, they only represent "the visible artifacts" of an organization culture (Schein, 1984, cited in Zollers et al., 1999). The deep culture of an organization; the values and attitudes and behavioral norms that govern the behavior of an organization (Jones, 1996), or what Schein terms the "underlying assumptions", are more important in promoting teachers' positive attitudes and in developing inclusive school cultures. In this, the current study showed that the underlying assumptions or the inclusive ideology in terms of values and beliefs are more important in developing positive attitudes and in creating inclusive communities. In this regard, the results of the current study supports the argument of many authors (e.g. Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Carrington, 1999) who argued that inclusion

requires a rich school culture in terms of values and beliefs and ways of responding to learner diversity, rather than introducing particular techniques or organizational arrangements.

Moreover, the qualitative data analysis showed that most teachers in the different settings and especially Al-Azhar teachers were affected by the religious beliefs about equality, rights and difference. More specifically, Al-Azhar teachers articulated this discourse more clearly which could mean that the underlying assumptions of Al-Azhar schools played a role in developing their positive attitudes towards inclusion in comparison to their colleagues in the other school contexts. This could be due to the fact that Al-Azhar schools are concerned with teaching different religious and spiritual subjects which are mainly based on the interpretations of Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Given that most teachers working in Al-Azhar schools are graduates from these schools, so a possible explanation could be that they might have been influenced by such moral atmosphere. Additionally, Al-Azhar schools have a long history of including children with SEN especially the blind and the physically disabled. In this sense, Al-Azhar schools represent a unique culture (Ali, 1989) that affect people working in them in a different way from the other school cultures. This could mean that Al-Azhar schools have a school culture that supports, to some extent, inclusion philosophy where children with SEN are welcomed. In this sense, this finding supports the argument of Carrington (1999) and Hunt & Goetz (1997) that inclusion needs a different school culture. According to Turner and Louis (1996), inclusive education will require a school culture that emphasizes the notion of diversity and is based on a desire to explore difference and similarity. Therefore, this goal of creating inclusive schools should not focus just on the needs of students with disabilities but should be embedded in the broader context of difference and similarity (Carrington, 1999). By recognizing and understanding social responses to difference and establishing "cultures of difference" within schools, equity and the inclusion of all students could be promoted.

However, teachers have been constrained by different contextual factors within the educational system and the school and classroom context which made them opt to prefer special setting for some children. Teachers' were constrained by the educational policy which encourage special education settings for certain children, by the product-oriented nature of the system, the overemphasis on achievement, curricula and examinations, parents' expectations etc. The findings of the study agree with the argument of

Hargreaves (1994) about the influence of the educational socio-cultural context on the daily life of teachers. He argued that *“local cultures give meaning, support and identity to teachers and their work. Physically, teachers are often alone in their own classrooms, with no other adults for company. Psychologically, they never are. What they do in terms of classroom styles and strategies is powerfully affected by the outlooks and orientations of the colleagues with whom they work now and have worked in the past (P. 165).*

One of the main features of the educational system in Egypt in general is the over-emphasis on academic achievement and examinations. Hargreaves (2001) argued that “examinations” is a central part of the broader socio-cultural context in Egypt that affects the whole educational system. *“While examinations serve an important certificatory and selective role for pupils, parents and teachers, submission of their results fulfils an accountability purpose for government along with reports from inspections, which put government into a powerful position over individuals in schools (p. 257).* He also argued that examination system in Egypt created a competitive atmosphere that places the emphasis on the accountability of individual schools and individual teachers instead of monitoring the national standards in Egyptian education. The objectives of these examinations have never been for individual learning in any other sense.

Also, the results of the study validates Hargreaves’s (2001) argument that the Egyptian assessment system was an unchallengeable system which left most people, such as teachers, students, administrators, etc. unable to act freely. Taking Hargreaves’s notes about assessment system in Egypt, I could argue that such atmosphere will lead to the exclusion of some children who might not be able to compete in this competitive environment. In a sense, teachers’ attitudes have been affected by this culture as they are expected to fulfil the policymaker aims, otherwise they will be accountable. The implication here is to rethink evaluation and assessment from organization or teacher level to be child-centered. From being concerned about academic achievement, to be concerned about the whole development of the child.

In conclusion, the data analysis indicated that teachers’ attitudes were influenced by the interaction between a group of interrelated and intertwined social contexts. Similarities and differences in teachers’ attitudes were the product of the interaction between these contextual levels. The study has some implications for policymaker to consider all these contextual issues in planning for and implementing educational reform.

Methodologically, the study supports Avramidis and Norwich's (2002) argument for adopting new methodologies in researching attitudes towards inclusion (see chapter 9).

8.6 Barriers to inclusion and moving towards change

The questionnaire and interview findings revealed a perception amongst Egyptian teachers that a number of barriers have to be surmounted and a number of conditions have to be met to facilitate a more inclusive education system. Broadly, the results of the qualitative data analysis were consistent with the questionnaire findings. However, the qualitative analysis highlighted the role of the contextual factors more clearly and supports the argument that "barriers to inclusion" is not simply an issue of resources. Rather, it is a very complicated issue that encompasses two many inter-correlated contextual factors that should be addressed very carefully in order to implement inclusion effectively. The qualitative analysis indicates that barriers to inclusion can be categorized into four categories: structural- organizational, personal, interpersonal and socio-cultural barriers as summarized in Figure (8.3).

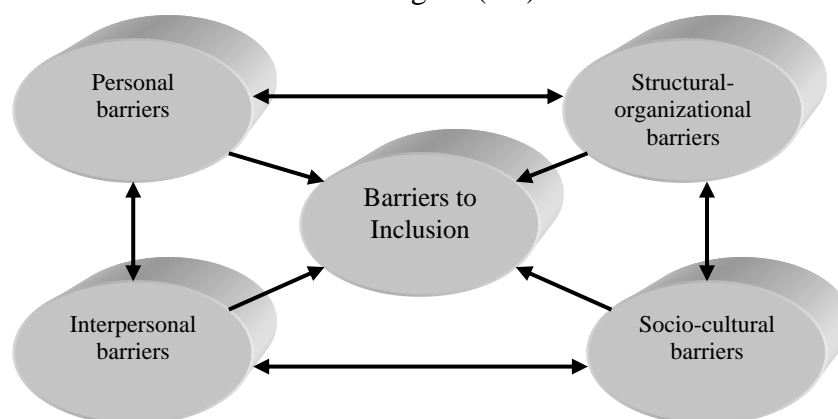


Figure 8.19 Barriers to inclusion

8.6.1 Structural-organizational barriers

Regarding the structural-organizational barriers, issues of class size and lack of time and work overload were amongst the main concerns for the majority of teachers. Previous research indicated that class size and teacher-child ratio represent great concern for regular education teachers in terms of inclusion (Bunch & Finnegan, 2000; Morley et al., 2005; Rose, 2001; Smith & Smith 2000; Vaughn et al., 1996). The findings of the current study seem to concur with the previous ones. However it is always repeated in the literature that class size is a big issue, it might be more difficult in Egypt as the average of the class size ranges between 40-50 students. Additionally, the absence of an inclusive educational policy could hinder the implementation of inclusion. However

educational policies do not guarantee the success of inclusion, they at least provide a vision for the policymaker and the teachers to act upon. In such central educational system, these policies could make a difference.

The type and severity of disability of children with SEN is related to teachers' concerns regarding the class size as teachers indicated that the number of included children should not be more than three or four. In a sense, this issue could affect success of the implementation of inclusion. Walther-Thomas, Bryant and Land (1996) recommend that an inclusive classroom should contain six or fewer students with identified disabilities or less in case of including students with severe disabilities.

Additionally, the data indicated that most teachers were concerned that there will be too much work for them in case of inclusion which they may not be able to cope with. The data showed that this could be due to large class sizes, lack of teachers' desire to teach those children or due to insufficient time for teachers to cater for those children or lack of resources. These results concur with the results of (Bunch & Finnegan, 2000; Kristensen et al., 2003; Lambe & Bones, 2006; Morley et al., 2005; Rose, 2001; Smith & Smith 2000; Vaughn et al., 1996) which showed that issues of time and workload and lack of resources affects the development of inclusion and affects teachers' readiness to support inclusive education. Moreover, time pressure could undermine the inclusion process. Therefore, it is necessary to help teachers by reducing some additional demands so they can cope with this approach. As Smith and Smith (2000) noted *"teachers who feel pressured by multiple demand made upon their time by the addition of special needs children to their classrooms especially need to encounter the facilitative face of building administration, not just the managerial one"* (P. 176).

In terms of resources, it is not surprising that most teachers in the current study were looking for more resources and support to develop an inclusive educational system, given the low quality of resources in the Egyptian schools nowadays. However, the resources discourse, in my view, has lost its meaning and it is not acceptable to blame resources for not developing inclusive educational system. Miles (2000) noted that resources are the most widely used excuses for not promoting inclusive practice, even in the most apparently well-resourced educational settings. She, further, argued that the attitudinal barrier to inclusion is so great that the level of resourcing is irrelevant. It is people's attitude to those resources and the way they utilise them, that is crucial to the promotion of inclusive education. The implication here is that, despite the importance of

resources, we need to move beyond this discourse and try to challenge other complicated issues in the school culture.

Also, the data indicated that the majority of teachers believe that curriculum and examination system represent a big barrier to inclusion. Teachers proposed simplifying the content of the curriculum, adopting inclusive pedagogy and changing the assessment system in order to implement inclusion successfully. In this, the current study supports the argument of many authors of rethinking about the curriculum and the expectations of teachers and parents (Angelides, 2004; Stainback & Stainback, 1992). Teachers' concerns about the curriculum could be explained by their fear of not achieving the curriculum in the time and fulfilling the policymakers' aims which might latter affect their positions. The main concern for Egyptian teachers regarding the curricula and the examination system is that they have no control at all over decisions regarding developing appropriate curricula or planning effectively for inclusive education. Similarly, Forlin (1995) found that teachers consider that they have little control over decisions regarding inclusive practices. The situation in the current study could be due to the centrality of the Egyptian educational system which gives teachers no power regarding the curricula to the extent that teachers through the whole country follow the same teaching plans at the same time. The implication here is that, there is a need to decentralize the educational system and give local authorities, schools and teachers more flexibility to arrange the education process in their schools within the national guidelines without forcing rigid curricula or examination systems.

8.6.2 Interpersonal barriers

That qualitative data analysis showed that one of the potential barriers to inclusion is lack of administrative support from head teachers, administrators, and inspectors. The majority of teachers reflected on the current difficulties which they face with school administration. They expected that these difficulties might get worse in the case of inclusion. These findings concur with the results of (Smith & smith, 2000; Kristensen et al., 2003; Morley et al., 2005; Villa et al., 1996) which showed that administrators' positive attitudes towards inclusion and administrative support are essential to teacher success with inclusion. Specifically, the role of the head teacher or the principal in building an inclusive educational climate is very important since he is the person who sets the general tone and educational climate in the school and who is responsible for establishing an instructional climate that is conducive to inclusionary education.

8.6.3 Personal barriers

Considerable evidence in the data has indicated that both general and special educators feel inadequately prepared to serve students with SEN in general education classrooms. Specifically, teachers have reported that they have insufficient skills and training to adequately serve students with special needs. In this, these findings support the argument of many authors (e.g. Forline, 1998; Lambe & Bones, 2006; Smith & Smith, 2000) that the lack of training and skills among teachers is a major obstacle in developing inclusive education.

Additionally, these findings concur with the results of (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996, McLeskey, Henry, & Axelrod, 1999; Wearmouth, Edwards, & Richmond, 2000; Corbett, 2001; Reid, 2005; Winter, 2006) which stressed that training, professional development and pedagogy are critical to the success of inclusion programmes. In their review of the literature on inclusion, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) contend that *'without a coherent plan for teacher training in the educational needs of children with SEN, attempts to include these children in the mainstream would be difficult'* (p. 139). It is especially important, therefore, that we prepare teachers who have both the confidence and the skills to teach in inclusive settings, and who are equipped to provide appropriate instruction for all pupils. The results of current study echoed this sentiment. To ensure successful implementation it is imperative that training provision for teachers is designed so as to promote positive attitudes.

Additionally, the findings indicated that teachers may experience too much stress from different sources which could frustrate them and consequently affects the success of inclusion negatively. Indicative of that stress was a frequent reference to, accountability, responsibility, inspection and administration problems, examinations, parents' expectations, workload and time etc. These findings concur with the results of (Forlin, 1998, Morley et al., 2005; Vaughn et al., 1996). It is noticeable that most sources of this stress are administrative ones. In this, this finding supports Smith and Smith's (2000) argument that administrators can accentuate teachers' feeling of stress or play an important role in reducing these frustrations. Therefore, it is imperative that alleviating these resources of stress could help in the success of inclusion.

The other issue which the data showed as a barrier to inclusion is teachers' lack of interest in teaching in general. While it is understandable that lack of teachers' desire to teach students with disabilities could be a barrier to inclusion (Vaughn et al., 1996), it was a bit strange to find that some teachers reported that there are some Egyptian

teachers who are not interested in teaching as a profession. Such finding can be understood by teachers' concerns about the low salaries which can not afford a decent life for teachers. So to fully understand this issue we have to locate those teachers within the Egyptian political, economical and cultural context. Egyptian teachers have very low salaries which force them to give private lessons or to look for extra work to support their life which consequently affects the quality of the education process. In such circumstances, securing a decent life for teachers should be a priority for the policymaker to ensure the success of the education process in general and the inclusive education process in particular. In our struggle to achieve an inclusive educational system that caters for the needs of all children, it is very imperative to consider teachers' needs as well.

8.6.4 Socio-cultural barriers

Additionally, teachers identified some barriers within the Egyptian social context that could undermine or hinder the success of inclusion. The majority of teachers believe that the current Egyptian schooling system represents a big obstacle for the implementation of inclusion. School according to teachers has lost its social role and has become like a prison "*unfortunately students do not like to go to school. They just go to school to meet the attendance conditionsand we are speaking about inclusion*". This situation has been attributed to the over emphasis on achievement, lack of activities...etc. Therefore, challenging the current status of the schooling system should be a priority for the policymaker.

The other issue which teachers raised was the lack of awareness among many people about disability. According to the interviewed teachers, some people are not aware of the difficulties and needs of those people with SEN and they are not aware of the importance of education for them. However most Egyptian people are tolerant, empathetic, still some people view disability negatively or deal with SEN people wrongly either with over protection and over sympathy or with inferior view. Also, these could lead to lack of commitment towards education in general and towards inclusion in particular. These negative social views need to be addressed carefully in order to change the wrong social practices. According to Singal (2005) and Kristensen et al., (2003), lack of community commitment towards inclusion through showing less interest towards this policy or through showing negative attitudes towards individuals with disabilities is a major challenge facing inclusive education movements.

Additionally, the findings of the current study concur with the results of (Forlin, 1998; Macleod, 2001; Singal, 2005; Vaughn et al., 1996) which found that lack of parents' involvement and lack of communication between parents and schools are fundamental challenges to inclusive education. They argue for more positive communication between parents and schools in order to support inclusion. The results of current study echoed this sentiment.

The previous discussion showed that there is a variety of perceived barriers that could affect the implementation of inclusion. All types of barriers were shown to be related, and they interacted together to affect teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion and the way inclusive practices can be developed. The variety of barriers identified above supports, to a large extent, the argument of Slee (1993) that there is a need to transcend the discussion of inclusion away from its previous emphasis on a technical resource-based approach towards greater appreciation of the complex interaction among a range of other factors which exist in schools. Slee (1993) proposes that it is issues, such as pedagogy, school organization, curriculum, and teacher education, which should form the basis of future consideration regarding implementing a policy of inclusion.

Moreover, the current study indicated that the achievement of an inclusive education system is a major challenge. The process of developing such educational system requires substantial personal, organisational and cultural changes. Therefore, to encourage and enable teachers to adopt innovative and challenging educational practices like inclusion, relevant authorities, the Ministry of Education in Egypt in particular, should consider minimizing some of the constraining factors. Possible ways to do so include changing the emphasis of the Egyptian educational system from an examination orientation (Hargreaves, 1997) to a learning orientation, providing teachers with sufficient teacher education concerning inclusive education, adapting models of curriculum delivery, supplying more appropriate resources.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter has reiterated and combined the data presented in the previous two chapters whilst trying to give answers to the research questions. The first research question aimed at understanding teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The findings of the study suggest that teachers in Egypt tend to hold mildly favourable to favourable attitudes towards inclusion. However, the study argues that attitudes are not simply an issue of acceptance or rejection of the policy. Rather, "attitudes" is a complicated social

constructivist and context-dependent phenomenon. In this, attitudes have many features related to teachers' conceptualizations of inclusion and SEN/disability.

Teachers' understanding of inclusion ranged between participation and belonging and engagement. Also, the data analysis showed that most teachers in the current study adopted a socio-cultural-religious discourse in their understanding of inclusion; a discourse embedded in their religious commitment or at least in their interpretations of the religious values and principles.

Additionally, teachers' conceptualizations of SEN/disability suggest that disability is a socially constructed phenomenon. Also, teachers' responses cannot be labelled as reflecting the deficit model or the social model. Rather, they reflect an interactive approach for understanding disability which recognizes both the within-child factors and the environmental factors. Additionally, one of the main themes in the current study was teachers' conceptualization of children with SEN as different, regardless of their attitudes towards the inclusion process. Teachers' conceptualization of difference was embedded in their reflections about issues of equality and equal opportunities which are inherited in the Islamic religious values. This discourse enhances and supports the calls for considering inclusion and SEN within a cultural model (Devliger, 2005; Ware, 2003) that takes into account the common values about disability in any given context which consequently will affect the way educational provision is provided in that context.

Despite the overall favourable attitudes, teachers' appeared to be concerned about the lack of instructional skills of general education teachers and about the academic outcomes of inclusion. Uncertainty and concerns were also expressed about the lack of support, resources, training, time, curriculum and pedagogy, collaboration and social attitudes and beliefs about disability. Therefore, teachers in the current study supported the inclusion of certain categories of children with SEN rather than adopting a zero-rejection model of inclusion. This does not mean that they do not support inclusion but it means that they are constrained by a number of variables that forces them to adopt such pragmatic attitudes.

In my attempt to answer the second research question which aimed at exploring the factors affecting teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, quantitative and qualitative data were collected about several demographical variables. The findings of the current study supported previous findings that teachers' attitudes are associated with a variety of child-related variables, teacher-related variables and educational environment related variables. In terms of child-related variables, the findings of the current study indicated

that attitudes towards inclusion vary directly with the type and severity of the disability categories represented and with teachers' understanding and construction of each disability. Regarding teacher-related variables, the findings of the current study indicated that positive teaching experience and in-service training are the most important factors in shaping teachers' positive attitudes.

Additionally, in terms of the environment related variables the findings of the current study argued that there are many other contextual factors that affect teachers' conceptualizations of inclusion and disability, attitudes towards inclusion and could affect the implementation of inclusion. The results indicated that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion cohered around a series of three interconnecting contextual levels: the wider social and cultural context, the state-wide educational level and the school and classroom contextual level. These contextual levels are intertwined together forming a web of reciprocal interactions and influences.

The third research questions dealt with teachers' perceptions about barriers to the implementation of inclusive education in Egypt. The findings of the study showed that "barriers to inclusion" is a very complicated issue that encompasses two many inter-correlated contextual factors that should be addressed very carefully in order to implement inclusion effectively. The analysis indicates that barriers to inclusion can be categorized into four categories: structural-organizational, personal, interpersonal and socio-cultural barriers. All types of barriers were shown to be related, and they interacted together to affect teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion and the way inclusive practices can be developed.

Finally, the fourth research question dealt with teachers' perceptions about change in order to put inclusion into practice. The participants suggested several strategies like, building teachers' commitment, developing national inclusive educational policy and overcoming all the structural-organizational and the cultural barriers. Additionally, the study has challenged the traditional and reductionist assumptions of change in the case of inclusion which is based mainly on providing resources. The study argued that unless educational change is tactically directed to the questioning of exclusionary thinking, inclusion will continue to constitute a rhetorical apparition within mainstream settings, with dreadful consequences for the education and welfare of disabled children.

Moreover, the findings highlight the role of the context in shaping teachers' view of the world. Barriers not only act against teachers' will, but also become part and parcel of their attitudes and in their beliefs systems. This indicates that teachers' attitudes and

perceptions are strong context outcomes, rooted in experience and do not become automatic routine conducts. The implication here is change is not that simple issue of addressing teachers' attitudes about the phenomenon. Rather, it's a comprehensive process that should address all the contextual factors that shaped teachers' perceptions. In the next chapter, further implications regarding theory and practice will be provided to set a basis for educational reform to be followed by some recommendations for future research.

*All translations of Qur'anic verses are taken from Ali (1996). The numbers between parentheses indicate the location of the verse in the Qur'an. The first number is that of the chapter, and the second number refers to the location of the verse within the chapter.

**The sayings of the Prophet (Hadith) are each referenced by: a) the name of the person who compiled and authenticated the Hadith; and b) the number of the Hadith as listed in the specific compilation.

CHAPTER NINE

Chapter Nine: Limitations, Implications and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of the challenges or limitations that I faced in conducting the study. It is followed by a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of the study. The discussion of the theoretical implications tries to present the contribution of the study to the literature around inclusive education, disability and SEN and teachers' attitudes. Further recommendations and suggestions for future research will also be provided.

9.2 Limitations of the study

Obviously, there is no study without limitations. Researchers make choices, and consequently (consciously or unconsciously) overlook aspects that may be important to understand the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations that I am aware of in the study. Limitations can be related to the design of the data collection instruments or the fieldwork process itself in terms of place, time, access, availability of teachers, social, cultural and administrative obstacles, etc.

One of the limitations of the current study is related to the context of research in terms of place and time. This study was conducted in two governorates (Cairo and Daqahlia) which necessitated travelling between both of them and increased the problems of gaining access to the participants in each. In order to gain access to schools and teachers I followed a long procedure to get permission from the MOE and from the regional officials as well. This consequently reduced the time available for collecting data and also limited the number of interviews that could be carried out. I had planned to spend three months collecting data in Egypt (the maximum time allowed from the sponsor) but because of these problems data collection was limited to two months.

Another limitation is related to the questionnaire used in the study. For example, although being based on the literature and previous studies, the questionnaire would have been more reliable if it was more grounded in the research phenomenon itself. This could have been achieved if it was preceded by a preliminary interview with small sample of teachers. This could have given more insight into why teachers do what they do. Also, the questionnaire, specifically in the cognitive and behavioural component of attitudes, did not provide for a differentiation between attitudes towards the inclusion of

children with different exceptionalities because I used the generic term SEN. Additionally, due to lack of time, accessibility and because this was not one of the main purposes of the study, the questionnaire has not been statistically subjected to factor analysis to enhance its construct validity. However, the internal consistency of the questionnaire as calculated by alpha coronach coefficient was within the acceptable ranges. Moreover, the potential bias in teachers' response to the questionnaire, which is one of the major disadvantages of self-report measures, could not be totally eliminated. Therefore, the confidence in teachers' responses to the questionnaire could not be fully guaranteed.

Another limitation is related to the background variables on which information was collected and analysed in the quantitative phase. The purpose was to identify any factors that could need to be considered as possible influencing variables on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The ways in which a number of these variables were assessed limit the confidence that can be placed in the findings. For example, the assessment of in-service training in this study used a yes/no response format which could have had a limiting effect. However I tried in the qualitative phase to stimulate teachers to speak about the quality of such training, still it would seem preferable in future to collect information on the amount and quality of training undertaken, rather than focusing on the presence or absence of such training.

Another limitation in this study is related to the chosen sample. Although the study included a reasonable number of participants (285 in the quantitative phase and 12 in the qualitative phase) the findings of the study cannot be generalized. Additionally, the sample of the study excluded other key players like students, parents and policymakers. It is necessary in future research that the voice of all concerned about inclusion should be heard.

Also, although the use of the interview was so advantageous in the current study, there were some potential limitations and problems associated with using this method. Conducting interviews in the Egyptian context where the positivist or the scientific approach is the dominant (Gahin, 2001) can be a difficult mission. There were many contextual factors that faced me during the interviews like, the long procedures to get permission to conduct interviews with teachers, timetable constraints and some cultural and religious issues. For example, it was very difficult to interview female teachers freely because of the religious and cultural beliefs that prohibit men to be alone in a separate room with a woman. Therefore, I had to conduct the interviews with them in

an open room or with the attendance of other teachers which might have influenced the opinions that were being expressed. Despite of all these challenges, the participants provided me with rich and meaningful data.

Acknowledging the limitations of the research minimizes the risk associated with an attempt to generalize the findings obtained from the study. It locates the findings in context and makes them more realistic. This coincides with the approach adopted by the study whose aim was not to throw generalizations over larger population. Rather, the aim was to obtain a deeper insight into and provide a deeper perspective of the research phenomenon under investigation. However, despite of the fact that generalization is not a goal for qualitative research (Patton, 1990), the lessons learned from the current study can be transferred (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to similar contexts. All the above limitations represent important areas for future research and they are added to my research agenda for further investigation. They might be addressed in more depth through further studies in the Egyptian context.

The limitations discussed above suggest some caution when interpreting the findings of the current study. However, despite the limitations of the study imposed by the research context and the purpose of the study and the limitations of data collection instruments, the study has made a valid contribution to knowledge concerning the complexity of inclusion, disability and SEN and teachers' attitudes by providing a range of theoretical and practical implications which will be explained in detail in the next sections.

9.3 Implications of the study

The findings of the study carry a range of theoretical and practical implications for the development of theory and practice of inclusive education and for educational reform. They present more challenges than providing recipes or ready made solutions to implement inclusion. The theoretical implications challenge the epistemological foundations of disability and inclusion and provide a rationale for a socio-cultural model for understanding these issues. The practical implications are based on the theoretical ones and represent some challenges for the policymaker in the areas of teacher training, differentiating the curricula and pedagogy. The implications of the current study should be understood against its limitations discussed above. In the same vein, as this study can be considered context-sensitive, the implications of the study must be understood in the light of the bearings exerted by the social and cultural context in which it has been conducted.

9.3.1 Theoretical implications

The theoretical implications of the current study hold the potential of developing the theoretical assumptions about inclusion, SEN/disability and attitudes. These theoretical implications are interrelated in many ways. However, for the purpose of clarity and readability they will be presented thematically as follows.

- **Inclusion discourse and educational reform**

The results of the current study challenge the globalized technical and reductionist approach of inclusion. The study argued that Inclusion is not one size fits all. Therefore, educational reform should not be one size fits all. Rather, it should be context-dependent and responsive to all the cultural issues within a certain context. Obviously, this does not mean we should not learn from other countries experiences. Rather, it means we should learn from them but not borrow the others' experiences and cultivate them in the unsuitable land, otherwise the fruit will not be ripe and even it might be sore. While the western model of inclusion was originated to challenge the discriminative approach towards people with disabilities among many others, this dilemma is not their in the Egyptian context at least in the cultural ideology. However there are some structural and organizational exclusion practices, there is a great deal of inclusive morals and values, which for me represent the heart of inclusion. So the educational reform proposed by many western researchers may be helpful to the Egyptian context in its technical and structural dimension not in its moral or ideological one.

Teachers' suggestions for change and their understanding of disability and inclusion represent a new dilemma that will need further research. The dilemma or the tension lies in the different assumptions about disability which read different from the western one, and the structural discourse of change which reads western. The current study showed that while Egyptian teachers adopted a similar approach to the western one (resources, training, etc...) in analysing challenges to inclusion, they adopted a different approach about educating children with SEN. The main point highlighted in the study is that there is lots of what I could call "*natural inclusion*" in the Egyptian schools, however some readers could consider it irresponsible inclusion, but we have low quality education. The major implication here is the need to move beyond challenging the ideology of inclusion itself to move towards challenging the quality of the educational systems and to rethink inclusion with different assumptions from that of special education. We need to move beyond Inclusion as a "special education initiative" and frame inclusion through more "humane understanding of disability" (Ware, 2003, p. 160). Indeed,

Barton's (1987) argument that special education was euphuism of the school failure is still very applicable to inclusion movement. I hope that the findings of the current study could direct the educational reform in another way. Instead of concentrating on the SEN in the schools, we need to concentrate on developing and enhancing the quality of education in order to be able to carry on without having to reiterate all the challenges that have been faced by other countries. In this regard, Slee (2006) argued that inclusion is not about disability. Rather, inclusion is about educational reconstruction, about school reform and about social change. However, we should take into account that such change should be multidimensional and be directed towards the plethora of interrelated elements that permeate both agency and structure (Power, 1992).

As argued by many authors, the realisation of inclusive education is primarily an attempt to change the education system so as to include and respect students' diversity. The review of educational reform in special education showed that most of that change was essentially structural (e.g. Ferguson, 2008; Liasidou, 2007; Peters, 2002) with less attention to challenging the basic assumptions or the epistemological foundations of special education (Slee, 1997). Such structural transformations did not lead to changing the practices (Ainscow, 2007; Vislie, 2003). For example, Vislie (2003) found that while some changes were occurring towards more inclusive provision for students with special education needs, most countries had remained stable in their practices, concluding that "inclusion has not gained much ground in the Western European region". Such criticism towards the structural model of change has been reiterated by many authors (e.g. Ainscow 1999; Ainscow, Howes, Farrell, & Frankham, 2003; Lipsky & Gartner 1997; Ferguson, 2008, Liasidou, 2007; Slee, 2006). Consequently, there was another movement (see Ferguson, 2008 for a detailed review) that called for changing schools so that they might better educate each and every student. At the same time, some other searchers sought a new approach to changing schools in ways that challenged long-held normative assumptions about students and learning. The larger general education community was struggling to respond to growing student diversity in race, culture, language, family structures and other dimensions of difference beyond ability or disability. The main challenge was always to rethink schools' practices in order to better prepare an increasingly diverse student population for a new and only partly known future. Much of that research indicated that moving beyond the structural changes requires fundamental changes in the "core of educational practice" (Elmore 1996, p. 23) and in the epistemological foundations of special and inclusive education

(Slee, 1997). Briefly, I will explain how the findings of the current study could support the educational reform in Egypt and elsewhere.

- **Reflections on educational reform in Egypt**

The Egyptian MOE attempts to reorganize the education system in order to facilitate the realisation of an inclusive discourse are concomitantly stained by certain uncritical actions. Inevitably, analysing the Egyptian educational policy requires a critical, albeit not a totally negative, stance. Therefore, by providing a critique of the Egyptian educational system it is not aimed to underestimate the progress and the important attempts undertaken so far. Criticism should be considered as an indispensable component in attempting to achieve '*a post special needs era*' (Slee, 2003, p. 213).

Since the early 1990s, the Ministry of Education started the integration of disabled children in mainstream schools, however, without an official policy. During that time Egypt was influenced by a flood of international documents and policy imperatives (e.g. Salamanca statement, 1994) that proclaimed the rights of disabled children to be educated with their peers in mainstream settings. The subsequent integrative attempts in Egypt epitomised the catastrophic dimension of educational borrowing (Watson, 2001) whereby the integrative attempts merely resulted from the necessity to align Egypt with the international special education policymaking trends. Not surprisingly, the placement of disabled children in mainstream schools was taking place uncritically, thereby leading to "*abortive integrative attempts*" (Liasidou, 2007, p.335). Even now after the ministry has launched the five year strategic plan for reforming special education in 2007, nothing new has changed.

Following Phtiaka (2001) in her concerns about the educational policy of Cyprus, I could argue that the Egyptian educational policy is experiencing an ideological conflict regarding the principles upon which a regenerated inclusive educational system will be predicated. Despite of the different national and religious ethos in Egypt, The Egyptian educational policy tries to reiterate the western model of integration of the early 1980s. It is quite evident, however, that having to choose between different discourses, which have long before been tested by other countries, the Egyptian MOE opts for the medical model of disability. Therefore, far from learning from the mistakes of the western experience, the same policymaking drawbacks are uncritically repeated without considering the cost these might have for the realisation of an inclusive system. The Egyptian trend of change is still based on the assumptions of special education as the supposed reform aims at giving chance to some children to be educated in the

mainstream school and supporting the special schools to be able to accommodate some other children with severe disabilities. This approach constitutes remarkable evidence that *“the social, political, economic and professional vested interests which have dictated the growth of special education have not disappeared, and the control of decisions and money by individuals and groups remain”* (Tomlinson, 1982, p. 172).

Finally, I could argue that the current Egyptian efforts in reforming special education reflect the false assumptions and understandings of inclusion, materialised through the institutional arrangements of the educational system. Ultimately then, the failure of inclusive educational policies might be attributed to the ingrained discourse of disability and of the institutionalised bases which construct that discourse (Fulcher, 1989) which have been challenged, to some extent, in the current study. In the same vein, Slee (1997, p. 407) considers that the failure of educational policymakers can be primarily attributed to the failure to analyse and ultimately deconstruct the ‘epistemological foundations’ of special education, and the discursive power that emanates from them. Inevitably then, “what has transpired is, as Bernstein (1996 cited in Slee, 1997, p. 407) demonstrates, better described as the submersion of special education interest within the discursive noises of integration and latterly inclusion”.

- **Reflections on the professionalism discourse**

The overemphasis of the Egyptian MOE on reforming special education by the intrusion of professionals in mainstream schools and through the extensive use of external support in resource rooms (MOE, 2007) will establish a new kind of status quo that constitutes a barrier to the possibility of a radical restructuring of the education system based on the principles of an inclusive discourse. What is currently still conveyed and encouraged through the official policy documents is a ‘pathognomonic’ (Jordan et al., 1997, p. 85) approach to disability that reduces inclusion to a special education ideological and procedural artefact. Despite the inclusive lexicon espoused in governmental rhetoric, reality reflects what Slee (2007b, p. 179) calls ‘the assimilation imperative of neo special educational rhetoric and practice’. This assimilationist approach often has little to do with establishing an inclusive curriculum, pedagogic practices or classroom organization to reconstruct schools. Thus, the attempts for educational reform in Egypt have been reduced to the creation of ‘human resources to mind the disabled’ in mainstream settings (Slee, 2007b, p. 181).

Additionally, the “resource rooms” approach has been criticised extensively by Liasidou (2007) as a prime example of the resurgence of special education imperatives whereby

disabled children are marginalised and excluded within a presumably inclusive mainstream setting. The problem with the resource rooms is increasing the visibility of children with SEN. The placement of disabled children in resource rooms increases their 'visibility' within mainstream settings as they constitute 'a centre toward which all gazes would be turned' (Foucault, 1977, p. 173) with the aim to 'measure, normalize and correct' (Foucault, 1977, p. 198) the deviant other. Also, the resource room approach supposes that children with SEN have something wrong that needs to be fixed in this room through the support of more experienced professionals. This discourse of "professionalism" (Fulcher, 1989) assumes the potentiality of 'normalizing' the 'deviant' students through expert intervention and remedy. This approach may create what (Foucault, 1980) called 'regimes of truth'. These 'regimes of truth' conveyed through the ideology of "expertism" (Avramidis, 2006; Vlachou, 2004) become naturalised and legitimised as they are ostensibly allied with 'disabled children's best interests' (Fulcher, 1989).

Moreover, the appointment of various professionals who acclaim their presence in mainstream schools could hinder change and reinforce the status quo. Indeed, professionals have been traditionally a powerful means for excluding disabled people (Kenworthy & Wittaker, 2000). The professionalism discourse of disability assigns power to professionals within all arenas of educational apparatus, whose judgements and knowledge perform a powerful and pervasive ideological function, which is further supplemented by the existing institutionalised structures and processes. Indeed, as Popkowitz (1993 P. 293) suggested "*the rhetoric of professionalism legitimates the practices that emerge*". Following Tomlinson (1982), I am concerned that the expanding appointment of professionals within mainstream schools enhances disabled children's 'difference' and their inability to participate in a common curriculum whilst, concomitantly, safeguarding the normal functioning of mainstream classrooms. Additionally, the presence of special teachers conveys the 'otherness' image imputed to disabled children and establishes the "binary perspective" (Peters, 1999) of normality and abnormality.

Obviously, the criticism of the professional discourse does not mean not to seek professional help in schools. Rather, it means that the impetus of inclusive education should "emanate from the recipients of professional services rather than from being orchestrated by professionals themselves (Corbett & Slee 1999, p.134). Moreover, even though it would be naïve to avoid the fact that students with disabilities might require

medical care and support (Barton, 1993), the overemphasis on their individual pathology jeopardises the attempts for inclusive education (Ware, 2003). The main focus of the MOE is placed upon the identification of children's deficits according to professionals' culturally constructed notion of normality which the current study had challenged. Reiterating Slee's words: "disability is seen to be a condition of the defective individual, rather than a signifier of more complex sets of relationships between institutions and individuals. [In this respect] policy has become the instrument through which knowledgeable experts manage the lives of disabled people (Slee, 2001, p. 389).

- **Change between ideology and structure**

The current study showed that both structural and ideological changes are necessary for creating an inclusive education system. However, the ideological challenges are the most important in creating inclusive educational system. Corbett and Slee (1999) explained that there are three tiers of inclusion. The first tier, there is surface inclusion, led by policy and notions of school effectiveness. The second is related to the structural modifications to the school environment and the curriculum. The third tier concerns the deep culture, the hidden curriculum of fundamental value systems, rituals and routines, initiations and acceptance which form the fabric of daily life. The third tier is the major part of inclusion. The findings of the current study indicated that, however, the first two tiers of inclusion are quite absent in the Egyptian schools, the last and the most important tier is there. Simply this goes against the assumption that inclusion will be achieved by imposing higher policies. Additionally, this situation contradicts the western model which always started by imposing policies, then moved slowly towards challenging the structural components of the school environment and finally striving to achieve a deep culture of inclusion in schools. The major theoretical implication here is to challenge the assumptions of inclusion that hinders the development of an inclusive culture in schools. Also, this challenges the reductionist approach of inclusion that was based mainly on resources which has led to a general lethargy that questions inclusion as possibly too idealistic (Allan, 2005).

And the other implication for the policymaker is that, following the structural model of change might not lead to inclusion and it could undermine the sense of "natural inclusion" which we have at the meantime. Given that there was some invisible children who were included in the mainstream schools, my concern is that the MOD strategic plan for change could pathologize those children and make them visible through the

highly structural proposed model of change (see chapter 2). The model concentrated mainly on the placement of children, resources and teacher training. Despite of the importance of these changes, there is no critical challenge to issues like curricula, pedagogy and assessment which represent the main body of an inclusive education policy. This approach could lead to the existence of *“certain micro-political and structural factors that occasionally combine to consolidate and reinforce the status quo which will be very difficult to remove, as they become naturalised and are thereby deeply institutionalised”* (Liasidou, 2007, p. 330). Moreover, the discourse adopted by the ministry is not inclusive because it is still based on the dichotomy; regular and special. As Slee, (2006) argued, the existence of special and regular education, together with student classification system that make them governable (Rose, 1989, cited in Slee, 2006), is perhaps to accept a descending taxonomy of human value. Therefore, the policymaker’s efforts should be directed towards increasing the quality of the educational system rather than targeting children with SEN in mainstream schools who will latter be blamed for the failure of the school.

- **Disability and inclusion: Towards a socio-cultural model**

The findings of the study indicated that teachers moved away from the traditional pathological explanations of SEN as being within child, and moved towards a wider, more interactive and ecological view in which the role of the context is clearly recognized. Florian (2008, p. 206) argued that inclusion *“involves an understanding of the interactive socio-cultural factors that interact to produce individual differences (biology, culture, family, school), rather than explanations that stress a single cause. Inclusive practice involves understanding how to sort out the relative contribution of each of these factors in determining appropriate responses when children experience difficulty”*. Additionally, teachers’ religious conceptualization of differences in the current study, coupled with Al-Azhar experience of including many disabled students could provide some ethos for the policymaker to build upon in moving towards a more inclusive educational system instead of borrowing ready made solutions from other contexts which have different cultural ethos. The major challenge facing the policymaker is to challenge the quality of education that has been criticised extensively. The advantage of this approach lies in *“moving our gaze from describing individual defective pathologies to understanding the more pervasive and complex pathology of schooling”* (Slee, 2007a, P.167)

The findings of the current study revealed a sense of what I call “*natural inclusion*” in the Egyptian schools where many children who are being reintegrated in mainstream schools in different contexts are naturally included in the Egyptian schools and teachers took the responsibility of teaching those children. However, there was a lack of full understanding of the philosophical assumptions of inclusion (as it is represented in the literature) as they did not support the inclusion of all children; for example, children with intellectual disabilities. Such dissonant views can be understood within the broader Egyptian political and cultural system. As discussed in the previous chapter, differences among children were perceived as a matter of human nature which reflects the Egyptian religious and cultural ethos. Such natural differences do not affect the individual sense of personhood and identity where the social or the collective identity is the most important one in the Egyptian context. However, teachers’ responses towards including SEN children in the mainstream schools were mainly affected by the political context of the educational system specially the secular system which is not based mainly on the Egyptian cultural ethos (Ali, 1989) and which used to follow the medical model in diagnosing children as suitable or not suitable for education in the mainstream schools. In this, inclusion is not simply about putting students together, it is about starting with a different epistemological view or about starting with the aims or the outcomes of the educational enterprise which are culturally bound.

It might be interesting here to refer to the cultural connotations of the term education in the Egyptian context based on Bayliss’s (forthcoming) argument that the cultural roots of the different understandings of ‘education’ could problematize our understanding of educational change. There are three Arabic terms for education representing the different dimensions of the educational process in Islam (Al-Attas, 1979). The first is *ta’līm*, from the root *’alima* (to know, to be aware, to perceive, to learn), which is used to denote knowledge being taught or conveyed through instruction and teaching. The second is *Tarbiyah*, from the root *raba* (to increase, to grow, to rear), implies a state of spiritual and ethical nurturing in accordance with the will of God. The third is *Ta’dīb*, from the root *aduba* (to be cultured, refined, well-mannered), suggests a person’s development of sound social behaviour. What is meant by sound necessitates a deeper understanding of the Islamic conception of the “human being”. Education in the Islamic context is regarded as a process that involves the complete person, including the rational, spiritual, and social dimensions. According to Al-Attas (1979), the comprehensive and integrated approach to education in Islam is directed towards the “balanced growth of the total personality...through training Man’s spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and

bodily senses...such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality" (p. 158). This indicates that in Islamic educational theory, knowledge is gained to actualize and perfect all dimensions of the human being. Additionally, in Egypt like in most Muslim and Arab countries, to be an 'educated person' means not only to have acquired knowledge, but also to know how to act in a moral manner. It describes a person that is trustworthy and able to strive towards righteousness. These assumptions could be very useful in reconstructing the educational policy especially with children who are deemed to have SEN as it could be easy for them to achieve the other aims of education instead of concentrating only on seeking knowledge.

Additionally, the study argued that teachers' concerns about the parents, disabled children, nondisabled children, principals, administration and policymakers reflects a lack of communication between all the people who are deemed to be responsible about inclusion. (Allan, 2005) argued that inclusion is an ethical project, in which all concerned, disabled students, mainstream students, teachers and researchers have responsibilities. The government's resistance to the voices of disabled people and their advocates (especially parents and teachers) represents a thorough reversal of "asymmetrical power relations" (Phtiaka, 2003). The policy discourse should not serve only the interests of the policymakers or the professionals. Rather, it should give enough space for disabled children and their teachers. In this, I could argue that, despite the fact that the principles of equity and human rights are enthusiastically promulgated, inclusive education policy documents are occasionally fraught with antithetical discourses whereby: *"Different vocabularies which espouse rights and equity, are now used to describe the cosmetic adjustments to traditional practices, which when applied, maintain the powerlessness of disabled students...and privileges those professionals who work 'in their best interests' (Slee, 1996, p. 107).* It is very important that the policymaker should listen to the voice of disabled children and their parents and teachers. The policies imposed by the higher bodies of government cannot be successful without a full understanding and acceptance from the first policymaker; the teacher (Fulcher, 1989).

One of the main contributions of the current study is its challenging of the traditional and reductionist assumptions of change in the case of inclusion which is based on providing resources. I would argue, following many authors (Liasidou, 2007; Ballard, 1997; Slee, 2006, 2007a, 2007b; Allan, 2005) that, unless educational change is tactically directed to the questioning of exclusionary and segregational thinking,

inclusion will continue to constitute a rhetorical apparition within mainstream settings, with dreadful consequences for the education and welfare of disabled children.

The current study argued that the realisation of a better and more inclusive future is highly related to the ways that key policy actors conceptualise and envision this future. Change cannot be achieved unless there is vision and means to realise it (Liasidou, 2007). Shapiro (1989, p. 36), whilst writing about educational change, gives considerable prominence to: ‘the critical necessity of a clearly enunciated moral vision to an effective politics of educational change’. It is necessary, however, that this vision should jointly permeate the ‘context of influence’, the ‘context of policy text production’ and the ‘context of practice’ (Ball & Bowe, 1992 cited in Liasidou, 2007). Also, it is very important that all those concerned about inclusion should have such moral vision in order to put the ethical project of inclusion (Allan, 2005) into practice.

- **Inclusion and attitudes**

Finally, the current study has challenged the “psychological” concept of “attitude” that has been represented in the literature simply as a matter of acceptance or rejection which I could argue is one of the key contributions. The findings of the current study go against the simple assumption that once teachers have positive feelings, inclusion can take place. It is not that simple. The current study showed that “attitude” is a complex and context-dependent issue that cannot be understood in isolation from the wider context within which such responses were created. The data analysis showed that there are too many intermediate factors that shaped teachers’ responses. While they have strong inclusive ethos, they are constrained by some cultural issues, educational practices and structural issues which forced them to adopt certain intentions and adopt teaching practices that are not compatible with these ethos. Additionally, the role of the social views about disability, religious values, school cultures, educational system and structural and organizational constraints cannot be underestimated in understanding teachers’ attitudes towards a complex issue like inclusion. For inclusion to become reality in any given context, such issues need to be understood carefully. This study also gives support to the social constructivist view of attitude as context dependent and responsive to factors within a particular socio-cultural context (Eiser, 1994; Carrington, 1999).

However, a final note about attitudes as an analytical tool is worthy to be mentioned here. Ingstad (1995) in her anthropological study about attitudes towards the disabled in Botswana raised the question: is the concept of attitudes really useful as an analytical

tool and is it useful as a predictor of the life situation of disabled people in a particular community? Following Ingstad (1995), I will answer the question with a very conditional “yes”. I will not argue that the concept of attitudes cannot be used as an analytical tool for certain purposes, especially when we measure simple dimensions. However, when it comes to more complex issues, like inclusive education, I am doubtful. Ingstad’s critical insights about the discourse of attitudes about rehabilitation are very applicable to my discussion of attitudes towards inclusive education. She argued “by emphasising attitudes, the international discourse on rehabilitation easily ends up in “victim blaming”. Poor care for a disabled person is seen as a question of individual attitudes- most often that of the family or care-giving person- and change becomes a question of attitude change” (p.260). By analogy, I could argue that it is not fair to blame teachers only for a non inclusive educational system. We need to understand all the different circumstances and all the different contextual factors within a certain context to understand inclusion and to understand why teachers respond in a certain way.

Additionally, by focusing on attitudes in this way, two things are achieved. First, the treatment of the disabled person and not the capacity of the school becomes the focus of attention. This reflects the ethos of the medical model in which restoring the functioning of the bodily parts is one of the major concerns. By limiting the perspective in this way, we lose the opportunity to challenge the schooling system and we also lose the opportunity for more radical change. Second, “victim blaming” takes attention away from the fact that these are often political issues. It is a question of ability or willingness to develop appropriate educational services. It is also often a question of raising the quality of the educational system. Finally, in order to achieve the ethical project of inclusion, there is a need to hear the voice of all the concerned people as articulated by Ingstad (1995) “*We should strive toward an approach in which the perspective of those concerned gets a prominent place in research as well as planning and implementation of programs concerning disabled people and their families*” (p.261). Only then can we hope to achieve a sustainable inclusion for all children in the near future.

9.3.2 Practical implications

The current study holds a range of practical implications for developing the practice. These implications concern policy, curriculum and pedagogy, teacher training and methodology.

- **Implications for policy, curriculum and pedagogy**

The first implication for the policymaker is to rethink before the implementation of inclusive education in Egypt and try to learn the lesson of the policymaking pitfalls of the other countries that preceded Egypt in adopting an inclusive education policy. Instead of borrowing a new policy from a context which holds different assumptions about disability, however successful this policy might be in that context, the policymaker should consider building the policy based on the national Egyptian ethos and the ethos of the education process as understood in the Islamic theory of education.

If it is necessary to identify the learning needs of children in order to provide them with an extra in-class-room support, then the policymaker should rethink the identification of children who might need extra help or support, including those with disabilities, away from the medical model and try to consider seriously a careful assessment of the interaction between the child and the school environment. According to (Ferguson, 2008), this shift in identification and assessment moves the “problem” from within the child to a complex interaction between the educational environment and the child’s ability. Also, the policymaker needs to rethink resources allocation, either human or material, within a discourse that emphasise the outcomes of learning process for all children, rather than allocating resources based on the deficits of children.

The current study showed that teachers with experience in inclusion have gained experience and self-confidence in teaching children with SEN in mainstream settings. However, some teachers showed some beliefs that are inconsistent with the inclusion philosophy. This implies that teachers need to be exposed to actual experience of teaching differently in order to change classroom practices (Ainscow, 2007). Also, this implies that change is to be gradual and it is not necessarily to be a “revolution or a one-off attempt” (Liasidou, 2007, p. 342) in order to be significant and substantial. Teachers must be able to assimilate the principles underlying the change and understand the rationale behind change or innovation projects. Every little attempt matters and contributes to the gradual construction of alternative regimes of truth that will contribute to the creation of more inclusive educational policies and practices within the Egyptian context and elsewhere.

Addressing teachers’ concerns in the case of including children with severe disabilities in general and children with intellectual disabilities in particular requires a strategy to be developed by educational policymakers and curriculum developers in two areas as suggested by Koutrouba et al., (2006). Firstly, curricular objectives should be set so that

the teaching process does not aim exclusively at achieving and assessing the cognitive adequacy of students, since this inevitably leads to marginalization of some children with SEN. Secondly, a parallel objective should be set regarding student socialization in the context of activities that are intended for all students, SEN and non-SEN students alike, and enabling teachers to assess the success of the teaching/learning process with different criteria that SEN students can more easily respond to.

Additionally, curriculum planners should think about different strategies to make the curriculum more engaging and meaningful and to support teachers to be able to personalise learning for every child. In this regard, strategies like designing curriculum to emphasise what students will eventually understand, as well as know and be able to do (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), or strategies such as project- and problem-based curriculum design and integrating various subjects into study of a broader problem, theme or project (Lake, 2001) represent potential ways to ensure that the resulting curriculum is interesting, engaging and meaningful to children.

In pedagogical terms, the educational process should move from teaching to learning. Here, teachers are encouraged to use different teaching strategies or to differentiate instruction (Bayliss, 1995a; Ferguson, 2008) so the learning of individual students' can be "personalised" to their current abilities as well as their interests. According to (Ferguson, 2008), Planning for differentiation involves thinking about different ways that any lesson or learning project might be changed to better meet students' needs. Also, a teacher can differentiate content (what specifically each student learns), processes (how each student learns) and products (what the student produces as evidence of learning). Moreover, teachers can take into account and differentiate according to students' current abilities, their interests and ways they learn best.

However, to enable teachers to do such proposed changes, there is another recommendation for the policymaker here as well. There is a need to decentralize the educational system to give the local educational authorities and schools more freedom to make instructional decisions to support the education of all children, given the various concerns teachers raised about the system from the administration, inspectors, policymakers, and rigidity of the curriculum and examination systems. In this, schools should be organised in ways that give space for teachers to plan, learn and work together. Additionally, teachers' views should be considered by the policymakers before the implementation of any changes related to the educational system. Moreover, the research has shown that, teachers perform better when strong professional incentives

and facilities are provided, enabling them to devote themselves to the whole of their task. Therefore, providing such incentives must form a central part of the objectives in any legislative changes to promote inclusion.

- **Implications for teacher education**

Also, the study holds some useful practical implications for teacher education and training. Given the concerns that teacher training, if presented based on the deficit model could lead to some exclusion practices; therefore, there is a need to deconstruct training. Teacher educators in Egypt and elsewhere need to challenge the traditional approaches to professional development as they may not produce any change in teachers' attitudes and, in turn, in regular school praxis since they reinforce the popular conception that inclusive education is about 'special' children who will prove problematic as they are resettled in mainstream settings (Slee, 2001). Alternatively, teachers should be trained how to differentiate teaching according to the child response to the learning topic not to the child's disability. Teachers' understanding of and knowledge about the essence of inclusion should be increased in order to enable them to re-define and re-appraise their role in promoting greater inclusion.

Also, teacher training programmes could raise teachers' awareness of the many difficulties that children may face during the learning process to help teachers to move away from the traditional pathological explanations of learning problems as being within child, and move towards a wider, more interactive and ecological view in which the teacher's role is clearly recognized. Teachers and all other professionals working in the school should be trained to challenge the deeply entrenched deficit views of difference, which define certain type of students as lacking something (Trent, Artiles, & Englert, 1998). Teachers should be trained how to acquire the 'generic' teaching skills that allow them to modify their practice in ways that meet the needs of all learners within 'inclusive' frameworks (Bayliss, 1998). According to teachers' views, such training should be continuous, practical and appealing. This is in line with the argument of many authors (e.g. Fullan 1991; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Sarason 1990) that simply supporting the practitioners in the early stages of the implementation of an educational reform is not enough; continued support and technical assistance must be provided.

Additionally, the current study anticipates for the creation of inclusive pre-service training programmes. Based on the findings of the current study, teacher educators might think of the possibility of interdisciplinary studies of exclusion and inclusion Slee

(2001) or no-categorical pre-service programs that merge professional training programs (Villa et al., 1996) in order that general and special teachers participate together in experiences directly related to enhancement of their skills to collaborate and instruct a heterogeneous group of learners. These programmes could provide training both on the psychological principles of teaching and learning and the individual differences resulting in a critical understanding of the educational process. Moreover pre-service training courses should cover topics such as understanding inclusion, disability, concentrating on the abilities that those learners have, differentiating the curriculum, assessing academic progress, managing behaviour, and working collaboratively with colleagues. This approach could provide practitioners with a vision and skills to modify their practice in genuinely inclusive ways.

- **Methodological implications**

In terms of methodology, using an interpretive-constructivist paradigm in this study proved an invaluable approach, as opposed to an absolute reliance on the positivist-scientific paradigm; the dominant research approach in Egypt. Using this research approach in this study has been innovative, opening a new land that is promising and rewarding. The research process I followed throughout the study has highlighted the difficulties involved in invading a new territory by a researcher having a positivistic background in a research context nurtured by positivism. Egyptian education researchers need to shift their approaches towards the interpretative paradigm, particularly in studies which require a deep understanding of the researched phenomenon.

The use of the interviews for data collection proved valuable also. The qualitative data analysis, despite the fairly small number of the participants, 12 teachers, provided me with rich understanding of teachers' views. It was not possible to obtain such understanding by applying a questionnaire method only, because of the limited space available for the participants to express their views frankly.

Moreover, the use of data triangulation technique has enabled me to view the phenomena from different angles and helped improving and enriching the interpretation and discussion of the data. This suggests that researchers need to apply flexible tools instead of relying only on a set of tools that aim to twist the phenomenon being investigated to meet the researchers' expectations.

9.4 Recommendations for future research

The insights gained from the study raised the ground of research and opened the door for potential future research. Future research can certainly provide more evidence to confirm some of the initial findings emerging from or suggested by the current study, and can answer the unanswered questions in this area of inquiry. Several interesting directions worthy of further research in this field can be recommended.

In terms of research methodology, this study has laid the ground for doing qualitative research in the Egyptian educational research context, especially using interviews. Further studies are invited to explore the potential of using interviews and other methods like reflective journals, group interviews, diaries, group discussions, etc.

Additionally, the current study had challenged the attitude questionnaires and their consequences as a sufficient foundation for inclusive education. Also, the study supports a social constructivist view of attitude as context dependent and responsive to factors within a particular socio-cultural context (Eiser, 1994, Carrington, 1999). Given this social constructivist view of attitude, future research would benefit from employing alternative methodologies, such as life history, narrative or autobiography, to examine teachers' attitudes. These methods, as suggested by Avramidis & Norwich (2002), can lead to an improved understanding of the complex and interrelated processes of personal experiences, attitudes and practices.

It is clear from the current study and from previous research that "teachers' attitudes" are not the only factor that determines the success of inclusion programs for children with special needs. Therefore, the fact that teachers may hold more negative attitudes towards a particular group of children with special needs does not preclude successful inclusion for the children concerned. Thus, as suggested by Hastings & Oakfordmore (2003), more research is needed that addresses a broad range of child, teacher and school variables and the interactions between them in terms of their impact upon the inclusion for children with special needs.

The study indicated that teachers were mainly concerned about children with intellectual disabilities. Further research is required to explore teachers' conceptualizations of intellectual disabilities. This research could be a base for teacher educators in the future to address teachers' conceptions and misconceptions about children with such disabilities. Additionally, addressing teachers' concerns about children with intellectual disabilities in future research can provide important data on how those students can be successfully included in regular classes.

This study highlighted the influence of culture in general and the role of religious values in particular in shaping teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards inclusion and children with SEN. A further study is needed to address in more depth the influence of cultural and religious values on teachers' attitudes and their representations in their teaching practices in general and in teaching children with SEN in particular. Also, this calls for an investigation into the potential of making use of cultural values for the sake of developing inclusive educational systems.

Also the study showed that there were many people with whom teachers dealt during the educational process, e.g., the school administration, inspectors, educational decision makers, parents and the learners themselves. Since all those people have affected teachers' views in a way or another, therefore there is a need to hear the voice of all those people in order to get a better and clear view of inclusion as policy and practice. This call is in line with Allan's (2005) argument that, inclusion is an ethical project, in which all concerned, disabled students, mainstream students, teachers and researchers have responsibilities. Dialectical, interactionist, participatory methods rooted within qualitative designs are required, so that the voices of all concerned can be articulated. This is especially important in the case of children/young adults, since we have lagged behind in seeking their informed views and opinions (Burden, 1997).

The present study has described comprehensively, but with some uncertainties, many features regarding the concept of inclusion. Future research should address these findings to link with policy and practical issues. More philosophical studies are required to challenge both the assumptions of special education and inclusive education in order to transcend the debate about placement and move towards challenging the assumptions of the educational process itself. Also, the study has questioned the external support model of provision exemplified by the resource rooms. Therefore, there is a need for some research to consider effective ways of in-class-support (Farrell, 2000). What are the different ways in which in-class-support can be provided to all children (with and without SEN) for the benefit of all? How can resources be allocated to schools based on the learning requirements rather than on children's disabilities? Also, there is a need for critical research in Egypt about differentiating the curricula and pedagogy based on the Egyptian national ethos in order to support the education of all children.

The current study supported, to some extent, Slee's (2007a) argument that inclusive education is not the adaptation or refinement of special education. It is a fundamental rejection of special education's and regular education's claims to be inclusive. Inclusion

demands that we address the politics of exclusion and representation. His suggestions for further research based in this argument are still very relevant to be reiterated in the current study. He argued that *“different kinds of research represent themselves as requirements for the kind of educational reconstruction required for democratic schooling. Investigations of the distribution of poverty and privilege, impacts of pedagogic approaches and educational measurement and assessment , the relationship between curriculum and the politics of representation, school reform that changes outcomes for formerly excluded children, all push toward the front of the research queue in the new educational laboratory”* (P. 167).

The current study has indicated that there is some sort of “natural inclusion” in Egyptian schools; however this is not compatible with the rhetoric of inclusion as suggested in the literature. Therefore, there is a need for understanding the processes of inclusion and exclusion which operate in Egyptian schools. Such research has the potential for critically examining existing practice and providing directions for formulating policies to support inclusion in ways which are acceptable to those most directly involved. By doing so, inclusion could move away from a narrow view of “learning difficulty and/or disability” towards child-centred education in general (Avramidis et al., 2002).

The current study has also fuelled the tension between issues of effectiveness and inclusion. However the current study starts to problematize basic understandings of “effectiveness”, there is a need for further research that adopts a more holistic conceptualization of the term. In this, as suggested by Avramidis et al., (2002), more sociological research regarding school effectiveness is worthy to be considered. This sociological approach could challenge the technocratic view of schooling implicit in much of the school effectiveness literature, and the idea that the process of schooling can be divorced from the social, cultural and political dimensions of the local and broader context in which the school is embedded.

The study has proved that disability and SEN are socially constructed phenomena and what can be seen as disability varies from context to another. In this, it is imperative to have some cross-cultural studies about the construction of disabilities to support the insights gained from the current study and to provide empirical evidence and support to the theoretical cultural model of disability proposed by Devlieger (2005). Anthropological and ethnographic studies have the potential to provide some rich insights in this direction.

Finally, taking into account the originality of this research area in the Egyptian context, these suggestions are by no means inclusive of all potential research areas. However, all these suggestions will be taken into account in my future research.

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APPENDICES

Appendices

Appendix I: Teachers' Perspectives about Inclusive Education Questionnaire

Dear colleague,

This questionnaire aims to explore the attitudes and perceptions which Egyptian teachers hold about the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. Also, the purpose of the questionnaire is to gain information that will help in understanding the factors surrounding inclusion and identifying the potential factors that could support or hinder the implementation of inclusive education in Egypt.

All the information will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

Thank you very much for your co-operation

Elsayed Elshabrawy Ahmed Hassanein

School of Education, University of Exeter

Part one: Background information

Please put a tick (✓) where appropriate

1- Gender: Male Female

2-Age:

21-25 26-30 31-35 36-40 41+

3-Teaching Experience:

1-5 6-10 11-15 16-21 more than 21

4- Type of School:

Regular School Regular school with mainstream unit
 Al-Azhar institute Special school

5-Phase taught:

Primary preparatory secondary

6. Please indicate your professional development in the field of SEN

None BC Special education certificate

7- In-service training

Yes No

8- Teaching Experience in Special Education

Yes No

9. Where is your school located?

Urban area rural area

Part Two: Attitudes towards Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES)

A- Teachers' opinions

Please read the following statements and indicate how strongly you agree or disagree using the scale provided. There are no correct answers; the best answers are those that honestly reflect your feelings.

The term special educational needs in the following scale refers to children who may require additional support to be educated in the mainstream schools like the visually-impaired, the hearing-impaired, physically-disabled, intellectually-disabled children and children with challenging behaviour.

The term inclusion in this scale refers to the process of teaching SEN children in regular schools.

5=strongly agree	4= agree	3= neutral	2= disagree	1= strongly disagree
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N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Children with SEN have the right to be educated in the regular school					
2	children with SEN should be given every opportunity to function in inclusive classroom					
3	Inclusion requires special areas in the classroom suitable for use with SEN children (computer, reading, listening)					
4	labels should be abandoned in inclusive schools					
5	Inclusion has a positive effect on the social development of SEN children					
6	Services needed by children with SEN should be available (e.g. health, physical , occupational, or speech therapy) in the regular school					
7	Inclusion means that all children are valued, regardless of their differences					
8	Children with SEN have a sense of belonging in the regular classroom					
9	Inclusion represents injustice to other children					
10	Teachers should use varied teaching methods to meet diversity in inclusive classes					
11	Inclusion necessitates adapting course content for the included children					
12	Inclusion puts SEN children at risk of developing sense of inferiority by comparison with peers					
13	Inclusion increases the SEN student circle of friends					
14	Examination system needs to be adapted for SEN included children					
15	Teachers in regular schools have the necessary knowledge and skills for teaching to SEN children					
16	Inclusion gives an opportunity for all children with and without SEN to learn about and accept differences					
17	Grouping children in a special class has a negative effect on their social and emotional development					
18	Inclusion worsen the learning problems of SEN children					
19	Including SEN children in regular classes impede the learning of other children					
20	Inclusion promotes self-esteem of SEN children					
21	Inclusion of SEN children adds to the disciplinary problems in regular classes					
22	SEN children would learn better when grouped together in a special school					
23	Academic needs of children with SEN can be met in the regular classroom					

- In your view as a teacher what is the most appropriate setting or environment for teaching children with SEN?

disability	home	Residential care	Special school	Special class in RS	Inclusion +out class support	Inclusion support +in-class
Visual impairment						
Hearing impairment						
physical						
Intellectual disability						
Challenging behaviour						

B: Affective response

If a child with SEN (Blind or visual impaired) was about to join your classroom, what would you feel?
(Please circle the number which best describes your feelings)

Uncomfortable 1 2 3 4 5 Comfortable
 Negative 1 2 3 4 5 Positive
 Pessimistic 1 2 3 4 5 Optimistic
 Uninterested 1 2 3 4 5 Interested
 Unhappy 1 2 3 4 5 Happy

If a student with SEN (deaf or hard of hearing) was about to join your classroom, what would you feel?

Uncomfortable 1 2 3 4 5 Comfortable
 Negative 1 2 3 4 5 Positive
 Pessimistic 1 2 3 4 5 Optimistic
 Uninterested 1 2 3 4 5 Interested
 Unhappy 1 2 3 4 5 Happy

If a student with SEN (Physical disability) was about to join your classroom, what would you feel?

Uncomfortable 1 2 3 4 5 Comfortable
 Negative 1 2 3 4 5 Positive
 Pessimistic 1 2 3 4 5 Optimistic
 Uninterested 1 2 3 4 5 Interested
 Unhappy 1 2 3 4 5 Happy

If a student with SEN (Intellectual disability) was about to join your classroom, what would you feel?

Uncomfortable 1 2 3 4 5 Comfortable
 Negative 1 2 3 4 5 Positive
 Pessimistic 1 2 3 4 5 Optimistic
 Uninterested 1 2 3 4 5 Interested
 Unhappy 1 2 3 4 5 Happy

If a student with SEN (challenging behaviour) was about to join your classroom, what would you feel?

Uncomfortable 1 2 3 4 5 Comfortable
 Negative 1 2 3 4 5 Positive
 Pessimistic 1 2 3 4 5 Optimistic
 Uninterested 1 2 3 4 5 Interested
 Unhappy 1 2 3 4 5 Happy

C: Behavioural intentions

Please read the following statements and indicate how strongly you agree or disagree using the scale provided. There are no correct answers; the best answers are those that honestly reflect your intentions.

5=strongly agree	4= agree	3= neutral	2= disagree	1= strongly disagree
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If a child with special educational needs is to be included in my classroom I will....

N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD
	If a child with special educational needs is to be included in my classroom I will.....					
1	Provide individual instruction for included children.					
2	Adjust the time and Pace of a lesson for included children.					
3	Adapt tests for included children.					
4	Use individualized/different criteria when evaluating SEN children					
5	be willing to engage in in-service training on teaching children with SEN					
6	engage in developing the appropriate skills to teach children with SEN in the regular classroom					
7	change my teaching process to accommodate children with SEN in my classroom					
8	accept responsibility for teaching children with SEN in my classroom					
9	encourage social interaction among all children in my classroom					
10	co-operate with the school administration in the decisions made concerning the SEN children in my class					
11	avoid using labels to the most extent possible					
12	Co-operate with the parents of SEN children for the benefit of their children					
13	Respect and appreciate all children regardless of the differences among them					

Part Three: Barriers to Inclusive Education Scale (BTIES)

Please read the following statements and indicate "the degree to which you feel each item represents a barrier to inclusion based on your own experiences and beliefs." Each item is rated on a scale from 5 (Strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree)

N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Inadequate pre-service preparation of teachers					
2	Overload on the part of teachers					
3	Classrooms do not accommodate children with disabilities					
4	Absence of regulations that support inclusion					
5	Teachers' negative attitudes					
6	Resistance among administrators					
7	Non-acceptance by other parents					
8	Little Knowledge about special educational needs					
9	Lack of experience regarding Inclusion					
10	Class size or large teacher/pupil ratio					
11	Limited time for teachers to give sufficient attention to children with SEN					
12	Lack of equipment and appropriate educational materials					
13	Non-acceptance by parents of SEN children					
14	Behaviour management					
15	Rigidity in curriculum design and examination					
16	Lack of regard for diversity of interests and abilities					
17	Inadequate in-service training for teachers					
18	Non-acceptance by other children					
19	the absence of educational policy for inclusion in Egypt or the absence clear vision for change					
20	Inadequate funding					

➤ Could you please mention any other barriers to inclusive education?

➤ What are the changes that you recommend to be done to put inclusion into practice in Egypt?

Appendix II: Protocol of the Semi-Structured Interview

The semi-structured interview protocol consists of five sections. The order they are presented in the protocol does not imply that interviews were conducted in the same order of the questions in the schedule since the participants' abilities to articulate their views about certain issues provided outlets for some probes or minor questions to further the discussion. These sections represent the themes the interviews addressed.

Understanding of inclusion

- Let's talk about inclusion, what does inclusion mean in your view?
- Do you think that the regular school environment is educationally suitable for children with SEN?
- What effect does the SEN Child's presence have on the regular classroom environment?
- Does the SEN Child benefit from regular education, considering both academic and social benefit?
- What is the ideal model from your perspective?
- Do you think that inclusion mean to close special school?

Understanding of disability

- What does the word SEN or disability mean for you?
- Is disability different from SEN?
- Who are the children that you consider as disabled?
- Do you think all children can be included? Why or why not?
- Does the severity of disability make a difference?
- Why do you think that it is difficult to include children with Severe SEN?

Skills and Training:

- Have you received any pre or in-service training relative to special educational needs?
- Do you think that you have the necessary skills for teaching children with SEN?
- Have you got any previous experience in teaching children with SEN? If yes, was it in a special school or a regular school?
- Do you think that teachers in regular schools have the sufficient abilities and skills to teach SEN children or not?
- Do think that teacher training can guarantee inclusion?

- So, what sort of training? Is it general training about inclusion or specific training about the different categories of SEN?

Resources and support

- How far do you think your school is resourced and ready for inclusion?
- Do you receive any support from the MOE or local authorities regarding the education of children with SEN?
- Do you think that the notion of assistant teacher is acceptable in Egyptian schools now?
- What sort of support would you like to implement inclusion successfully?

Perceptions about barriers to inclusion and perceptions about change

- In your view, what are the barriers to the implementation of inclusive education in Egypt now?
- Could you please mention some other important changes that should be done in order to put inclusion into practice in Egypt?
- Do you think that Inclusion in the future can change or adapt teachers' and local communities' attitudes towards SEN children?
- Do you think that the current curriculum is suitable for all children? Why or why not?
- How can the curriculum be changed? How can the examination system be changed?
- What else needs to be done in your school in order for inclusion to be successful?