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The Attitudes of Stakeholders towards the Inclusion of
Students with Special Needs in an Armenian School

By

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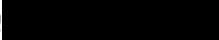
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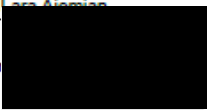
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The Attitudes of Stakeholders towards the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs in an Armenian School

Lara Ajemian

ABSTRACT

To better understand how teachers and principals perceive the inclusion of students with disabilities in classrooms, this study investigated the attitudes of school principals and teachers toward the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities. Principals and teachers' attitudes towards inclusion were studied along three dimensions: teacher perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities, beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion, and perceptions of professional roles and functions. The study also explored the barriers and challenges to inclusive education and discussed strategies to enhance the students' inclusion in the school. Twenty-two teachers and two principals of one Armenian school located in the Metn district of Lebanon participated in the study. The research design adopted a case-study approach. The study used both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and an observation checklist intended to assess the school's accessibility. The findings of this study showed that teachers have a neutral attitude toward inclusive education. They indicated that for inclusive education to yield favorable outcomes, school administrators needed to invest in support systems for teachers, teacher professional development, and additional resources tailored to the needs of students with disabilities. As for the principals, their attitude towards the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities was positive. Finally, the case study demonstrated that there were a number of barriers that prevented the school from implementing inclusive practices.

Keywords: Special Education, Disabilities, Inclusion, Inclusive School, Teachers' Attitudes, Principals' Attitudes, Barriers to Inclusive Education.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, inclusive education's definition and implementation have attracted a lot of attention. The concept of inclusion in education is based on the idea that each student is an individual with different interests, skills, and learning needs. It focuses on the idea that all kids, despite their differences or difficulties, deserve to have a good education (Division for Social Policy Development, 2016). According to advocates of inclusion in education, all children in general education settings should have the same access to resources as students with special education needs (Division for Social Policy Development, 2016). Inclusion in education is being perceived and understood more widely around the world as a reform that encourages and supports diversity among all pupils (Imaniah & Fitria, 2018). Nevertheless, providing the support needed for all students to achieve their learning goals and potential is always a concern and a challenge around the world (UNESCO, 2019). This paper presents the introduction, the literature review, the methodology, the results, the discussion, and the recommendations of my research.

To start, the purposeful, continual endeavor to guarantee that every voice is heard is part of what is referred to as inclusion. Also, inclusion means that everybody is treated fairly, feels a part of society, and is granted the right to prosper (Tan, 2019). Besides, diversity refers to the presence of individual variances in a specific location. Examples include gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, race, ethnicity, ability level and religion. It is the way that people differ while being similar, both on an individual and group level (Tan, 2019). Hence, diversity is not only limited to disabilities but also to all differences that exist among and within individuals (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002).

Many specialized UN agencies or branches have policies that support inclusion. Any limitation of access to school based on socioeconomic injustices such as gender, ethnicity, social background, or disability is forbidden by the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and other international human rights laws (UNESCO, 2019). Additionally, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was declared and ratified by the UN General Assembly, calls on governments to implement laws that support inclusive education. Each and every person has the right to a high standard of education, as stated in Article 24 of the International Declaration of Human Rights. Also, according to the article, states must guarantee that learners who have disabilities access the education system at every level. Preschools, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education are included in this, as are lifelong learning, vocational training, and extracurricular and social programs (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). Likewise, under its Curriculum Reform program, UNRWA—the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East—is trying to incorporate holistic policies and actions into all educational frameworks and activities. According to UNRWA's inclusive education policy, organizations should be committed to providing all children with a high-quality inclusive education, regardless of their ability, economic and social background, gender, or psychological and health needs. UNRWA seeks to eliminate obstacles so that all students have equal chances to learn, engage in class, and reach their full potential (Seer, 2013). Furthermore, according to a study conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the educational rights of people with special needs, people with disabilities cannot access excellent education, social growth, or educational equality without inclusive education (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

Some nations have established policies on inclusion. There is a swift trend toward inclusivity in developed nations like the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Mittler, 2000; UNESCO, 1993). On the other hand, educational institutions in underdeveloped nations were still struggling to improve their inclusive policies when the tsunami of change toward inclusion hit. Most developed nations—primarily England, the United States of America, Australia, and Canada—provide literature and other educational materials to developing countries to support them in the process of implementing inclusive practices (UNESCO, 1994). Initially, the United States' Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) encouraged special education and related services for young people who had disabilities (Lipkin & Okamoto, 2015). Part B of IDEA was approved in 1975 and provides federal funding to assist states and school districts in providing a free and appropriate public education to children with disabilities in specific age ranges, starting at their third birthday and possibly lasting until their twenty-first birthday. Children who need additional support during school hours due to intellectual, social, physical, or sensory impairments or challenges are thus entitled to receive these services under Part B of IDEA. Later on, the law was expanded to include children who are between the ages of zero and three as well (Lipkin & Okamoto, 2015). As for England, its more current education policy adheres to several of UNESCO's ideals. The National Curriculum for England and Wales was supported by the government as a mechanism for instructors to adapt their instruction to cater to the needs of each student in their classrooms (Beaton & Spratt, 2019). With regards to Italy, the Education Act of 1971 mandates that all students with special needs attend ordinary schools (Buzzi, 1995). In the same context, the northern Italian town of Reggio Emilia has a well-established international reputation for quality and forward-thinking in its approach to early childhood education. Youngsters with special needs are fundamentally referred to as having special rights in Reggio. Such pupils are accepted into

all levels of mainstream schools in Reggio Emilia under its fully inclusive philosophy. A class is given an additional educator when a student with special needs attends. Still, it's important to note that this additional support applies to the entire class, not just the individual student (Valentine, 1999). In the United Arab Emirates, since 1979, the provision of assistance for special education has progressed. Today, a broader variety of special education categories are recognized to encourage inclusive education and equal access to educational services (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education, 2021). As for the Nordic countries (i.e. Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), a normalization ideology based on normative values of autonomy and self-determination had a significant impact on policies relating to individuals with disabilities. Over the second half of the 20th century, these countries prioritized social justice, equality, cohesiveness, and high-quality education to all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status or abilities (Gjertsen et al., 2021).

The World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain, in 1994, issued a declaration that inclusion should be the standard method of education for children with disabilities. The Salamanca Statement's Article 2 concluded that the declaration was accepted by 90 countries, including all of Europe. According to the article, regular educational institutions that use inclusive education techniques are the best approach to combating discriminatory attitudes, promoting welcoming communities, creating a society that is inclusive and delivering quality education for everyone (UNESCO, 1994, p. ix; Richard, 2010). The World Conference then urged all nations to prioritize inclusive education in their policies and laws and educate all children in regular schools except if there are compelling, solid motives for acting differently (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, 2020).

Everyone has the right to an education, including individuals with special needs (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). The World Declaration on

Education for All, the Salamanca Declaration and Framework for Action, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child all acted by drawing attention to this issue in order to increase acceptance and awareness of the rights of people with disabilities. To secure the basis of inclusive schools and society, it is up to each country's government to decide whether to include these principles in its laws. It is up to the principals of the schools to decide how to adopt and enforce these regulations to guarantee the acceptance of students with exceptional needs in schools (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

1.1 Context of the Research

The current research will be conducted at one Armenian school in Lebanon. In this context, Lebanon is one of the United Nations' 51 founding members, having signed the UN Charter on June 26th, 1945. Since then, the UN has maintained a strong and consistent presence in Lebanon. Knowing that Lebanon is part of the UN, the policies on inclusive education should also be implemented in Lebanon. In May 2000, new legislation, Law 220/2000, was approved by the Lebanese Parliament. People with disabilities are guaranteed equal educational opportunities in a regular school setting under Lebanese Law 220/2000. Despite being clear and directive, there is no legal action taken when the law is not implemented in schools when it comes to accepting students with disabilities or catering to their diverse needs. Discrimination and exclusion of students with special needs are still present in our society (UNESCO, 2013).

The Armenian school where the research will be conducted accepts pupils with mild to moderate disabilities. Therefore, I will focus on students with mild to moderate disabilities, following IDEA's definition of disabilities as specified in Table 1. The school has one

special education teacher and one school counselor who cater to the academic and psychological needs of more than twenty-five students with disabilities.

1.2 Research Problem

It is widely understood that inclusive learning benefits families, teachers, students, and communities by ensuring that kids with and without disabilities enter school with their peers and have access to the tools they need to succeed in both their academic, social, and emotional lives. Additionally, it is recognized that societies make the most of inclusion as the integration of children with disabilities into communities and educational settings aids in the removal of obstacles and the reduction of discrimination (Human Rights Watch, 2018). As a result, communities and schools become more open to diversity, and everyone benefits from a more welcoming and accepting atmosphere (Division for Social Policy Development, 2016). Furthermore, retaining separate schooling for children with disabilities is neither cost-effective nor sustainable in the long run, in addition to the fact that such discriminatory practices often result in children with disabilities receiving inferior education (Division for Social Policy Development, 2016).

Teachers have a crucial role to play in ensuring that these kids study in a setting that is secure, motivating, physically and emotionally safe, and supportive (Sithole, 2017). The atmosphere they foster to include learners with special needs in the classroom is greatly influenced by their views about inclusion (Ariana, 2020). Recognizing that general educators' and principals' attitudes toward students with special needs have a significant impact on removing obstacles and overcoming challenges in establishing inclusive practices will help ensure the effective execution of inclusive education (Ariana, 2020).

1.3 Research Purpose

For the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of how principals and educators feel about enrolling students who have mild to moderate disabilities in lessons, this study will look into the views of stakeholders (school principals and educators). Also, this study aims to discover the barriers and challenges to inclusive education, which in turn will help us come up with strategies to enhance the students' acceptance in the school. This case study will be conducted on twenty-two teachers and two principals in one Armenian school located in the Metn district. The results will help to make well-informed decisions and long-term strategic planning based on actual data on the subject of the present research.

1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities?
2. What are the principals' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities?
3. What are the barriers and challenges to inclusive education?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

A broad range of theoretical frameworks are offered by the research questions to facilitate the examination. This study draws upon research from the fields of psychology and education. Particularly, the topic of research is based on the theories of behaviorism and constructivism in education (Al-Shammar, Faulkner & Forlin, 2019). To elaborate, the points that follow are some fundamental behaviorist tenets that encourage inclusive

education: behavior is influenced by the environment where it occurs; behavior is governed by the setting in which it occurs; behavior is driven by what occurs before, during and after actions; therefore, there should be an emphasis on the student's observable behavior; and behavior is learned from teachers and peers. In regards to cognitivism, the significance of processing and interacting with mental information in guiding student learning serves as a demonstration of cognitivism's application in inclusive educational settings (Evgeniou, & Loizou, 2012).

The importance of these two approaches is that when students are actively engaged in their learning, they tend to learn better in addition to the skills they gain when they interact with other people. Knowing that after the school years, students with special needs will become active members of society, they should be included in the general classroom, where all students have different abilities, so that they can actively learn from each other and have real-life experiences that facilitate their inclusion in society. Therefore, the behaviorism and constructivism approaches highlight the importance of inclusion. In addition, leadership that believes in inclusiveness and that helps to instill inclusion practices inside the school plays an important part in implementing the inclusive practice successfully and limiting the barriers to inclusion. According to Dyal et al. (1996), an educational environment that encourages opportunities for learning for every pupil, including those with impairments, must be created by the school administration (Khaleel et al., 2021).

1.6 Literature Review

The literature review chapter presents studies on inclusive education, highlights the importance of inclusion in education, and explores the effect of teachers' and principals' attitudes on the inclusion of students with special needs. Furthermore, it examines the findings of different studies related to the attitudes of teachers in Lebanon and other

countries. The literature review is aligned with the research questions and organized thematically as follows: What is a disability, inclusive education: its types, teachers' perception and inclusion, principals' attitude and role in inclusion, attitudes and inclusion, and the barriers to inclusion.

1.7 Methodology

This study adopts a case-study research design. A case study is, by definition, a comprehensive investigation that explores a modern phenomenon in its natural environment (Harling, 2012). An empirical investigation known as a case study enables researchers to create an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). A case study is grounded in authentic situations; it can be a project, an activity, an event, or one or more people (Yin, 2018). As a result, it is realistic, attainable, and allows for application to situations that are similar (Cohen et al., 2011; Yin, 2018). In the current study, the school I work in is chosen as the natural setting, as I want to investigate the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion in the school. Also, the convenience sampling strategy, a technique used to select participants that are accessible around a location (in this case, my workplace), is used to collect data from the sample that is knowledgeable about inclusion (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015); the participants of this study will include all twenty-two teachers and two principals of the school. Moreover, this study uses qualitative approaches to provide an in-depth description of the situation at hand (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The study adopts descriptive statistics to categorize attitudes as positive, neutral, and negative and to identify barriers to inclusion. In this study, I will administer a questionnaire that includes three sections (Appendix B) to collect information on attitudes and barriers and get quantitative data. I will also conduct semi-structured interviews (Appendix C) with

three teachers and two school principals and an observation (Appendix D) to collect information.

In the context of Lebanon, although studies are still limited in their numbers, In Lebanon's private schools, both inside and outside the nation's capital city of Beirut, researchers have looked at how principals and teachers feel about including kids with special needs (Khochen-Bagshaw & Radford, 2012; Curtis, 2018). However, no previous research in Lebanon has explicitly examined teacher and principal attitudes in an Armenian school in Lebanon. Adding to this, as the school I work at is part of the Armenian Prelacy of Lebanon; it follows the policies of the Prelacy along with three other Armenian schools. Therefore, the study's results may reveal the application of the inclusive education practice inside these schools, and the outcomes may help improve the practice of inclusion inside these schools. Finally, this study derives from my experience as the first special educator inside the school, as I have established the special education department and brought inclusive education practices to this school. From my experience, I found that challenges come along with the application of inclusion inside the school, and stakeholders' attitudes play an important role in inclusive education's successful execution.

1.8 Position of the Researcher

Being a special education teacher in one Armenian school, I found that stakeholders (principals and teachers) have different and varying opinions when it comes to the inclusion of students with special needs in the classroom. I also noticed that the attitudes of stakeholders towards inclusion were diverse and the roles of the special education teachers were unclear. Moreover, there are many internal and external barriers to inclusion in the school.

In the 21st century, awareness should be spread about the importance of inclusion for education systems and individual learners. The time has come for the serious application of inclusive practices, and this calls for careful planning and a clear vision. To assure that these students receive appropriate help and support, the attitudes of teachers and the barriers to inclusion in the school should be identified to assure the successful implementation of inclusion. As research demonstrated, one of the factors that appears to have the most favorable impact on inclusive education in the classroom is teachers' and principals' attitudes and beliefs toward inclusion (de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). Saying so, if the attitudes of the stakeholders are negative, we are unable to provide a holistic approach to address the needs of the student (de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). Thus, this causes inconsistencies in serving students with special needs.

1.9 Significance of the Study

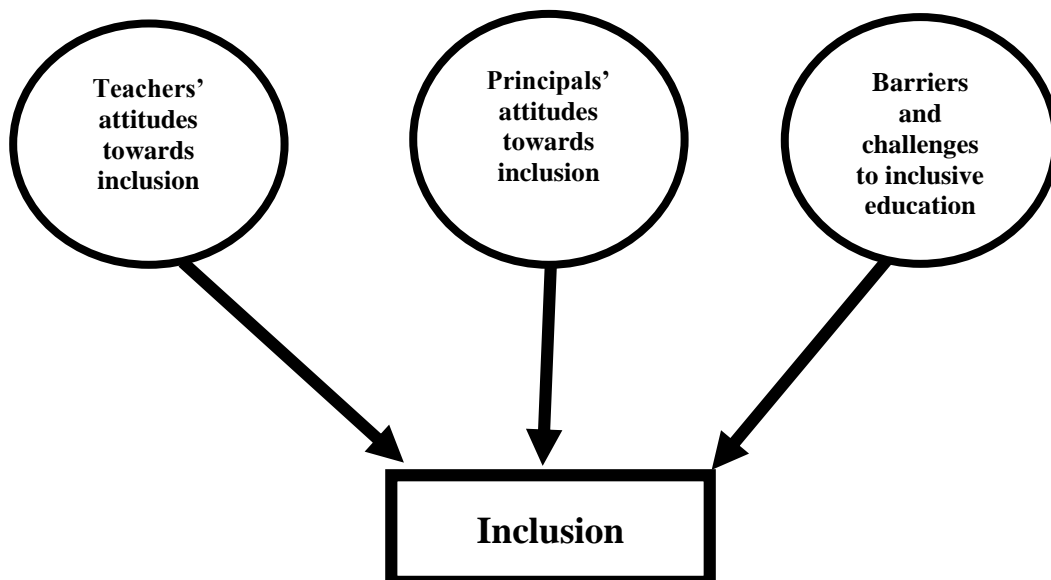
Few studies have been conducted on teachers' views toward inclusion in the field of special education in Lebanon. Particularly in Armenian schools in Lebanon, there is no research conducted about the subject of study. In terms of theoretical significance, this study will allow educators to understand the effects of teachers' and principals' attitudes on students with special needs. Also, the current study can serve as a hypothesis for future research in the field of special education. As for the practical significance, the success of the study would allow for the improvement of the practice of inclusion inside the school. Finally, the results of this study would allow the administration to improve policies of inclusion inside the school and would guide the future implementation of programs for students with mild to moderate disabilities.

1.10 Conclusion

Since we are all entitled to the same privileges despite significant differences, inclusive education is now a widely accepted 21st-century strategy because it helps students realize their hidden potential, guarantees everyone's right to equality without discrimination, and fosters an inclusive environment for pupils' full development. Inclusive education celebrates the concept of acceptance and encourages social acceptance, peace, and collaboration on a larger scale (Singh et al., 2020). The engagement and collaboration of teachers and community leaders are crucial for the proper function of inclusive education. The successful implementation of inclusion would only be possible if the stakeholders had a positive attitude towards it (Figure 1). This study will therefore be crucial to discovering the barriers to inclusive education in one Armenian school, which in turn will help us come up with strategies to enhance the students' acceptance in the school.

Figure 1

Mind Map of the Research Study



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the study presents a literature review. It begins by defining the term disability as it relates to this study. The study then goes on to discuss the following ideas: What is a disability?; inclusive education: its types; teachers' perception and inclusion; principals' attitudes and roles in inclusion; attitudes and inclusion; and barriers to inclusion.

2.1 What is a Disability?

The notion of disability is multifaceted, and there are several viewpoints on what it is and what it signifies to each person, family, and community. Furthermore, the severity of a disability is the outcome of several situations or experiences, including the response to it, the education, types of services, and supports provided to an individual with special needs (Bryant et al., 2019). Also, the characteristics of pupils identified as having disabilities are quite diverse and tend to fluctuate along a continuum rather than showing themselves in discrete groups (National Research Council, 2004).

IDEA has set criteria to define disability. Individuals under the age of three who require early intervention services due to developmental delays, as determined by suitable diagnostic instruments and processes are designated as "infants and toddlers with disabilities" under IDEA. The student must have an officially identified medical, neuro-developmental, or psychological condition that is likely to result in a delay in development, or the developmental delays must be present in one or more of the following areas: communication development, physical growth, mental growth, adaptive development, and interpersonal or emotional development. The phrase "developmental delay" may be used

with children aged 3 to 9 (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2012).

IDEA specifies thirteen distinct types of disability. Children aged between three and twenty-one could potentially be eligible for help when their diagnosis falls under one of these categories: autism, orthopedic impairments, deaf-blindness, special learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, hearing impairments, speech or language impairments, intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, other medical impairments, traumatic brain injuries, or visual impairments (including blindness) are all considered "children with a disability" under the IDEA (the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2012; Knoblauch & Sorenson, 1998).

Table 1

List of Disabilities Specified by IDEA

Autism	A developmental condition that affects a child's social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication, and academic performance. Autism is frequently characterized by involvement in repetitive behaviors and gestures, changes in everyday habits, and unusual reactions to sensory inputs.
Orthopedic impairment	A substantial disability brought on by a bone, joint, or muscle to affect the child's academic performance.
Deaf-blindness	An individual who has severe interaction, developmental, and educational issues due to a combination of hearing and vision problems.
Specific Learning Disability	A disorder that makes it difficult for a pupil to understand or use written or spoken language. It might manifest as a lack of communication, listening, thinking, reading, writing, spelling, or mathematical calculation skills.

Deafness	Even with a hearing aid, a youngster with a significant hearing impairment cannot understand what is being said.
Emotional disturbance	An emotional disorder (such as anxiety, fear, etc.) that causes maladaptive behavior, including acting out and aggressiveness as well as withdrawal and isolation, negatively impacts a person's social and academic performance.
Hearing impairment	A hearing loss, either temporary or permanent, that impairs an individual's academic achievement but does not meet the criteria for deafness as previously stated.
Speech or language impairment	A communication issue that negatively affects a child's academic achievement, like language impairment, stuttering, poor pronunciation, or a voice impairment
Intellectual disability	Deficits in adaptive behavior and severely below average general intellectual functioning. Additionally, it manifests during the formative period and has an impact on a child's academic performance.
Multiple disabilities	A combination of disabilities that leads to serious educational problems and prevents the kid from being admitted to a special education program.

In addition, the aforementioned impairments are broken down into three severity categories: mild, moderate, and severe. Children with mild disabilities need low-intensity care and monitoring. Children with moderate impairments, however, need a decent amount of care. These kids also need semi-constant supervision to make sure they behave appropriately and take part in the full range of recommended treatments, education, leisure, and socializing activities. Finally, due to the severity of their disability, kids who have severe disabilities need a high degree of almost constant care and monitoring; they demand a highly ordered environment, continual monitoring, and assistance (Interagency Licensing

Committee, 2014). It is important to mention that the current study focuses on mild to moderate disabilities as per IDEA's categorization of disabilities (Table 1). Although the research was carried out in an academic setting, scholastic challenges are not the only primary characteristics that are prevalent in these disabilities. Physical, cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional challenges can occur for students with disabilities, among other things.

The number of students with disabilities enrolling in schools over the past few decades has increased significantly, as has the attention paid to their needs (National Research Council, 2004). Many of these kids have characteristics, such as physical, emotional, or learning challenges, that may make it difficult for them to demonstrate what they know or can perform on a test (National Research Council, 2004). In order to allow these students to show their knowledge and abilities, testing accommodations are used. It is not only vital but also a legal need for states, to include them in large-scale examinations to address their educational needs alongside those of other children. However, their various demands necessitate evaluation methodologies that are both flexible enough to evaluate what they know and comprehensive enough to assess what they don't know (National Research Council, 2004).

States are responsible for fulfilling the special needs of qualified children with disabilities under IDEA. To determine if a child is eligible for treatment, he or she must first undergo a comprehensive and unique evaluation. The evaluation's goals are to establish if the kid has a disability under IDEA and to pinpoint the special education and related services the child needs (the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2012).

For this study, I will look at the teachers' attitudes toward including children with mild to moderate impairments, as the school in which the research will be carried out

includes students with such levels of disabilities. The study will thus concentrate on pupils who need low to moderate-intensity care and monitoring.

2.2 Inclusive Education: Its Types

Inclusion in education is founded on the belief that all students have unique characteristics, preferences, skills, and learning needs. It focuses on the principle that all pupils, regardless of their difficulties or disabilities, should learn together (Division for Social Policy Development, 2016). Inclusion in education supports the idea that pupils with special needs should have equal access to resources as all other students in a general education context (Division for Social Policy Development, 2016). Knowing that schools prepare students for life and that people with disabilities are part of the society, school should be the place where inclusion starts.

To begin with, inclusion is practiced in different ways. The push-in method would allow the student to remain in his or her education setting throughout the day with the assistance of a special education teacher or an assistant. In contrast, in the pull-out method, assistance is provided to the student with special needs by the special education teacher in a room separate from the general education setting (Fernandez, 2018). On the other hand, co-teaching is a pedagogical method of instruction delivery that happens through the cooperation of a special educator and a general instructor in a classroom that has or does not have students with special educational needs in regular classrooms (Fluijt, Bakker, & Struyf, 2016). Knowing that inclusion at its very core is about what is best for all children, this should mean staying in the classroom, but it does not necessarily **always** have to be this way. Saying so, some schools have come up with the Multi-tier System of Supports (MTSS) approach to inclusion. MTSS presents a multi-tiered strategy explicitly. Students' available interventions are often divided into three tiers. At Tier 1, the focus is on universal core

education that is differentiated throughout the whole school. Tiers 2, on the other hand, offers interventions that become increasingly individualized and intensive at Tier 3. This approach allows all students to receive the support needed even if they are not diagnosed with disabilities (Averill, et al., 2011).

2.3 Teachers' Perception and Inclusion

The attitudes of teachers and principals towards the inclusion of students with special needs play a major role in implementing the necessary inclusive practices in education. Several research studies have explored the influence of positive and negative attitudes on implementing inclusive practices. To start with, Cassady (2011) conducted a study on twenty-five general educators who were polled on their preparedness to have a student with autism and a student with emotional and behavioral disturbances in their classrooms. The snowball sampling method was used, as the researcher requested that individuals complete the questionnaires and nominate others to join the sample. An individual sample t-test was performed to compare the data's means, and descriptive statistics were employed to examine the distributions of the two groups. The results of a quantitative study on the attitudes of teachers in regards to the inclusion of learners with emotional disorders and autism are presented by Cassady (2011) in her paper. According to the author, educators who reject inclusive techniques are unlikely to adapt their lesson plans to meet the requirements of their pupils. Furthermore, children with disabilities are excluded from studying in schools and aren't provided the assistance they need to establish a joyful learning environment for them due to instructors' unfavorable views about incorporating students with special needs. Additionally, the attitudes of educators will facilitate or obstruct the execution of inclusion policies. On the other hand, ambitious and creative programs relating to the inclusion of kids with special needs in school would need the support and involvement of educators to

be sustained. According to the study's findings, it would be better for children with autism to be included in their general education classes than in separate settings. In Cassady's study, educators also demonstrated a greater commitment to creating individualized education plans, modifying instruction to fit the requirements of students, and collaborating with colleagues to create services and accommodations that are suited for autistic children. The author concludes by pointing out that enhanced teacher effectiveness, more teacher collaboration, and a greater possibility of varied instruction are all linked to increased tolerance for including students with special needs (Cassady, 2011) in the classroom.

In line with the previous study, Szumski, Smogorzewska, and Grygie (2020) performed a quantitative study to evaluate middle school students' attitudes toward students with disabilities based on the moral identity of typical students. The authors point out that prosocial behaviors, including caring, sharing, and other prosocial behaviors, are similar to favorable views toward people with disabilities. In a cross-sectional sample, the authors examined attitudes and moral identity (the importance of being a moral person among an individual) toward persons with disabilities in inclusive classroom environments among 1525 students without disabilities. It was a random sampling of classes taken from a nationwide pool of schools in cities with populations of more than 100,000 people. Within a few days, the participating students completed the questionnaires in groups in their classes. The authors analyzed attitudes toward people with disabilities using the "Multidimensional Attitudes Scale toward Persons with Disabilities" scale. Also, using the "Commitment to Ethical Goodness" scale, the moral identity of each student and the classroom was examined. Both steps were translated into Polish using all appropriate methods, including back-translation. The results show that studying in an inclusive classroom and having a strong moral identity at both the individual and institutional levels both predict a decline in prejudice against individuals with disabilities. The results of this investigation might also

have a lot of practical applications. There are a minimum of three practical ramifications to think about. First, the results stress the significance of including students with difficulties and disabilities in inclusive settings. Second, the study mentions that general educators and special educators should search for students who have a better moral sense and involve them in programs that aid students with disabilities in integrating into society. The students with a stronger moral conscience seem to be predisposed to serving as facilitators in the development of social networks. Likewise, the findings of the research indicate the need for schools to implement successful moral education programs. Consequently, students' moral development will be aided not only by services dedicated to it but also by a positive school and classroom culture. To conclude, the authors claim that one of the main obstacles to the implementation of high-quality comprehensive inclusion in education is the discriminatory behavior of students without disabilities toward their peers with disabilities.

Khochen-Bagshaw & Radford (2012) looked into the attitudes of instructors and head teachers toward those with disabilities in traditional primary schools in Lebanon. In this study, data was collected using a mixed-methods approach; forty teachers from the project's schools filled out questionnaires, and core head teachers and administrators were consulted. The survey was modified from past research that looked into instructors' perceptions of kids with special needs. Additionally, five interviews were done, three of which were conducted with principals and the other two with line managers. Prior interactions between participants and students with impairments occurred. They were specifically picked so that they could look into how they saw pupils with special needs. The findings demonstrated that the inclusion of kids with special needs in classrooms is seen favorably, and it was said that these students are on an equal footing with everyone else. The study also discovered that instructors' inclusive behaviors were impacted by their educational background and duration of teaching experience. To elaborate, instructors with

greater knowledge and expertise in the subject area were able to recognize the challenges faced by children with special needs in relation to the educational curriculum, the administration of the school, and society. On the other hand, participants expressed worries about involving all pupils, particularly those with behavioral, mental, and psychological problems. In terms of the future, the research found that implementing inclusive practices in schools is becoming more challenging due to a lack of proper training and assistance, a lack of subject-matter experts, and the rising expense of doing so.

Consistent with the results of the previous research, another non-experimental quantitative study, conducted by Zakka (2018), evaluated leaders, line managers, coordinators, teachers, and other school stakeholders' attitudes toward students with disabilities and their attitudes' effect on the placement of children with special educational needs in classrooms. The non-probability convenience method was used to choose 28 private school principals. 17 principals of schools in Beirut, Lebanon's capital city, and 11 principals of schools outside the capital city were included in the study. The author also mentioned that teachers' attitudes have an impact on how students with special needs are viewed and whether their right to a good education is upheld. Moreover, the researcher looked at the views of private school principals on including children with special needs in general education classes. The findings of the study revealed that regardless of the principal's ethnicity, age, school location, or years of experience in the educational arena, participants showed a favorable outlook toward the inclusion of students with disabilities. Finally, the study concluded that principals who promote the inclusion of children with disabilities and intellectual challenges give Lebanon's children, classrooms, and society hope since they are "selected" to represent pupils who cannot learn without assistance. Furthermore, teachers who are concerned about the extra effort inclusion would take should

be reminded that reaching out to students with special needs is their job as teachers (Zakka, 2018).

In addition, in her article, Andary (2013) examines whether altering behaviors through a process of parental, teacher, and school administration participation and collaboration enhances the inclusion of kids with moderate disabilities (MDC). Purposive sampling was used to pick two schools to evaluate the implementation of inclusion in two schools with distinct approaches to inclusion. To respond to the study's question, "To what degree are the designated schools and their habits conducive to the learning of MDC?" a qualitative technique was adopted. The habitus is required to enhance the process of MDC assimilation in regular classrooms, according to the study's most significant findings. Likewise, teachers' instruction and guidance were discovered to be important elements that affect the community within their classroom and can contribute to the success or lack of inclusion. This research lays the groundwork for further research into the relationship between habitus and inclusive education in Lebanon.

2.4 Principals' Attitudes and Role in Inclusion

When it comes to the principals, Algethami (2018) conducted a quantitative study to identify Saudi principals' views about the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities as well as the factors that contribute to good attitudes toward inclusion. The author mentions that school leaders can establish positive changes in an educational atmosphere and culture. The inclusion of students with disabilities, especially kids with intellectual disabilities, is one of the most difficult adjustments in the present educational arena. Also, she states that for inclusion to be successful, the school leader must create an atmosphere in which all children, regardless of their disability, may succeed and accomplish. Additionally, Algethami (2018) mentions that, according to previous research,

the attitudes of school leaders are a critical element in successful inclusion implementation. As a result, school administrators must have a favorable attitude toward incorporating children with disabilities if inclusion is to be successful.

Likewise, in her quantitative research study, Conaway (2018) investigated secondary school administrators' attitudes regarding integrating children with autism into the general education setting. The author mentioned that one of the most important aspects of the success of any program's execution is administrative assistance. Furthermore, she asserted that the principal's role and attitude toward inclusive practices are critical to the success or failure of inclusion in a given school. The author also stated that although administrators' attitudes toward inclusion will ultimately determine whether inclusion succeeds or fails, teachers' perspectives about inclusive education are crucial. Administrators nowadays are more exposed to children with disabilities than ever before due to the rise in the number of learners with special needs, which prompts them to make placement decisions for these students. The findings of the present research showed that administrators' opinions regarding involving children with autism and kids without impairments in the classroom were impacted by their level of expertise.

Furthermore, one study evaluated the circumstances of inclusive schools within the setting of the United Arab Emirates and concentrated on the role performed by educational leaders to encourage inclusive schools in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates. It was done using a qualitative study design and phenomenological methodology. Ten general and special education teachers were examined; five were from public educational institutions and five were from private ones. Thematic analysis was used to understand the qualitative data. The results underlined the crucial role of administrators in creating and sustaining inclusive schools by taking a closer look at factors that affect the enrollment of pupils with disabilities and the implementation of successful inclusive practices in classrooms. According to the

findings, establishing and enhancing an inclusive educational system requires professional development for educators, including administrators and educators, as well as the adoption of inclusive practices and regulations. Additionally, it was found that leaders should employ inclusive strategies like employing extra special education teachers, taking part in continuing education development programs and courses, rewarding peer mentoring, encouraging best practices, controlling the types and number of students with determination that are accepted, and allocating funds to provide these students with the facilities and resources they need (Khaleel et al., 2021).

2.5 Attitudes and Inclusion

The attitudes of instructors toward inclusion determine the efficacy of inclusion initiatives. Olson, Chalmers, and Hoover (1997) conducted research on 10 people to examine how children with disabilities are handled in inclusive settings. Teachers chosen for the study worked with pupils who had mild mental disabilities, learning challenges, and behavioral difficulties. Instructors had experience working in a variety of educational service delivery settings. Special educators were providing consulting support to these educators to cater to the needs of kids with disabilities who were being placed full-time in the classrooms. The authors found that teachers' favorable attitudes toward students with impairments predict the successful implementation of inclusion.

In addition, Stanovich and Jordan (2002) discovered that teachers who backed the illness model of disability regularly worked to lessen diversity in their classrooms. In contrast, educators who considered impairments to be developmental barriers that can be addressed via effective training proved to be more tolerant of differences. They also demonstrated an intense dedication to inclusivity and were more likely to seek assistance, which caused them to widen their repertoire of teaching techniques (i.e., collaborate more).

The authors also stress how important it is to support aspiring teachers in making a commitment to incorporating students with disabilities in regular school settings. The researchers reached the conclusion that adjustments in educators' mindsets and opinions about working with special needs children, along with the assistance and resources provided in a collaborative model, result in further beneficial modifications in the way educators act and the participation of pupils in the classroom. Teachers improve when they are ready to support students with disabilities in their general education classes, actively seek out materials and supports, and then incorporate those supports into their lessons. As a result, there is a belief that inclusion can be a useful tool for professional development.

In their study, Buell, Hallam, and Gamel-McCormick (1999) examined the relationship between classroom teachers' views of their ability to succeed in an inclusive workplace and their exposure to training. Their results showed that when teachers had a thorough understanding of the reasons for inclusion as well as the processes and systems that could be put in place to support it, they were far more likely to see inclusion as an option and to have confidence in their capacity to instruct every student well while avoiding disincentives to learn.

Administrators in educator preparation and professional growth are under pressure to highlight inclusive teaching's tenets and strategies in order to shift teachers' perceptions and promote inclusive perspectives (Angelides, 2008). It is crucial to identify the particular attitudes and beliefs required to realize inclusive education in order to give efforts to promote attitudinal change a focus. Using a quasi-experimental approach, Cullen and Noto (2007) investigated differences in new school teachers' self-efficacy in behavioral management in the classroom before and after receiving training in behavioral assessment. Researchers have shown that instructors in inclusive schools do not feel equipped to deal with children with disabilities. The authors discuss this in the literature review and stress

the significance of educators having classroom management methods to meet the requirements of these kids. For inclusive education to be successful, mindsets and convictions are important, according to Cullen and Noto (2007). The authors' thorough evaluation of the literature found that teachers' ideas about their professional responsibilities and duties, as well as the effectiveness of inclusion, significantly influenced their perceptions of inclusion. Teachers' unfavorable attitudes about inclusion were caused by their lack of trust in their ability to teach any students who had disabilities. Teachers with professional training in managing an inclusive classroom and dealing with children with disabilities, however, showed higher self-efficacy and a favorable attitude toward inclusion. As a result, they improved the inclusive atmosphere.

2.6 Barriers to Inclusion

Challenges come along with the inclusion of students with disabilities. Bartz (2020) adopted a mixed-methods approach to re-evaluate the situation of students with special needs against the background of these students' personal life stories by focusing on accessibility in teaching and to answer the following research question: "How inclusive higher education is generally experienced by impaired students at German institutions, and what specific observations have they made in this regard?". 45 students with different disabilities from 35 universities were included in the study. The participants were both quantitatively and qualitatively interviewed. Data sets were gathered over a 12-week timeframe. In the quantitative section of the study, students with disabilities were asked to explain their perspectives concerning six major topics: issues they encountered while pursuing their education due to a disability, issues with university physical environments, issues with instructional materials used in lectures, issues with lecturer attitudes, issues with interacting with other learners at their colleges and universities, and issues with the unique

circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. The students that were polled were allowed to rate how obvious these issues are to them on a Likert scale ranging from 1-6. Also, students were interviewed for the qualitative part of the analysis. The interviews, which ranged between 40 and 60 minutes, were based on the students' descriptions of their actual situation and their knowledge of their disabilities. Univariate analysis and multivariate statistical approaches were used to evaluate the survey data. According to the author, the COVID-19 epidemic has made a number of issues that students with disabilities experience more difficult, including their academic environment, their access to learning resources, and their instructors' attitudes. Findings also indicate that students with disabilities report difficulties with their studies as a result of extra costs incurred due to their condition. Likewise, these students brought up issues with physical barriers. Further, this study found that not only do students with physical disabilities face difficulties with university architectural design, but there are also many challenges for students with mental disabilities. Additionally, a significant number of students claimed that they had problems with lecturers. In light of the case studies' depiction of the complexity of the endeavor, instructors often need to put in extra effort to meet the demands of students with impairments. Furthermore, university professors make discriminatory comments when describing or addressing students with special needs. Finally, the researcher specifies that the barriers to inclusive education include the availability of instructional resources, the accessibility of facilities, and relationships with lecturers. Thus, the research has shown that it is critical to create alternatives to current challenges to encourage their full inclusion in education. In the end, according to Bartz (2020), greater planning and execution of frameworks that use many teaching strategies, including inclusive ones like Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are required. The Universal Design Framework for curriculum design is defined as putting a strong emphasis on recognition, strategic, and affective brain

networks. Variations in materials, techniques, and evaluation of teaching are integrated into the nature of all classes and units in the UDL system so that all students benefit. UDL is therefore a change of emphasis rather than having to "retrofit" the curriculum to meet the needs of particular students (Dalton, 2017).

In order to establish inclusive practices, there are a number of social and educational issues that Kuzmicheva and Afonkina (2020) identify and classify. The pedagogical dialogue with the expert is the primary research strategy developed by the article's authors. The study included 110 instructors from Murmansk area general education institutes. This strategy enabled specialists to objectify the instructors' conceptual and practical challenges in implementing inclusive educational methods. The findings are given by defining, characterizing, and categorizing the professional challenges faced by teachers in inclusive education as a result of the social and educational context, as well as highlighting the inconsistencies in the substance of these challenges. The results revealed the following barriers: unsuccessful adaptation of the methods for teaching topics to the specific features of learners with special health needs; difficulties in understanding the child's uniqueness and talents; absence of resources; and the need for digital equipment and software to support a child's difficulties. Also, challenges lie in establishing the nature of the support that has to be provided, its amount, and the unique educational prerequisites for its supply on an individual basis.

Travers et al. (2010) mentioned that the challenges of inclusion are related to teaching techniques, which encompass the strategies that instructors employ in the classroom to ensure students' successful participation in the school and class. These challenges include a lack of knowledge about behavior management techniques, differentiation, and instruction delivery. To facilitate inclusion, the authors suggested deploying Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) inside the classroom, planning and preparing

ahead, having available teaching resources (including access to books, libraries, and interactive whiteboards), collaborating with other schools and agencies, providing extra-curricular activities to students to improve their school life experience, having conversations with children with special needs, and listening to their needs and concerns.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to investigate the attitudes of stakeholders (the school principal and teachers) toward the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities. This study also aims to discover the barriers and challenges to inclusive education. This section introduces the methodology that I used in my study and discusses the research queries, research strategies, methods, description of the study context, research procedure, data collection, data analysis method, research ethics, and implications.

3.1 Research Aims

The study aims to understand how teachers and principals perceive the inclusion of students with disabilities in classrooms. It aims to investigate the attitudes of stakeholders (the school principal and teachers) toward the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities. This study also aims to discover the barriers and challenges to inclusive education, which in turn helped us come up with strategies to enhance students' acceptance in the school.

3.2 Research Questions

The following research questions can be used to translate the study's objectives:

1. What are the teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in schools?
2. What are the principals' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in schools?
3. What are the barriers and challenges to inclusive education?

3.3 Research Strategies

The approach adopted in an investigation is known as the research strategy. There are several research strategies available to the researcher. The fundamental premise is that the research plan or strategies adopted, as well as the methodologies or techniques used, must be appropriate for the issues intended to be addressed (Robson, 1993).

This study adopts a case-study research design. A case study is, by definition, an empirical investigation that explores a current occurrence in its actual setting (Yin, 1984). Case studies concentrate on a specific circumstance, incident, activity, or phenomenon. The instance is noteworthy due to what it demonstrates about the phenomenon and what it may signify. It is especially well-suited for questions, scenarios, or confusing circumstances that arise in everyday practice because of its tight focus (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). To put it more specifically, the case study approach enables an investigator to carefully evaluate data in a specific situation. A case study technique frequently chooses a small, constrained population or geographic region for evaluation. Case studies essentially investigate modern real-life phenomena by carefully investigating the history of a small number of occasions or situations and how they interact (Zainal, 2007). There are several benefits to using case studies. First, the usage context, or the setting in which the action is carried out, is typically where data analysis takes place. (Yin, 1984). Second, the assessment of both quantitative and qualitative data is now possible because of changes to fundamental case study approaches. Thirdly, the thorough qualitative analyses that are often conducted in case studies assist in both investigating or describing the data in a genuine setting and in explaining the subtleties of real-life circumstances that survey research isn't always able to capture.

Case studies have received criticism in spite of their advantages. Yin (1984) responds to three main sorts of objections to case study research. To begin with, case studies

are typically criticized for being unreliable. Second, case studies provide insufficient support for scientific generalization because they only involve a small number of participants. Third, case studies have been criticized for being too lengthy, challenging to complete, and producing a huge amount of material (Yin, 1984).

In this study, the case study method is the most suitable design for addressing the research question since it allows participants who are closest to the problem under investigation to communicate their opinions and ideas, offering the researcher a unique perspective on the subject at hand. Perceptions are used as proof rather than statistical evidence of influence (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Likewise, this method allows me to highlight an issue present at the school and the research site and to look at it from different perspectives. The problem I am exploring is current and will be studied in its natural setting (i.e., a bound phenomenon).

3.3.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Generally, educational scholars categorize research methodologies as either qualitative or quantitative. While understanding human behavior is the main goal of qualitative research, providing insight into it is the main goal of quantitative research (House, 2018). The term qualitative research approach is used to describe a number of techniques that give in-depth accounts of how people perceive the environment and respond to events (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). With the help of interpretive discoveries of recurring patterns, qualitative research gradually develops theories while providing a wealth of personal information and a rich background. The emphasis is typically on the processes that lead to these outcomes rather than just the results of human activity (House, 2018). On the other hand, quantitative research techniques focus on the development of standards and regularities that can be applied broadly. The research topic is distilled and defined in terms

of precisely outlined circumstances. To support or disprove hypotheses, empirical investigation must be used (House, 2018).

This study adopts a qualitative research method. To collect data, I administered a questionnaire that includes three sections: Part I includes information about the demographic and professional characteristics of the participants; part II comprises the Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scale (TATIS) by Cullen et al. (2010) with little modifications, and part III includes Likert scale items related to the barriers to inclusion in the school as perceived by the teacher (Appendix B). To collect in-depth data, I conducted semi-structured interviews with three teachers and two school principals. The information taken from the interview with the teachers and school principals serves the purpose of triangulation and provide deeper insights. I also conducted an observation using a checklist to investigate the attitude of the teachers towards inclusion and the barriers to inclusive education (Appendix D).

3.4 Description of the Study Context

Lebanon is one of the United Nations' 51 founding members, having signed the UN Charter on June 26th, 1945. Since then, the UN has maintained a strong and consistent presence in Lebanon. Today, the UN works with Lebanon's government and people to fulfill the country's national goals, which correspond to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Moreover, in order to guarantee continuity, equity, and accessibility to education for all students, the UN assists Lebanon's educational authorities. (United Nations, 2022). As previously mentioned, UN policies on inclusive education encourage the education of all children, regardless of their differences in abilities (UNICEF, 2018). Given that Lebanon is a member of the UN, inclusive education policies ought to be implemented there as well. The Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) and the Faculty of

Pedagogy at the Lebanese University hosted an academic symposium in 2016 under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, with assistance from UNICEF, to promote inclusive education for children with special needs. The conference supported the right to an equitable, high-quality education, as outlined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and was attended by academics and educational professionals from both public and private schools and colleges, as well as representatives from UN agencies, important organizations, and NGOs. During this event, the representative of UNICEF in Lebanon, Ms. Tanya Chapuisat, mentioned that education is about maximizing a child's personality, talents, and intellectual, social, and physical capacities. She underlined the importance of schools in preparing kids with special needs for life. Children should be prepared for life in a diverse society in the classroom of the twenty-first century. And as we are all well aware, inclusive schools are essential to the development of an inclusive society. The University of Lebanon's faculty of education dean, Dr. Thérèse El Hachem, stressed the difficulties that people with special needs regularly face in society in terms of social interaction, psychological health, and academic performance. She stated that diversity in education is a national issue at the center of our education plan that involves all stakeholders and is not a conventional topic. There is still work to be done, despite Lebanon being acknowledged as an Arab leader in inclusive education (UNICEF, 2016).

The Lebanese law 220/2000, issued in May 2000, guarantees equal educational opportunities for people with disabilities in a regular school setting. Despite being clear and directive, there is no legal action taken when the law is not implemented in schools when it comes to accepting students with disabilities or catering to their diverse needs in schools. Discrimination and exclusion of students with special needs are still present in our society (UNESCO, 2013).

Knowing that the school I work at is located in Lebanon, the Lebanese law 220/2000 should also be followed. The school accepts students with mild to moderate disabilities. It has one special education teacher and one school counselor who cater to the academic and psychological needs of more than 25 students with disabilities. For three years, general educators working in the school received training related to catering to the academic needs of students with special needs. Saying so, some teachers work collaboratively with the team, while others prefer the work to be done by the special educator alone. Also, for my research, the disabilities that I considered are mild to moderate.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

Sampling describes the method of selecting participants for the research study. A sample in the context of a study is, more specifically, the group of individuals from which data is gathered (Fraenkel et al., 2011). The convenience sampling approach is employed to gather data for this investigation. Convenience sampling, a type of nonrandom sampling, includes members of the population being studied who meet certain practical characteristics, such as availability, geographical proximity, availability at certain times, or desire to participate (Abbott, 2009). Another application is to use volunteers in population studies who are readily available to the researcher. The benefits of convenience sampling are numerous. It is inexpensive and simple because the themes are readily available. Convenience sampling's drawback is that because the target demographic is homogeneous, it is likely to be skewed (Precht, 2007).

Regarding the sample, I included teachers from this school in this study because they work in an inclusive environment that is geographically close and easily accessible to the researcher. To elaborate, these teachers participated in the study since they have been exposed to students with special needs who have various types of disabilities in their

classrooms. Hence, they are knowledgeable about inclusion and its practice inside the school setting. Overall, the participants in this study includes twenty-two teachers and two principals.

3.6 Data Collection

To collect data, I administered a questionnaire that includes three sections. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with three teachers and two school principals. The tools are chosen and designed according to the study's goals and the reviewed literature. The instruments used for this study are questionnaires, observations, and interviews.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

I used a questionnaire, which is generally a technique used to gather data and which describes the features of a target group population (knowledge, opinions, attitudes, or beliefs) (Fraenkel et al., 2011). Three sections make up the questionnaire (Appendix B). To start with, information about the demographic and professional characteristics of the participants were be collected using the demographic questionnaire (Appendix B, Part I). The demographics section includes information about the participants' age, gender, educational experience, and special education training experience. These criteria are significant because they impact teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. Furthermore, the second part of the questionnaire adopted for the current study is the Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scale (TATIS) by Cullen et al. (2010), with a few modifications to explore the attitudes of educationalists toward inclusion in an Armenian school (Appendix B, Part II). The TATIS questionnaire is designed to measure the three individual factors in terms of teachers' views toward inclusive education. These three elements are: (a) teachers' views of

students with mild to moderate disabilities; (b) teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of inclusive education; and (c) the views of the professionals in inclusion.

Therefore, I used this instrument to answer the first and second research questions related to the attitudes of teachers and principals regarding inclusion. It is a well-structured, valid, and reliable questionnaire of teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education, intending to study teachers' and principals' perspectives in important areas of inclusive education. The Cronbach's alpha correlation procedure was used by Cullen et al. (2010) to confirm the reliability of the TATIS instrument, with a value of 0.844, indicating that it is adequately trustworthy (Ilias et al., 2021).

Cullen et al. (2010) mentioned in their article that the TATIS questionnaire depends on extensive literature research. However, they claimed that the questionnaire might be culturally bounded. To further verify the instruments' validity, the questionnaire and the interview questions were reviewed by three experts with backgrounds in educational leadership and special education to ensure the validity of the content. The experts received the questionnaire, reviewed it, and provided their comments based on their knowledge and expertise in the subject of study. As a result, questions were added to keep the essence of the questionnaire similar. Hence, the factors should not change, but to further determine the extent to which the questionnaire yields consistent results, I also checked for the reliability of the questionnaire through the Cronbach's alpha correlation procedure.

The original TATIS questionnaire by Cullen et al. (2010) is comprised of fourteen straightforward and brief questions about the respondents' attitudes toward inclusive education, such as teachers' willingness to conduct inclusive education programs and the value of prior service and training (Ilias et al., 2021). After modification, the questionnaire contains seventeen items. The questionnaire comprises a seven-point answer scale (1–7), with 1 corresponding to disagree very strongly, 7 corresponding to agree very strongly, and

4 being the neutral choice. After modification, item number 6 of the initial questionnaire was broken down into two questions. In the modified questionnaire, items 6, 8, 9, and 17 were added (Appendix A). Also, the questionnaire was piloted with colleague teachers to examine each question's validity and identify any issues that might affect the questionnaire's comprehensiveness and clarity before implementing the full questionnaire.

Besides, the survey comprises a third section that includes Likert scale items related to the barriers to inclusion in the school as perceived by the teachers (Appendix B, Part III). The second and third sections of the questionnaire contain a comment box to allow participants to add their thoughts or ideas related to each part.

Regarding the checklist, to check its validity (Appendix D), Mumbi (2011) asked her supervisors at the university and other specialists involved in approving the research instruments. Modifications were made where needed, appropriate information was supplied, and any confusing items were addressed. After calculating the correlation coefficient to assess the reliability of the study's instruments, the researcher decided that the reliability level of 0.80 was sufficient.

3.6.2 Interviews

In addition to the questionnaire, I conducted comprehensive, semi-structured interviews with three teachers and two school principals selected randomly from the pool of teachers and principals that completed the survey. Specifically, the framework and the adaptability of the responses are what constitute a semi-structured interview technique. By delivering an elevated level of relevance to the subject being studied while paying close attention to the participant, it stands out among interviewing techniques. It is not crucial to use specific language or ask questions in a specific order because the majority of the interview is guided by a list of topics or questions to be covered (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The goal of the semi-structured interview is to elicit subjective responses from participants regarding a specific situation or event they have experienced. When subjective information is insufficient but objective understanding of an event or phenomenon is sufficient, this method may be used. In semi-structured interviews, participants are allowed to answer these open-ended inquiries in any way they see fit (Merton & Kendall, 1946).

In this study, the interview items are self-constructed by aligning each question with the items of the TATIS questionnaire for triangulation (Appendix C). The interviews helped gather particular information based on a list of topics that need to be investigated. Correspondingly, I carried out the interview face-to-face, and I recorded the audio on a mobile phone. I converted all interviews to a laptop, carefully listen to them, and then transcribe the information into a Word document.

3.6.3 Observations

Observation offers a natural depiction of behavior in the setting observed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I undertook a fieldwork observation for this study, which entails traveling to the program, location, institution, setting, and field to see the phenomena being researched (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Moreover, I acted as a non-participant observer outside the classroom to investigate the attitude of the teachers towards inclusion and the barriers to inclusive education. Knowing that the school setting is where I currently work, access to the site of the observation will be assured. Before its execution, I asked the school principal for her permission to conduct the observation. Additionally, to guide the observations, I noted the actions taken by the teachers during the sessions and look for external barriers by using checklists designed by Mumbi (2011) (Appendix D). The checklist is made up of items related to physical resources, curriculum, and learning experiences. To elaborate, in order to identify the kinds of physical infrastructure, technological tools, and other resources

required for efficient instruction and learning in an inclusive school, Mumbi (2011) used her checklist in her study. The researcher looked at a wide range of written materials on the study topic, including public records from local education offices and government records, newspaper articles, and papers written by other scholars working on the topic. Her study's instruments were validated by university supervisors and other experts, and where appropriate, revisions were made, any important information was included, and any unclear item was fixed. The researcher looked at a significant amount of written information on the study topic, including public records from local education offices and government records, newspaper articles, personal records by other researchers, and other visual materials like the Internet. Mumbi (2011) also employed the test-retest methodology, in which the same surveys were administered to the same group of respondents at intervals of one week and the outcomes were compared, to assess the consistency of her study instruments. Finally, the researcher found the degree of reliability of 0.80 to be sufficient in determining the instruments to be very dependable.

3.7 Research Procedure

The administration procedure for the questionnaire lasted one month. Before its execution, a meeting was held with the principals of the school. To conduct the survey effectively, consent was obtained from the school. Furthermore, essential explanations concerning the study's goal and research strategy were offered, and participants were guaranteed that the study's outcomes would be communicated to them. Afterward, the questionnaires were sent to the instructors and the school principals. The school principal then returned them in the same manner once they had been satisfactorily completed. In parallel, interviews were carried out with the assigned teachers and the principals. To avoid mistakes, instructions and clarifications were supplied along with the procedure.

3.8 Data Analysis Method

To answer the first and second research questions, "What are the teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities?" and "What are the principals' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities?", the TATIS questionnaire was analyzed. The three elements based on which the answers were analyzed are: 1. teacher perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities (POS); 2. beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion (BEI); and 3. perceptions of professional roles and functions (PRF). To ascertain if the teachers have a positive or negative attitude, the statistical analysis program SPSS was used. I used a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 to transform raw values into t-scores. I carried this out for every item and every aspect. Results that are one standard deviation above the mean were seen favorably, whereas scores that are one standard deviation below the mean were not. Also, to get the score for the factors, I added up the scores of individual items and divided them by the number of items. In the original TATIS questionnaire, items 1-6 go under the first factor: teacher perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities (POS). Whereas, items 7-10 go under the second factor: beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion (BEI). Finally, items 11-14 go under the third factor: perceptions of professional roles and functions (PRF) (Appendix E). After modification, items 1-6 go under the first factor: teacher perceptions of students with mild to moderate disabilities (POS). Items 7-12 go under the second factor: beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion (BEI). Finally, items 13-17 go under the third factor: perceptions of professional roles and functions (PRF).

To answer the third question "What are the barriers and challenges to inclusive education?", the third part of the questionnaire (Part III: Barriers to Inclusive Education), developed by the researcher based on the literature, was analyzed. To support the data collected from the questionnaire, I transcribed all of the audio-recorded interviews; each

interview with a participant was listened to numerous times and transcribed individually by each researcher. I reviewed each transcript numerous times after transcribing all of the interviews and highlighted concepts and comments that were connected to the study's principal purpose. The concepts and statements were numerically coded, and comparable concepts and statements were given the same alphabetical code. All concepts and statements were categorized into themes based on these codes. The findings from the interviews acted as supporting evidence for the questionnaire results. The themes or concepts used for coding are the following: push-in, pull-out, co-teaching, the role of a school principal, barriers to inclusion, and promoting an inclusive school. After the end of data collection, data analysis was carried out utilizing computer software, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). SPSS analysis allowed the researcher to efficiently manage the data. The data was reduced into tables for further analysis using frequencies and percentages.

3.9 Research Ethics

Before its execution, I sent this study proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Also, I contacted the participating school principals to get their informed approval to conduct the research within the school setting and to distribute the survey to the teachers by sending a letter to the school (Appendix E). Similarly, I gave the participants a brief overview of the study, as well as assurances that their participation was voluntary. I also obtained the teachers' signed agreement (informed consent form) and informed all participants that their names and data would be kept anonymous and confidential and that participation is optional and may stop at any time (Appendix E). Consequently, I asked all teachers and principals participating in the research to sign an informed consent form, in conformity with the Institutional Review Board policies of LAU to ensure their confidential participation.

3.10 Implications

The results of this study were used to ascertain how instructors feel about inclusive education. Also, the results of this study help us, as special education instructors, better cater to the needs of kids with special needs help us, as special education instructors, better cater to the needs of kids with special needs. Moreover, the study's results could assist policymakers in creating different inclusionary measures and guaranteeing their effective implementation to enhance the social and academic climate of schools. Finally, the current research would support decision-making and long-term strategic planning based on factual information about the research's subject.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities as well as the barriers to their inclusion in the classroom. The TATIS questionnaire and interviews with teachers and principals were used to explore their perspectives toward inclusion in regular classes, while a scale developed by the researcher and an observation checklist was used to identify the barriers to inclusion. An analysis of the questionnaire and the interviews with the teachers and the principals was conducted to determine their attitudes toward the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in the classroom. As for the barriers and challenges to inclusive education, the third part of the questionnaire (Part III: Barriers to Inclusive Education) and the "Observation Checklist for Inclusive Schools" were analyzed.

The researcher analyzed the demographic variables of the participants, then examined the findings of the questionnaire and interviews to respond to the following research questions:

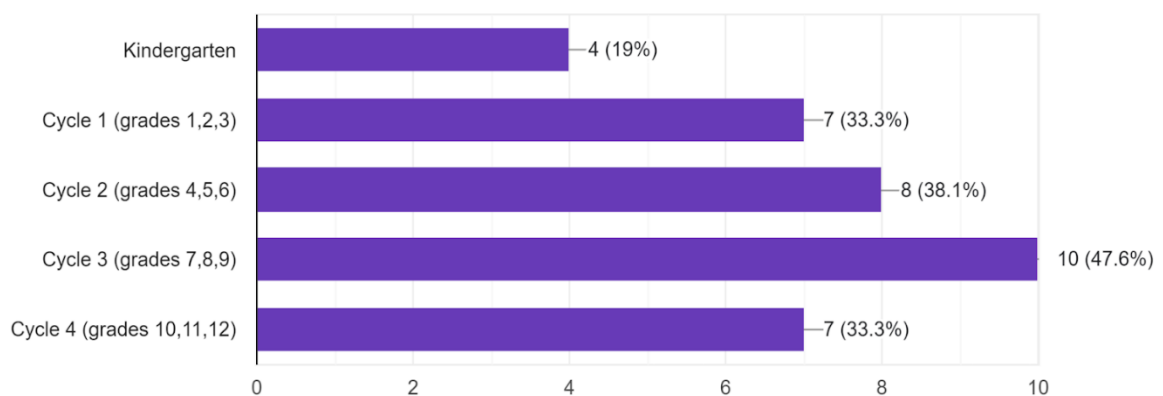
1. What are the teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities?
2. What are the principals' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities?
3. What are the barriers and challenges to inclusive education?

4.1 Analysis of the Demographic Variables

To start with the analysis of the demographic variables of the teachers, the survey showed that all participating teachers were female. As for the teachers' educational level, 30% of the teachers had a technical education degree (LS and TS), 50% of the teachers had a bachelor's degree, 10% of the teachers had a master's degree, and the rest had a high school diploma. Further, the majority of teachers (63.63%) had teaching experience of more than 12 years, with a maximum of 31 years of teaching experience, whereas the teaching experience of the rest ranged from 1 to 10 years. Additionally, as shown in Figure 2, 19% of the teachers were teaching kindergarten-level students, 33.3% were Cycle 1 teachers, 38.1% were Cycle 2 teachers, 47.6% were Cycle 3 teachers, and 33.3% were Cycle 4 teachers. It is important to note that some teachers teach more than one cycle.

Figure 2

Graphical Representation of the Cycles Taught by the Teachers



Adding to the above-mentioned details about the participants, the results of the survey showed that 63.6% of the teachers have taken a one-time training program delivered

to them by an external special education center, while the rest (36.4%) of the teachers received no training related to students with special needs.

4.2 Teachers' Attitudes toward the Inclusion of Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities

Teachers' perceptions of pupils with mild to moderate disabilities (POS), their beliefs about the effectiveness of inclusion (BEI), and their perceptions of professional roles and responsibilities (PRF) were all examined in order to answer the first research question: "What are the teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of pupils with mild to moderate disabilities?". Three categories of responses to the TATIS questionnaire were created: positive, neutral, and negative. The statistical analysis tool SPSS was used to determine the instructors' viewpoints. T-scores were created by converting raw scores into a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. Positive attitudes were defined as scores one standard deviation above the mean and negative attitudes as scores one standard deviation below the mean. All scores between plus and minus on the standard deviation about the mean were considered neutral attitudes.

The analysis of the answers to the first part of the TATIS questionnaire is listed in Table 2 below, which provides the distribution of responses for Factor 1, including the items that constitute Factor 1. After analyzing the results for Factor 1, which stands for the perception of teachers toward students with mild to moderate disabilities (POS), 77% of the teachers demonstrated a neutral attitude, 9% demonstrated a positive attitude, and 14% demonstrated a negative attitude toward these students. Consequently, for Factor 1, teachers' perception of students with mild to moderate disabilities is neutral. Figure 3 below

is a graphical representation of the categories of responses for Factor 1. Figure 3.1 shows a graphical display of the attitudes of each teacher for Factor 1 (POS).

Table 2

Analysis of the results for Factor 1 (POS)

		Attitude (%)					
		Negative		Neither positive nor negative		Positive	
Questions	Tscore	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with peers without disabilities to the fullest extent possible.	TscoreQ1	4	18%	17	77%	1	5%
It is seldom necessary to move students with mild to moderate disabilities from regular classrooms in order to meet their educational needs	TscoreQ2	5	23%	12	54%	5	23%
All or most separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated.	TscoreQ3	2	9%	16	73%	4	18%
All or most classrooms can be modified to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities.	TscoreQ4	3	14%	16	72%	3	14%
Students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education self-contained or segregated classrooms.	TscoreQ5	6	28%	12	54%	4	18%
Educating students with mild to moderate disabilities inside the classroom is more efficient than excluding them from the classroom.	TscoreQ6	5	23%	15	68%	2	9%
	TscoreFactor1	3	14%	17	77%	2	9%

Figure 3

Graphical Representation of Table 2

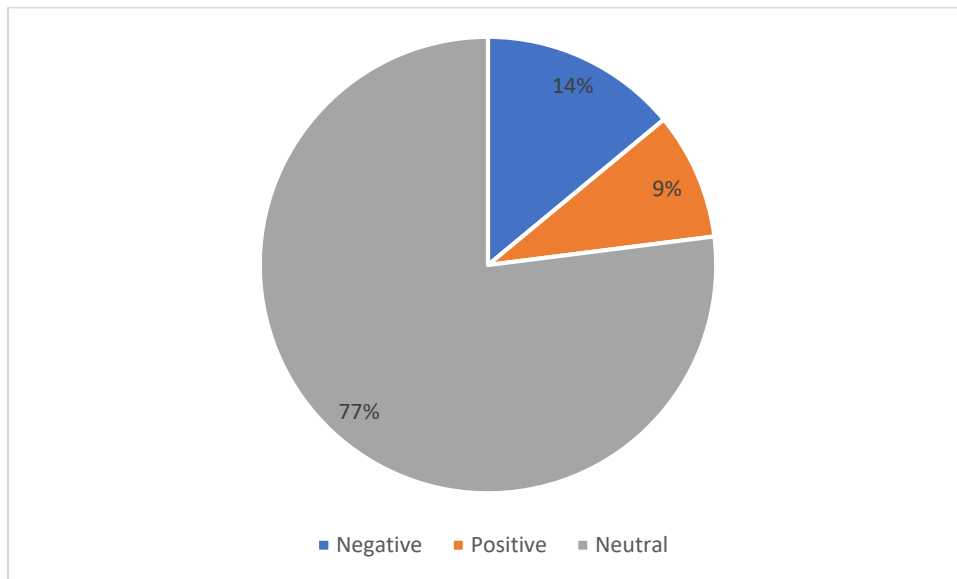
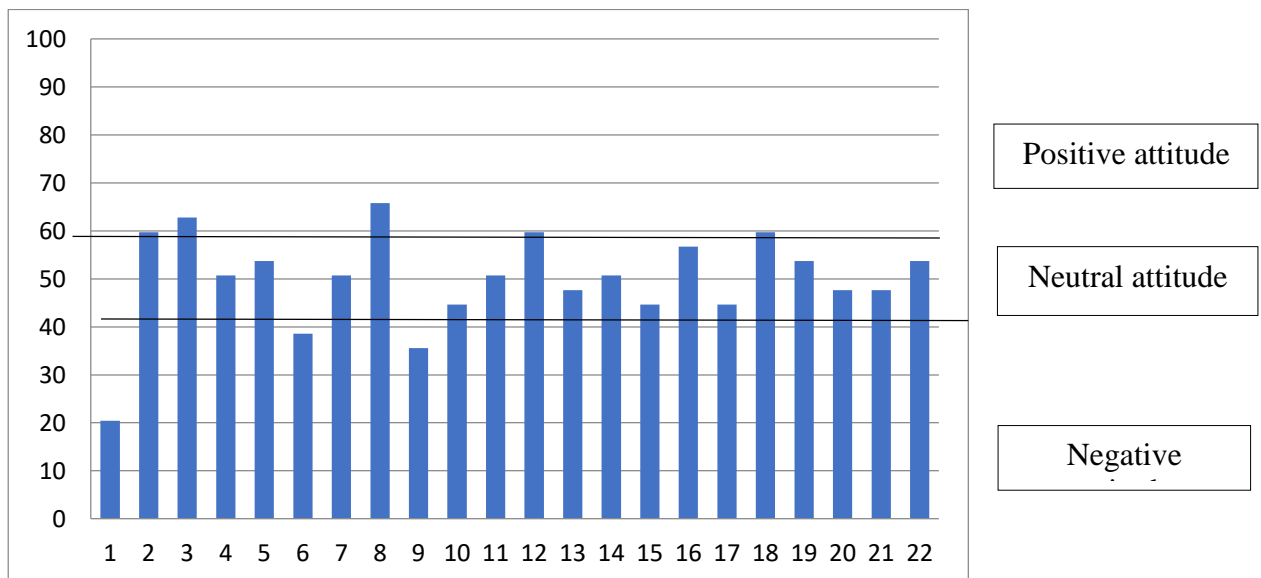


Figure 3.1

Attitudes of the Teachers across Factor 1(POS)



Note. Number of the teachers = 22, M = 50, SD = 10

As presented in Table 3, which gives the distribution of responses for the items that constitute Factor 2, 73% of the teachers had a neutral belief about the efficacy of inclusion, while 14% demonstrated a positive belief and 14% had a negative belief about the

effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in the classroom. Because of this, instructors do not fully support the value of inclusion. According to the author of the TATIS questionnaire, teachers' opinions on the viability of inclusive education were substantially correlated with their degree of confidence in their capacity to implement inclusion (Cullen et al., 2010). As a result, the teachers lack the confidence necessary to meet these children's demands in the classroom. Figure 4 below is a graphical representation of the categories of responses for Factor 2.

Table 3

Analysis of the results for Factor 2 (BEI)

		Attitude (%)					
		Negative		Neither positive nor negative		Positive	
Questions	Tscores	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students because they will require too much of the teacher's time.	TscoreQ7	2	9%	13	59%	7	32%
Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students if the teacher has not received the necessary professional training needed for inclusion to meet the academic needs of all learners.	TscoreQ8	2	9%	18	82%	2	9%
I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the cognitive skills (mental processes such as problem-solving, decision-making...) necessary for success.	TscoreQ9	2	9%	19	86%	1	5%
I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in	TscoreQ10	4	18%	17	77%	1	5%

regular classrooms because they often lack the academic skills (knowledge) necessary for success.							
I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the social skills necessary for success.	TscoreQ11	7	32%	15	68%	0	0%
I find that general education teachers often do not succeed with students with mild to moderate disabilities, even when they try their best.	TscoreQ12	7	32%	12	54%	3	14%
	TscoreFactor2	3	14%	16	72%	3	14%

Figure 4

Graphical Representation of Table 3

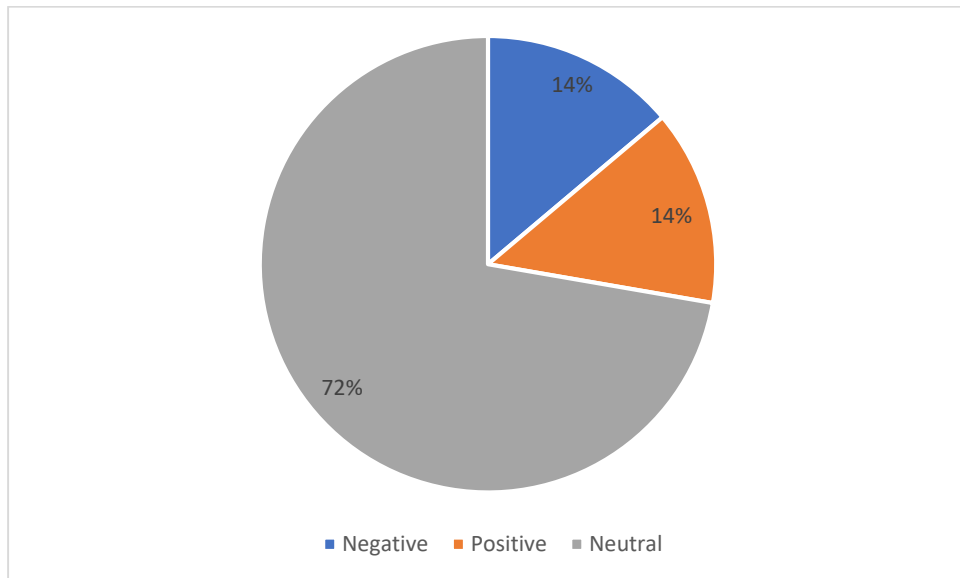
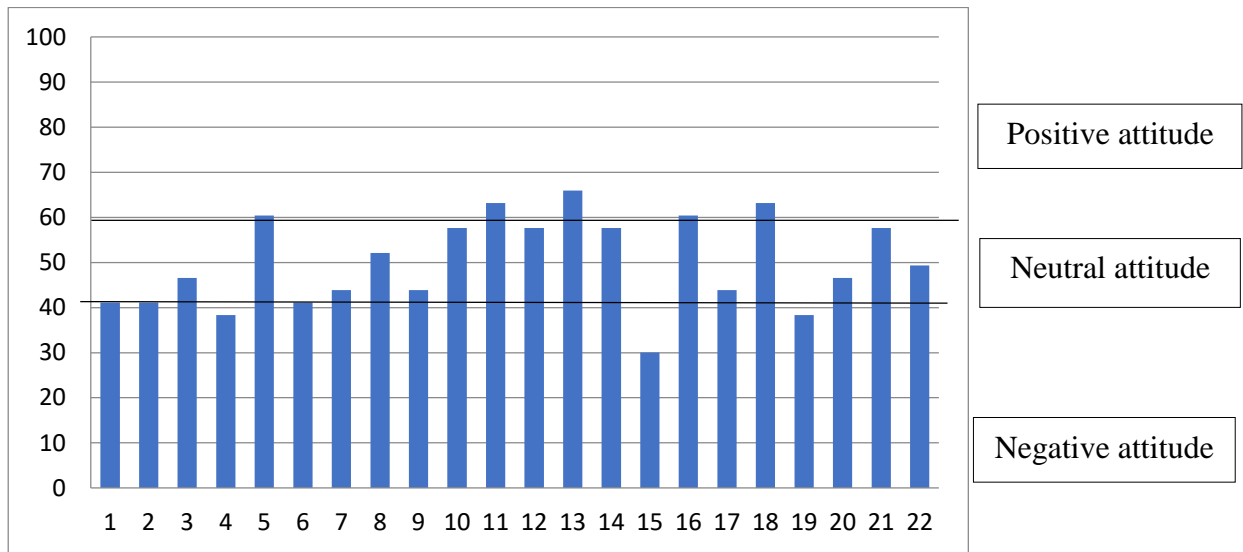


Figure 4.1 presents a graphical display of the attitudes of each teacher across Factor 2 (BEI), which stands for teachers' beliefs about the efficacy of inclusion.

Figure 4.1

Attitudes of the Teachers across Factor 2 (BEI)



As shown in Table 4, which gives the distribution of responses for the items that constitute Factor 3, 82% of the teachers showed a neutral perception, 9% had a positive perception, and another 9% had a negative view of professional roles and responsibilities. Overall, teachers’ perceptions of their professional roles and functions are neither positive nor negative. Figure 5 below is a graphical representation of the categories of responses for Factor 3.

Table 4

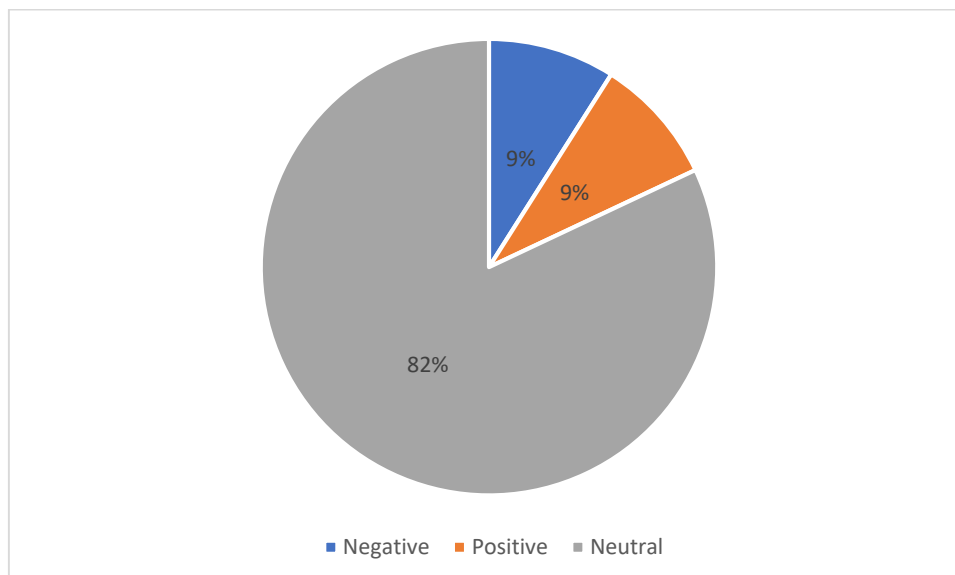
Analysis of the results for Factor 3 (PRF)

		Attitude (%)					
		Positive		Neither positive nor negative		Negative	
Questions	Tscore	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
I would welcome the opportunity to team teach, or co-teach that is, the pairing of general and special education teachers in a general education classroom, as a model for meeting the needs of students with mild	TscoreQ13	2	9%	16	73%	4	18%

to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.							
All students benefit from team teaching or co-teaching	TscoreQ14	2	9%	15	68%	5	23%
The responsibility of educating students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms should be shared between general and special education teachers.	TscoreQ15	5	23%	15	68%	2	9%
I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teaching model (i.e. regular collaboration meetings between general and special education teachers to share ideas, methods and materials) as a means to address the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.	TscoreQ16	6	28%	12	54%	4	18%
Different methods are used for the education of students with disabilities which may also be beneficial for typical students and enhance their learning.	TscoreQ17	4	18%	16	73%	2	9%
	TscoreFactor3	2	9%	18	82%	2	9%

Figure 5

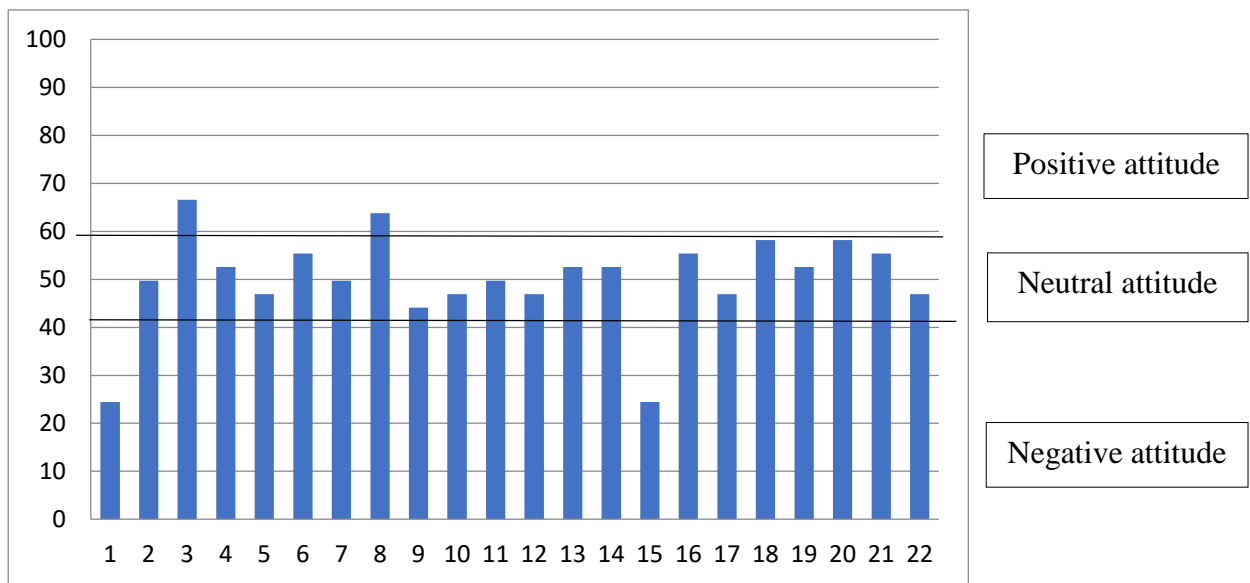
Graphical Representation of Table 4



Finally, Figure 5.1 shows a graphical display of the attitudes of the teachers across Factor 3 (PRF), which stands for the perception of teachers toward their professional roles and functions.

Figure 5.1

Attitudes of the Teachers across Factor 3(PRF)



As the scores were in the middle of the Likert scale, indicating neutral responses to all statements, an analysis of the interview data was conducted to provide a more in-depth understanding of the attitudes of teachers toward the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in the classroom.

In the interview, teachers demonstrated a moderate-to-favorable attitude toward inclusive education while emphasizing the difficulties they were facing in implementing inclusive practices in their classrooms. For instance, one teacher mentioned:

" I believe that kids with mild to moderate disabilities could indeed learn in regular classes because I support inclusion and the idea that all students should be a part of

the educational community. However, the school should provide its teachers with all the needed resources and the classroom with the necessary tools so that the teacher can become responsive to the various needs of all students and can cater to all their learning styles. Including students from different backgrounds under the same roof can help children become more tolerant and empathetic and embrace diversity" (January 6, 2022).

Another teacher stated:

"I believe that individuals with mild to severe impairments may learn alongside peers who do not have disabilities in typical classroom settings. Peer learning may be used in the normal classroom, and students can support and assist one another because of this" (January 12, 2022).

A teacher also stressed the importance of including students in the classroom as opposed to pulling them out of it throughout the day. She said:

"I think that removing individuals from the classroom, particularly sensitive students, can be upsetting for certain students with disabilities. Pulling them out for reinforcement or test guidance can make them feel isolated and detached from the "community" they belong to. They might be feeling like they are labeled or stigmatized as "special students" (January 13, 2022).

Concerning co-teaching, the interview revealed that teachers were ready to implement this approach to inclusion. They were open to having an additional teacher who would co-teach in the classroom and provide support for students with special needs.

However, teachers stated that they don't have the adequate knowledge, skills, and resources to use this approach. One teacher mentioned:

"It sounds promising; however, it needs a lot of teacher training and support from special educators so that teachers can master the skill of personalizing teaching, adopt the most effective teaching approaches, and most importantly, use instruction time to cater to the needs of the students with special needs" (January 12, 2022).

All instructors who were questioned about the principal's responsibilities in supporting an inclusive school concurred that the job of a principal is crucial in fostering an educational environment where all children, especially those with special needs, can succeed. They claimed that the principal's support is needed to facilitate inclusion by providing the necessary resources to the teachers. One teacher mentioned the importance of policies that specify the criteria for including students in the classroom. Another stressed the fact that they don't have a job description that mentions that they need to provide all the support needed for these students.

"Without the principal's guidance and support, schools would struggle to meet the challenging demands of providing diversified services that meet the needs of various student populations. Principals must thus understand the significance of inclusive schools. They must thus assist instructors and offer the instruction required to incorporate these pupils in the classroom" (January 26, 2022).

"Teachers should not be expected to include students with special needs and provide all the support needed if they don't have the resources necessary to do that. The principal's role is important in motivating teachers and demonstrating that inclusion

can be a positive experience. They should also ensure that the school is financially ready to apply the inclusive practices" (February 2, 2022).

"There are no policies specifying which cases can be accepted by the school. The policies should specify the level of disability that can be supported in the school. For instance, our school is not ready to accept severe cases. In addition, in order for people to understand this vision, leaders must provide the necessary support through communication, resource provision, and skill development" (January 26, 2022).

Teachers were stressing the fact that the salaries of the teachers decreased tremendously with the economic crisis and the drop of the Lebanese pound. Thus, this affected their motivation in putting more effort to cater to the needs of all students in the classroom.

"Our salaries dropped massively now. We are working and dedicating a lot of time and not getting a fair salary to keep us motivated. In addition to this, the workload is increasing with the number of students with special needs who need extra support in the classroom. The expectations should match with the appreciation teachers are getting for doing all the work" (January 14, 2022).

Overall, the TATIS questionnaire demonstrated that the teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities are neutral. The interview results showed that teachers have the readiness and willingness to include students with mild to moderate disabilities in the classroom; however, they need support from the administration, additional resources, training, and motivation to implement inclusive practices in the classroom.

4.3 Principals' Attitudes toward the Inclusion of Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities


To answer the second research question, "What are the principals' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities?" The TATIS questionnaire responses from both principals were examined. According to the findings, both principals agreed that kids with mild to moderate impairments should get the highest amount of instruction feasible in normal classrooms alongside peers without disabilities. In order to address their educational requirements, they also discovered that it was essential to remove kids with mild to moderate impairments from regular classrooms, although most classrooms could be adjusted to do so. Additionally, they agreed that pupils with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with other students if the teacher has not received the necessary professional training for inclusion to meet the academic needs of all learners. Additionally, they approved that students with mild to moderate disabilities could be educated more effectively in traditional classrooms than in separated classrooms. Moving forward, they asserted that team teaching, also known as co-teaching, which involves pairing general education teachers with special education teachers in a general education setting, could assist in meeting the needs of pupils with mild to moderate disabilities in classrooms. Further, they acknowledged that general education teachers and special education teachers should share responsibility for teaching learners with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms. As a way to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms, they also mentioned that they would be happy to take part in a consultant teaching model (i.e., frequent meetings between general and special education that aim to exchange ideas, methods, and materials). Finally, both administrators recognized that educating kids with disabilities can be done in a variety of



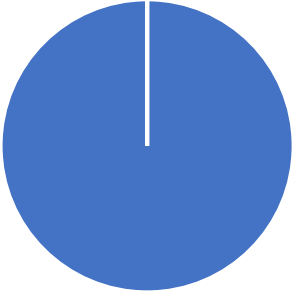

ways that may also benefit regular students and improve their learning. Agreeing with the above-mentioned statements shows that the principals support the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in the classroom.


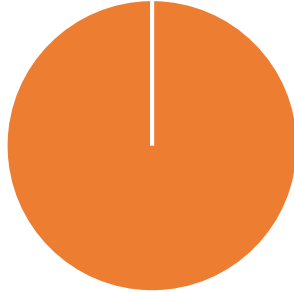
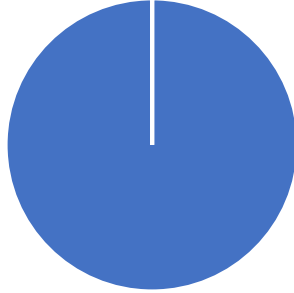
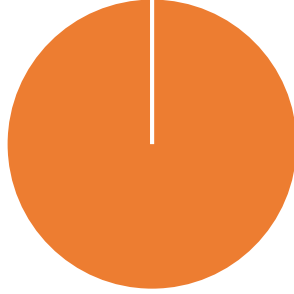
Furthermore, both administrators disagreed with the idea that kids with mild to moderate impairments shouldn't be taught in regular courses alongside students without disabilities since they would take up too much of the teacher's time. They also disagreed with claims about the effectiveness of including these students in regular classrooms, with the assumption that they frequently lack the cognitive skills (mental processes like problem-solving and decision-making), academic skills (knowledge), and social skills required for their achievement. Having disagreed with these items means that the principals support inclusion. Table 5 below demonstrates the responses of the principals to each item. Agree very strongly, strongly agree, and agree are grouped under "agree," and disagree very strongly, strongly disagree, and disagree are grouped under "disagree."

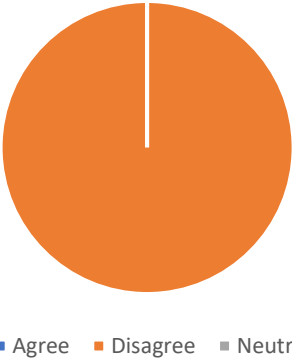

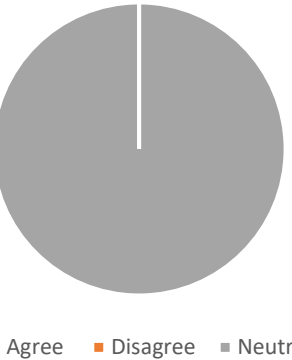

Table 5



Responses of the Principals to the TATIS Questionnaire

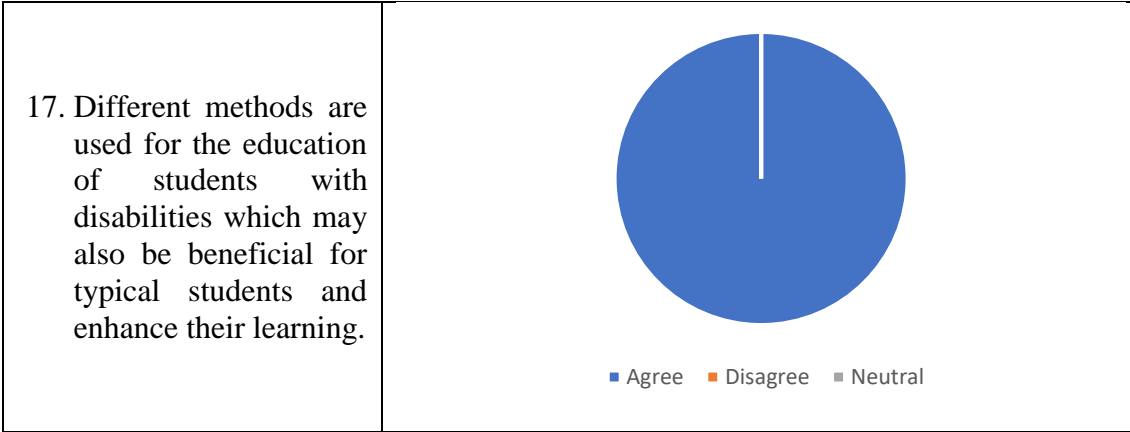
TATIS Questionnaire Items	Principal's Responses								
<p>1. All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with peers without disabilities to the fullest extent possible.</p>	 <p>A pie chart showing the distribution of responses for item 1. The chart is almost entirely blue, representing 'Agree', with a very small sliver missing, representing 'Disagree'. The legend below the chart shows three categories: 'Agree' (blue square), 'Disagree' (orange square), and 'Neutral' (grey square).</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Item 1: All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with peers without disabilities to the fullest extent possible.</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>~95%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>~5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Agree	~95%	Disagree	~5%	Neutral	0%
Response	Percentage								
Agree	~95%								
Disagree	~5%								
Neutral	0%								

<p>2. It is seldom necessary to move students with mild to moderate disabilities from regular classrooms in order to meet their educational needs</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>
<p>3. All or most separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>
<p>4. All or most classrooms can be modified to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>
<p>5. Students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education self-contained or segregated classrooms.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>

<p>6. Educating students with mild to moderate disabilities inside the classroom is more efficient than excluding them from the classroom.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>
<p>7. Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students because they will require too much of the teacher's time.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>
<p>8. Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students if the teacher has not received the necessary professional training needed for inclusion to meet the academic needs of all learners.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>
<p>9. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the cognitive skills (mental processes such as problem-solving, decision-making...) necessary for success.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>

<p>10. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the academic skills (knowledge) necessary for success.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>
<p>11. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the social skills necessary for success.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>
<p>12. I find that general education teachers often do not succeed with students with mild to moderate disabilities, even when they try their best.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>
<p>13. I would welcome the opportunity to team teach, or co-teach that is, the pairing of general and special education teachers in a general education classroom, as a model for meeting the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>

<p>14. All students benefit from team teaching or co-teaching</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>
<p>15. The responsibility of educating students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms should be shared between general and special education teachers.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>
<p>16. I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teaching model (i.e. regular collaboration meetings between general and special education teachers to share ideas, methods, and materials) as a means to address the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.</p>	 <p>■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral</p>



The interview with one of the principals demonstrated a moderate to favorable attitude toward inclusive education. To elaborate, the principal believed in the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities and stressed the fact that these students are part of our society and should be provided with equal educational opportunities. When asked about her opinion about pulling students out of the classroom for reinforcement sessions or test guidance, she answered:

"As our teaching staff is not fully equipped with resources, I believe that the pull-out system would help students with special needs receive the support needed. As for the "push-in" system, it would be an alternative to "pull-out" if teachers are well-trained to cater to the needs of the students" (February 12, 2022).

The principal also added that bullying might be another issue when pulling students out of the classroom.

"Students with special needs may need additional support outside the classroom, during which a specialist might help them by delivering instruction, explaining a concept learned in different ways, or by assisting the student during tests and exams. This raises other concerns among the peers in the classroom, as they find it unfair

not to receive this support. Even when we talk to students about differences and different abilities and discuss the reasons why some students need that support, it remains an issue. Thus, these students become unkind towards the ones who need extra support, which sometimes results in bullying" (February 12, 2022).

Besides, when asked about the responsibilities of school administrators in promoting an inclusive school, the principal mentioned that:

"For inclusion to happen, the principal should be educated about the latest practices that facilitate the inclusion of students in the classroom. Principals should be collaborating with parents to work together as partners in providing the support needed for the child. The principal's role is also important in reaching external agencies or people to support the school financially" (February 12, 2022).

Finally, the principal stressed the importance of the government's contribution to facilitate the implementation of inclusion in schools:

"The authorities should change the curriculum and the educational system to enable schools to fulfill the needs of all pupils. To guarantee that pupils with disabilities receive the assistance they require, the government should offer all the supporting services to students of determination free of charge. This way, teachers, parents, and students will feel supported" (February 12, 2022).

Overall, the principals' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities are positive, as the data gathered from the analysis of the TATIS questionnaire demonstrated. The interview results show that the participating principal is aware of the challenges of including students with special needs in the classroom. The

economic crisis affects the school as well, and principals have a hard time coming up with strategies to face all difficulties, as most of these problems should be first solved at a national level with the government's contribution and support.

4.4 Barriers and Challenges to Inclusive Education

In order to respond to the final query, "**What are the obstacles and difficulties for inclusive education?**", the questionnaire's third section, which examined the barriers to inclusive education, was examined. Raw scores were converted into t-scores using the mean of 50 and the standard deviation of 10. Scores that were a standard deviation above the mean were considered barriers, and scores that were one standard deviation below the mean were not considered barriers to inclusion. According to Table 6, teachers didn't find any barriers to the implementation of inclusive practices. With more than 50% of the responses being neutral for all the questions and the remaining 50% divided between being considered a barrier or not, the listed items are not considered barriers by the teachers. Table 6 shows the teachers' responses to the questionnaire related to barriers to inclusive education in the school.

Table 6

Barriers to Inclusive Education

		Barriers (%)					
		Yes		Neutral		No	
Barrier	Tscore	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
1. Non-inclusive curriculum	TscoreQ1	2	9%	20	91%	0	0%
2. Insufficient teacher preparation in identifying and meeting the academic needs of	TscoreQ2	4	18%	11	50%	7	32%

learners with challenges							
3. Discrimination toward students with special needs	TscoreQ3	4	18%	12	54%	6	28%
4. Misconceptions about students with disabilities	TscoreQ4	2	9%	20	91%	0	0%
5. Lack of specialists in the school (special educators, psychologists, psychomotor and speech therapists)	TscoreQ5	3	14%	14	63%	5	23%
6. Lack of financial resources to cater to students with special needs	TscoreQ6	2	9%	18	82%	2	9%
7. Lack of technological resources (literacy software that allows text to be read aloud, speech-to-text tools, physiotherapists, etc.) to cater to students with special needs	TscoreQ7	2	9%	12	54%	8	37%
8. Lack of physical facilities (Ramps where there are steps; width and positioning of door and doorway; table, bench, and shelf height; availability of an elevator, etc.)	TscoreQ8	1	5%	16	73%	5	24%
9. Lack of understanding of what it takes to educate a student with a disability in a regular classroom	TscoreQ9	2	9%	16	73%	4	18%
10. Large class size	TscoreQ10	3	14%	19	86%	0	0%
11. Insufficient time	TscoreQ11	3	14%	13	58%	6	28%
12. Heavy teacher workload	TscoreQ12	4	18%	18	82%	0	0%

13. A limited number of graduates specializing in special education	TscoreQ13	6	28%	12	54%	4	18%
14. Lack of awareness about disabilities in the community	TscoreQ14	4	18%	12	54%	6	28%
15. Lack of policies that address inclusiveness	TscoreQ15	2	9%	14	63%	6	28%
16. Unclear and outdated policies that address inclusiveness	TscoreQ16	4	18%	12	54%	6	28%
17. The absence of an anti-bullying policy that specifically identifies bias-based bullying	TscoreQ17	4	18%	18	82%	0	0%
18. The absence of a written policy protecting students from harassment, violence, and discrimination	TscoreQ18	1	5%	22	95%	0	0%
19. The absence of core values and a mission statement that includes respect for diversity and multiculturalism	TscoreQ19	2	9%	13	59%	7	32%
20. The absence of leadership with a vision to create and support an effective inclusive school environment	TscoreQ20	5	23%	9	40%	8	37%

In the interview conducted with the teachers, the interviewees mentioned that there are some barriers to inclusive education. A teacher claimed that

"The lack of external funds, resources, and implemented policies that support inclusive education are barriers to successfully implementing inclusive practices in the school" (January 24, 2022).

Another teacher mentioned:

"The lack of support from the administration and teachers' low salaries might affect the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion" (January 12, 2022).

Additionally, two teachers mentioned that the Lebanese curriculum sets a huge barrier to implementing inclusive practices in the classroom. The curriculum is designed for students who are fast learners and can work above a certain level. They also stressed that official exams make it difficult for teachers to differentiate the content or spend more time supporting students with special needs.

"As teachers, we are always in a hurry to cover the content of the curriculum. Students take official exams in grades 9 and 12. Thus, we need to be mindful of the time spent on each lesson when teaching. Consequently, it becomes challenging to reduce the content of the lesson for students with difficulties, as we can never know if they will be taking the official exams or not until the end of the academic year in grade 9. It all depends on the government's decision as to whether or not the student will do the official exams or not. In case we reduce the content and it turns out that the student has to take the official exams, teachers will be held accountable in case the student doesn't pass it" (January 24, 2022).

All the barriers shed light on a number of the fundamental problems that seem to prevent the effective implementation of inclusive education and, more significantly, affect teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities.

As for the principals, the questionnaire revealed that the following items were seen as barriers to inclusive education: Non-inclusive curriculum, insufficient teacher preparation in identifying and meeting the academic needs of learners with challenges, discrimination toward students with special needs, misconceptions about students with disabilities, lack of specialists in the school (special educators, psychologists, psychomotor and speech therapists), lack of financial resources to cater to students with special needs,

lack of technological resources (literacy software that allows text to be read aloud, speech-to-text tools, physiotherapists, etc.) to cater to students with special needs, lack of physical facilities (ramps where there are steps; width and positioning of door and doorway; table, bench, and shelf height; availability of an elevator, etc.). They also took into account the following factors: inadequate time, a demanding teacher workload, a dearth of graduates with special education degrees, a lack of community awareness of disabilities, a lack of inclusiveness policies, unclear and out-of-date inclusiveness policies, the lack of a bullying policy, violence, and inequality prevention plan, the absence of fundamental principles and a mission statement that include acceptance of multiculturalism and diversity, and the absence of leadership with a vision of creating and promoting an effective inclusive school environment.

The interview supported the data gathered from the questionnaire. One of the principals mentioned:

"The country's financial crisis has made it extremely difficult to set aside money in the budget to buy the supplies required for inclusive education. We always aim to improve and extend our inclusive practices. Thus, we contact external foundations to support us with that. In addition, it is always challenging to find specialists in the field of inclusion, especially Armenian special educators and therapists, as the Armenian community is always in need of professionals in the field" (February 12, 2022).

The barriers are not only limited to the financial difficulties the school is facing; the principal also agreed that teachers need to receive additional training and support to include students with special needs in the classroom. However, the principal discussed that for training to be successful, the teachers should be persuaded that inclusion is beneficial for all

students and that the time has come to change the traditional teaching practices with more recent ones that help all children succeed.

"Training will not make a difference if teachers are not convinced of the idea of inclusion. Training will not be effective if teachers still consider supporting students with special needs as an additional task that can be ignored. We surely need policies that set clear rules to include these students in the classrooms" (February 12, 2022).

To improve inclusive practices in the school, the principal suggested that parents receive training to detect any difficulty and target it early on. Also, the training should talk about misconceptions about students with special needs and the reasons why students with special needs might receive extra support in the school so that they can teach their children about differences and equity.

"Parents are crucial collaborators in our effort to attain full inclusion. They need to teach their child about accepting differences and supporting friends with difficulties. That's how we can have a society accepting differences" (February 12, 2022).

Lastly, an observation checklist developed by Mumbi (see Appendix D) was used to document the school's inclusive practices. The results are mentioned below.

6. Guidance and counseling department:

- a. **Active**
- b. Inactive/not established

7. Field activities

- a. Varied
- b. **Few**

8. Classroom activities:

- a. Varied
- b. **Limited**

9. Which teaching-learning strategies are used in the schools studied by the teachers?

- a. **Teacher-centered**
- b. learner-centered

10. Other observations made by the researcher within the school compound as pertains to SNE implementation:

- There is no elevator available to reach the classrooms on the first and second floors.
- Separate rooms are available to support students who need extra interventions.
- A multidisciplinary team is available and is composed of one special educator, one school counselor, and one social worker.
- The number of students in the classroom range from 20 to 30.

The checklist assisted in identifying obstacles to entering the school's grounds and locating its current facilities. According to the checklist, the school has a Special Needs Education (SNE) program. Regarding physical accessibility, the school is crowded, the buildings are not accessible, the stairs don't have ramps, pavements are not available, the classrooms are congested, and the class size is large. As for the curriculum, it doesn't support the needs of all students as the school follows the Lebanese curriculum, which doesn't target low-achieving students and is teacher-centered. Adding to this, the school doesn't have wheelchairs, walking sticks, or play facilities accessible for all children. On the other hand, the school has a guidance and counseling department, that includes a school counselor, a social worker, and a special educator.

This checklist helps to spread awareness about the need to keep the school barrier-free and accessible to all students, including those with disabilities. The results revealed that the school is not physically accessible to students with physical disabilities who require the use of a wheelchair, crutch, or walker.

Overall, the questionnaire, the interview, and the observations revealed that there are a great number of barriers that make it difficult for inclusion to be successfully implemented. Some of these barriers need to be targeted by the government, while others can be targeted by the administration to facilitate inclusion. Teachers and parents also have an important role to play in supporting inclusive education. The discussion section will mention recommendations for improving the accessibility of the school.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

According to research, instructors are crucial in creating a secure, motivating, and enriching learning environment for pupils with special needs in the classroom (Sithole, 2017). Their attitudes toward inclusion are vital in fostering an atmosphere that encourages the inclusion of kids with special needs in the classroom (Ariana, 2020). In this study, teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education were evaluated using the TATIS questionnaire and interviews. Similarly, a questionnaire, interviews, and observations were conducted to determine the barriers to inclusive education. The results of this study will be covered in this section.

The results of this survey indicate that teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education range from neutral to moderately favorable. Additionally, the findings showed that most instructors had a neutral attitude regarding their professional roles, which indicates that they solely saw their roles as ones of providing education. This is described by Cullen et al. (2010) as the traditional way of approaching teaching. There was a slight difference between the results of the TATIS questionnaire and the results of the interview regarding the attitudes of teachers toward inclusive education.

5.1 The Relation Between the Demographic Variables and Teachers' Attitudes

There are several factors to which the difference in results between the questionnaire and the interview might be related. First, the majority of teachers (63.63%) had teaching experience of above 12 years, with a maximum of 31 years of teaching, whereas the teaching

experience of the rest ranged from 1 to 10 years. As mentioned in the literature review, studies revealed that the years of experience of teachers influenced their attitudes toward including students with disabilities in the classroom (Khochen-Bagshaw & Radford, 2012; Conaway, 2018; Zakka, 2018). Florin's (1995) study found that teachers with over eleven years of experience were the least tolerant. Leyser et al. (1994) found a similar pattern, indicating that instructors with 14 years or fewer experience in the field had much more positive attitudes about inclusion than teachers with more experience. Therefore, as the majority of the teachers had teaching experience of 12 years or more, their attitude toward inclusion might be affected by their years of experience.

Moving forward, the results of the survey showed that 63.6% of the teachers have taken a one-time training program delivered to them by an external special education center, while the rest (36.4%) of the teachers received no training at all related to students with special needs. As mentioned in the literature review, it has been determined that teacher training programs are a significant predictor of instructors' views toward inclusive education (Gamel-McCormick, 1999; Angelides, 2008; Khaleel et al., 2021; Koliqi & Zabeli, 2022). Saying so, the implementation of inclusive education and enhancing the quality of service delivery for all students depend heavily on teachers' ongoing professional development (Mangope et al., 2015). Inclusion won't be successful if all teachers do not receive adequate support to believe in the effectiveness of inclusion and to make the provisions necessary in the classroom (Cullen et al., 2010). Trainings should help teachers understand the idea that when used properly, and when teachers plan for variability in advance (as in UDL), most teaching methods would work not only work with children who are struggling, but also with the ones who may not have failed to qualify for special education services. Robinson & Carrington (2002) claimed that one-time professional development workshops, frequently held outside of the school environment, do not consistently result in improvements in

classroom instruction. Teacher concerns must be reviewed and clarified in follow-up discussions. In order to help the instructors improve their knowledge and abilities to effectively educate and support students with difficulties in their classrooms, the administration should offer regular professional learning opportunities. At that point, they could have self-assurance in their ability to properly meet the requirements of every kid and fend off demotivating factors. Mangope et al. (2015) mentioned in their article that professional development enables educators to embrace the idea of inclusive education and encourage its implementation.

5.2 The Relation Between the Class Size Variables and Teachers' Attitudes

Furthermore, as demonstrated by the observation checklist and the interview, classrooms were crowded, and the class size was large. Therefore, due to the increased number of students in the classroom, teachers found it difficult to cater to the needs of all students. As an alternative teaching technique to traditional teaching, teachers might feel supported by the presence of an additional adult with whom they can collaborate to create a lesson and assess a single group of pupils using this educational method. This is the concept of co-teaching, toward which teachers felt positive in the TATIS questionnaire. For children with special needs, especially those who have mild disabilities, co-teaching has been shown to be very effective (Friend and Bursuck, 2009). Additionally, as Cullen et al. (2010) pointed out in their article, researchers Thousand, Meyers, and Nevin (1996) discovered that teachers who engaged in team teaching strayed from their regular duties and displayed higher certainty in their ability to educate children with special needs as well as more confidence in the viability of inclusion. The research-based co-teaching methods were described by Friend and Bursuck (2009). These co-teaching versions consist of: 1) One of the co-teachers educates large groups of pupils while the other gathers educational,

behavioral, or social data on specific students or the learning environment as a whole using the teaching approach "one teach, one observe."; 2) "station teaching" which refers to grouping students into three groups and rotating them between stations where they are instructed by two co-teachers at each station and work autonomously at the third; 3) "parallel teaching" during the same lesson which requires each of the co-teachers to educate half of the students to provide instructional differentiation and boost student involvement; 4) "alternative teaching", where one instructor instructs the majority of students while the other teaches a small group of students for remediation or enrichment; and 5) "teaming" which happens when two teachers educate the entire class, sharing the teaching duties (Friend, 2014). When implemented correctly, co-teaching can be a very effective method of instructing all pupils in a classroom, and all these strategies would facilitate the delivery of instruction by targeting all abilities in the classroom.

5.3 The Role of Leadership in Inclusive Education

As for the principals, the TATIS questionnaire and the interview revealed that their attitude towards the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities is positive. The literature mentioned that while teachers' opinions of inclusive education are essential, it is the administrators' attitude toward inclusion that will decide the ultimate success or failure of inclusion (Conaway, 2018). The results aligned with the findings from the interview with the teachers about the principal's role in implementing inclusive practices. According to the literature, administrators should employ more special education teachers, take part in ongoing training and development programs, encourage peer coaching and reward best practices, reduce class size, introduce co-teaching practices, and allocate funds to provide facilities and resources for students of determination (Khaleel et al., 2021).

Moving forward, the principal mentioned in the interview that for inclusion to be successful, teachers should first be convinced about the effectiveness and justice of inclusion as we prepare our students for real life and to become global citizens. Behavioral science research has shown that changing practices requires a very concrete visualization of the envisioned change. What appears to be resistance to change may be a lack of understanding of the planned changes (Shuck & Herd, 2012). A substantial body of research has found that the success or failure of educational change is largely dependent on school leaders. In this study, principals' attitudes were positive toward including students with mild to moderate difficulties in the classroom. However, this positivity was not seen in the teachers' attitude, which was mostly neutral. Research has examined the keys to successfully implementing inclusive practices in schools and concluded that leadership significantly affects employee engagement and that effective leadership is essential for achievement (Shuck & Herd, 2012). Additionally, scholars found that the promotion of efficiency in inclusive education is made possible by transformational leadership (El-Jabali, 2019). A transformational leader is someone who, according to Bass and Riggio (2006), exhibits certain unique leadership traits like idealized impact (charisma), inspirational motivation, stimulating thinking, and personal consideration that enable them to build relationships with subordinates that go beyond simple business dealings or reward exchanges and involve sharing values, needs, and future goals. To meet the requirements for academic change, administrators should provide moral guidance that gives significance to the educational institution's targets, increase understanding of inclusion, give encouragement to the group in order to carry out the entire inclusion project, assist in overcoming difficulties, and provide the vision and tools needed to help teachers succeed (Opiyo, 2019).

Waldron, McLeskey, and Redd (2014) noted in their case study research that, in addition to the studies on the types of leadership that support inclusive education, the

implementation of inclusive principles would be successful if leaders established cooperative structures and procedures, promoted a shared mission and vision, organized processes for decision-making, utilized data to make choices about curriculum and instruction, and used policy to develop comprehensive school systems. As Guzman (1997) asserts, the primary responsibility of every school leader is to identify the needs of his or her specific school and to address those needs by making use of the available resources and talents.

5.4 Barriers to Inclusive Education

The case study also identified a number of barriers to inclusive education in an educational setting. The observation of the school's physical accessibility also showed that the school is not accessible to students with physical disabilities. As per the guidelines of UNICEF (2016), the standards for a school to be accessible are mentioned in Table 7.

Table 7

The Standards for School Accessibility by UNICEF (2016)

Entry/ Exit “	At any variation in elevation between the road's surface and the level of a footpath, ramps should be available.
	There shouldn't be anything outside the fence (such as parked automobiles, manholes, or potted plants) blocking the school's gate, entry, or exit.
Ramps	Ramp should be available next to the stairs.
	The ramp's position should be marked with a sign.
	The ramp slope should be no more than 1:12.
	The width of the ramp should be a minimum of 1200mm.
	There should be continuous handrails, on both sides, between 760 and 900 millimeters above the floor.

	The turning of the ramp should have a 1500 x 1500 mm landing.
	The ramp's surface should be non-slip and matte finished.
	To prevent wheelchairs from falling down the ramp, there should be edge protection.
Stairs	The stairs' location should be clearly marked by a sign.
	The stairs must be at least 1200mm wide.
	Handrails, easy to grip and painted in colors contrasting with the color of the wall, must be at a height of 760 to 900 millimeters from the floor and present on both sides.
	The position of the emergency (fire escape) steps is marked with a sign.
	There should not be exposed spaces between the step risers.
Corridors	Corridors should have a minimum width of 1200mm.
	There shouldn't be objects expanded more than 100mm from the walls.
Signage	On each floor, there should be signs indicating the floor level.
	A signage should be indicating the places of classrooms and other facilities.
	Signs should also be available in Braille, pictograms, and text.
	Signs should be suspended between 1000 and 1600 millimeters above the ground.
	Signs should show girls' and boys' toilets locations.
	There should be signs indicating the accessible restrooms for males and girls.
Doors	Doors, marked with a color band, should be easily opened and closed by children.
	One of the leaves of twin leaf doors should be at least 900mm wide so that wheelchair users can enter and exit without having to open the other leaf.
	Manual door parts (handles, locks, pulls, etc.) must be positioned between 800 and 1000 millimeters above the ground.

	The edges of the entrance mats should be fixed to the floor and flush with or immersed in the flooring.
Boards	Classrooms must have green boards.
	In order for kids in wheelchairs to access green/black boards, it should be ensured that their lower margins are not more than 500mm above the ground.
Windows	The windows must be open into the learning spaces and other rooms rather than the halls or corridors.
	Children should be able to view outdoors from their seats if windows are between 600mm and 1450mm in height (bottom edge to top edge).
	There should be window fences accessible to prevent kids from falling outdoors.
Flooring	The flooring of the school and the toilet should be skid-proof.
	The floor of the toilet should have a drain for all extra water.
Drinking water	At 400 mm above the level surface, the drinking water needs to be easily accessible and well-maintained.
	The taps should have handles.
	Make sure there isn't any water blocking the drinking water location.
	To prevent tap water from dripping onto children's mobility equipment, a basin should be available.
Toilets	A ramp must be available for the accessible toilets.
	Children with physical disabilities should have their own restroom stalls.
	The accessible restroom must be at least 2000mm x 2200mm in size.
	There should be a sufficient wheelchair moving space of 1500mm x 1500mm. in the toilet.
	The washbasin's height from the floor should be between 700 and 800 millimeters.

	At a distance of 1000 mm from the floor's surface, the lowest edge of the mirror glass should be placed.
	On the open side of the toilet, U-shaped grab bars should be installed at a height of 700–800mm above the floor, with a transfer L-shape on the wall side.
	An emergency alarm system should be set in the toilet.
	In emergencies, doors should have a locker from the inside and from the outside.
	The flush of the toilet should be easy to operate.
	The bathroom door must open to a clear width of 900 meters or more.
	Open the toilet door to the outside.
Playgrounds	A paved walkway with a minimum width of 1800 millimeters shall be present in the playground and be covered with grass.
Emergency preparedness	A guiding arrow sign should be used to clearly identify emergency exits.
	All spaces should have both auditory and visual emergency alerts.

The interview outcomes about the barriers to inclusion were consistent with the results of previous research mentioned in the literature review, as studies found that not receiving adequate support and training, the unavailability of specialists in the field, and the increased cost of supporting inclusion are making inclusive practice implementation in schools more difficult (Khochen-Bagshaw & Radford, 2012; Zakka, 2018).

CHAPTER SIX

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that teachers have a neutral to somewhat favorable attitude toward inclusive education. As for the principals, the TATIS questionnaire and the interview revealed that their attitude towards the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities is positive. Finally, in terms of obstacles to inclusive education, the case study showed that there were a number of them that prevented the school from implementing inclusive practices. The observation of the school's physical accessibility also showed that the school is not accessible to students with physical disabilities.

6.1 The Role of the Government and the UN in Inclusive Education

The government and the United Nations play a significant role in the adoption of inclusive practices in the nation, as was highlighted in the literature study. Many specialized UN organizations have inclusion-supporting policies. The UNESCO Convention against Educational Discrimination as well as other worldwide human rights treaties prohibit any restriction of opportunities for education based on social disparities, including sex, ethnic background, nationality, culture, socioeconomic background, or abilities (UNESCO, 2019). Lebanon is one of the United Nations' 51 founding members, having signed the UN Charter on June 26th, 1945. Since then, the UN has maintained a strong and consistent contribution to Lebanon. Knowing that Lebanon is part of the UN, the policies on inclusive education should also be implemented in Lebanon. The Lebanese legislation 220/2000, which provides individuals with disabilities equal educational opportunity in a regular school environment, is not being completely implemented in the classrooms. Therefore, the

government and UN agencies should assist Lebanese schools in ensuring continuity of education, inclusiveness, and equity for children with special needs.

6.2 The Role of Universities in Inclusive Education

To help schools improve their inclusive practices, universities can also help principals find solutions to problems that arise in inclusive primary schools, as research sources with authority include universities. They can supervise the development of academic policies and suggestions based on research that will eventually improve the way inclusive education is implemented in inclusive primary schools (Zelina, 2022). Likewise, to generate inclusive teachers with quality competencies, universities must establish fruitful partnerships with inclusive schools to mentor and guide teachers on how to apply the recent instructional techniques in their classrooms to support students with different abilities (Rasmitadila et al., 2022).

6.3 The Role of School Leaders in Inclusive Education

School administrators must also consider the serious effects that insufficiently prepared teachers may have on children with special needs. Leaders must find ways to provide the essential training required for teachers in schools as they look for ways to improve education in light of the considerable changes in the number of pupils in the typical classroom over the past several years. Teachers are unable to provide students with disabilities with appropriate instruction if they have little to no professional experience in special education programs or the particular student difficulties present in a school environment. Therefore, professional development opportunities for teachers should be made available so they may learn the most up-to-date methods that support all students and

that work and help everyone in the classroom. Then and only then can we have truly inclusive education. Co-teaching should also be taken into consideration as a substitute for traditional teaching in order to assist instructors in delivering lessons and aid students with special needs. To support students and teachers, a multidisciplinary team composed of a speech therapist, special educators, occupational therapists, school counselors, and psychologists should be working alongside the teachers to deliver the interventions needed for students with special needs. Finally, job descriptions should specify that new teachers need to have knowledge about students with special needs and should mention that one of the teacher's roles is to support students with difficulties in the classroom by differentiating the instruction.

As parents are an important part of the whole process, awareness about difficulties should be spread to parents in the schools to help them detect and work with their children from the early stages. To do so, workshops can be organized by professionals to inform parents about the developmental milestones, the red flags, and the steps to be taken when suspecting a difficulty in a child.

Finally, the school should work with local and external foundations to collect funds to improve the inclusive education system in the school and to provide teachers with the necessary resources to support students.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

To substantiate the identified obstacles and the teacher traits connected to the attitudes toward enrolling children with mild to moderate challenges discovered in this study, more research is required. This study might be duplicated with public and private teachers in different parts of Lebanon, or on an international basis to further examine the

association between teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students and the barriers to inclusion.

If there are differences in the attitudes of primary, elementary, middle, and secondary teachers, further research can be conducted to determine that. Besides, research on the parents' and students' perceptions of the inclusion of students with mild to moderate difficulties in the school might be relevant in improving inclusive practices in the school. Future research can also consider a representative sample of all Armenian or Lebanese schools. Finding solutions to enhance these children' educational experiences is crucial as the proportion of special needs students enrolled in regular classes rises.

6.5 Limitations

To begin with, the current study is a qualitative study that investigates the attitudes of the teachers and principals toward inclusion. One of the downsides of the nature of this study is that it is usually more subjective. Thus, findings might be influenced by the personal opinions, ideas, and feelings of each participant (Wilson et al., 2021). Moreover, the case study was conducted in one Armenian school in Lebanon, and the sample size was small. As a result, the findings provide insights into the way teachers and principals attitudes impact inclusive education, but they cannot be generalized to all Armenian or Lebanese schools. Second, the study was predicated on the assumption that the participants replied genuinely to the interview questions and the questionnaires. Third, the current study was predicated on the idea that the reliability and validity of the results would not be impacted by the interviews' translations from Armenian to English.

Moving forward, the teachers who participated in the interview were the ones with less than 15 years of experience. The teachers with more than 15 years of experience were

not willing to participate in the interview; therefore, the interview pool included the younger age group, which research studies say is more open to new ideas (Leyser et al., 1994).

Finally, the interviews conducted with the teachers were semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews have some weaknesses. First, due to interviewing teachers with language barriers, there was limited probing. Second, as a result of poor comprehension of or response to the subject, the interviewer sometimes received limited responses to questions. Consequently, this resulted in stopping the conversation, explaining the topic, and sometimes moving forward with the question.

6.6 Conclusion

The current study investigated the attitudes of the teachers and principals towards the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in the classroom and the barriers to the implementation of inclusive practices in the school. Teachers had a neutral attitude, while principals demonstrated a positive attitude toward inclusion, as the findings of the TATIS questionnaire showed. The interview with the teachers and principals showed their readiness to implement inclusive practices in the school, but they need additional resources, funds, and training to support students with difficulties in the classroom. Also, the study revealed that there were some barriers to the implementation of inclusion. These were mainly related to the lack of resources, funds, policies, training, and support staff.

By giving policymakers information on the variables influencing teachers' attitudes, this study helps raise awareness of inclusion, develop an understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and advance policies on inclusive practices. On a national scale, the policy related to inclusive education should be revised to encourage schools to promote inclusive practices and support students with special needs. To help and encourage schools with the

implementation of the inclusion policy, the government, the UN, and universities should work alongside schools to mentor teachers and guide them in their teaching.

To conclude, in recent times, diversity and inclusion have attracted more attention than ever before, especially in the second half of the decade (Umoh, 2019). There has been increased awareness about understanding disabilities and catering to the needs of schoolchildren with disabilities. This study sheds light on understanding and including students with mild to moderate disabilities in the school. It contributes to the limited literature on inclusive education in Lebanon, specifically in Armenian schools. This study also highlights approaches to facilitate the inclusion of pupils with special needs in schools while providing quality education for all students in the classroom. The results might help start a journey of change toward spreading awareness of inclusive education and its application as a new approach to education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ITEMS BEFORE AND AFTER MODIFICATION

Items before modification	Items after modification
1. All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with peers without disabilities to the fullest extent possible.	1. All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with peers without disabilities to the fullest extent possible.
2. It is seldom necessary to move students with mild to moderate disabilities from regular classrooms in order to meet their educational needs	2. It is seldom necessary to move students with mild to moderate disabilities from regular classrooms in order to meet their educational needs
3. Most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated.	3. All or most separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated.
4. Most or all regular classrooms can be modified to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities.	4. All or most classrooms can be modified to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities.
5. Students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms.	5. Students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education self-contained or segregated classrooms.
6. Inclusion is a more efficient model for educating students with mild to moderate disabilities because it reduces transition time (i.e., time to move from one classroom to another)	6. Educating students with mild to moderate disabilities inside the classroom is more efficient than excluding them from the classroom.
7. Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students because they will require too much of the teacher's time.	7. Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students because they will require too much of the teacher's time.
8. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the academic skills necessary for success.	8. Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students if the teacher has not received the necessary professional training needed for inclusion to meet the academic needs of all learners.
9. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the social skills necessary for success.	9. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the cognitive skills (mental processes such as problem solving, decision-making...) necessary for success.
10. I find that general education teachers often do not succeed with students with mild to moderate disabilities, even when they try their best.	10. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the

	academic skills (knowledge) necessary for success.
11. I would welcome the opportunity to team teach, that is, the pairing of general and special education teacher in a general education classroom, as a model for meeting the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.	11. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the social skills necessary for success.
12. All students benefit from team teaching.	12. I find that general education teachers often do not succeed with students with mild to moderate disabilities, even when they try their best.
13. The responsibility of educating students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms should be shared between general and special education teachers.	13. I would welcome the opportunity to team teach, or co-teach that is, the pairing of general and special education teacher in a general education classroom, as a model for meeting the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.
14. I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teaching model (i.e. regular collaboration meetings between general and special education teachers to share ideas, methods, and materials) as a means to address the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.	14. All students benefit from team teaching or co-teaching
	15. The responsibility of educating students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms should be shared between general and special education teachers.
	16. I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teaching model (i.e. regular collaboration meetings between general and special education teachers to share ideas, methods and materials) as a means to addressing the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.
	17. Different methods are used for the education of students with disabilities which may also be beneficial for typical students and enhance their learning.

APPENDIX B : QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I – Demographic Information

Please tick out the responses with 'X'.

1. Gender:

- a. Female
- b. Male

2. Age: _____

3. Educational Level:

- a. Doctoral degree
- b. Master's degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. High school degree
- e. Other
Please specify

4. How long have you been working at this school? _____ years

5. Have you taken part in the **special education training program** at the school in which you work or during your university years:

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. If your answer to the above question is yes, how many hours of special education training did you take?

- a. Less than 10 hours
- b. 10-30 hours
- c. 31-60 hours
- d. more than 60 hours

7. Provide a reason for taking the indicated number of hours in the previous question

Part II - Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scale (TATIS)

Cullen et al. (2010)

Directions: The purpose of this confidential survey is to obtain an accurate and valid appraisal of your perceptions of the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms. It also contains questions pertaining to your beliefs about professional roles, attitudes toward collegiality, and perceptions of the efficacy of inclusion (i.e., whether or not you believe that inclusion can succeed). Because there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to these items, please respond candidly.

Definition of Full Inclusion: For the purposes of this survey, full inclusion is defined as the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities into regular classrooms for 80% or more of the school day. Under federal special education law, mild to moderate disabilities include Learning Disabilities; Hearing Impairments; Visual Impairments; Physical Handicaps; Attention Deficit Disorders; Speech/Language Impairments; and mild/moderate Emotional Disturbance, Intellectual Disability, Autism, or Traumatic Brain Injury.

Use the following scale for items 1-14:

1= Agree Very Strongly (AVS), 2= Strongly Agree (SA), 3= Agree (A), 4= Neither Agree nor Disagree (NAD), 5= Disagree (D), 6= Strongly Disagree (SD), 7= Disagree Very Strongly (DVS)

	1 = Agree Very Strongly	2 = Strongly Agree	3 = Agree	4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree	5 = Disagree	6 = Strongly Disagree	7 = Disagree Very Strongly
18. All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with peers without disabilities to the fullest extent possible.							
19. It is seldom necessary to move students with mild to moderate disabilities from regular classrooms in order to meet their educational needs							
20. All or most separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated.							
21. All or most classrooms can be modified to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities.							
22. Students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to							

special education self-contained or segregated classrooms.							
23. Educating students with mild to moderate disabilities inside the classroom is more efficient than excluding them from the classroom.							
24. Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students because they will require too much of the teacher's time.							
25. Students with mild to moderate disabilities should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students if the teacher has not received the necessary professional training needed for inclusion to meet the academic needs of all learners.							
26. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the cognitive skills (mental processes such as problem solving, decision-making...) necessary for success.							
27. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the academic							

skills (knowledge) necessary for success.							
28. I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms because they often lack the social skills necessary for success.							
29. I find that general education teachers often do not succeed with students with mild to moderate disabilities, even when they try their best.							
30. I would welcome the opportunity to team teach, or co-teach that is, the pairing of general and special education teacher in a general education classroom, as a model for meeting the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.							
31. All students benefit from team teaching or co-teaching							
32. The responsibility of educating students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms should be shared between general and special education teachers.							

<p>33. I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teaching model (i.e. regular collaboration meetings between general and special education teachers to share ideas, methods and materials) as a means to addressing the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms.</p>							
<p>34. Different methods are used for the education of students with disabilities which may also be beneficial for typical students and enhance their learning.</p>							

Part III- Barriers to Inclusive Education

1. Indicate the extent to which the factors listed below form barriers in the implementation of inclusive education in the school. Use the following scale for items 1-21:

**1- Strongly Agree 2- Agree 3- Neither Agree nor Disagree
4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree**

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Non-inclusive curriculum					
2. Insufficient teacher preparation in identifying and meeting the academic needs of learners with challenges					
3. Discrimination towards students with special needs					
4. Misconceptions about students with disabilities					
5. Lack of specialists in the school (special educators, psychologists, psychomotor and speech therapists)					
6. Lack of financial resources to cater for students with special needs					
7. Lack of technological resources (literacy software that allow text to be read aloud, speech to text tools, physiotherapists, etc.) to cater for students with special needs					
8. Lack of physical facilities (Ramps where there are steps; width and positioning of door and doorway; table, bench and shelf height; availability of an elevator, etc.)					
9. Lack of understanding of what it takes to educate a student with a disability in a regular classroom					
10. Large class size					
11. Insufficient time					
12. Heavy teacher workload					
13. Limited number of graduates specializing in special education					
14. Lack of awareness about disabilities in the community					
15. Lack of policies that address inclusiveness					

16. Unclear and outdated policies that address inclusiveness					
17. The absence of an anti-bullying policy that specifically identifies bias-based bullying					
18. The absence of a written policy protecting students from harassment, violence and discrimination					
19. The absence of core values and a mission statement that includes respect for diversity and multiculturalism					
20. The absence of leadership with a vision to create and support an effective inclusive school environment					
21. Other:					

Optional Comment box: Please elaborate on your answer to the above checklist question.

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APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(Council of Chief State School Officers,2020; Flores, 2012; Mambo, 2011; Zelina, 2020)

1. In your opinion, would it be possible for students with mild to moderate disabilities to be educated in regular classrooms with peers without disabilities? (Please elaborate)
2. What is your opinion about pulling students out of the classroom for reinforcement sessions or for test guidance? Have you heard of push in as an alternative to pull out? (Please elaborate)
3. Do you feel that having a co-teacher inside the classroom would be helpful? In what way would it be helpful or not? (A co-teacher is a person who would provide assistance to the teacher in instruction delivery and other tasks)
4. What is the role of a school principal in promoting an inclusive school? (Probe for policy: e.g. the practices and policies to deal with bullying, multidisciplinary meetings, teacher preparation programs, teaching materials and technologies to meet the needs of all students, external funds to accelerate targeted intervention in inclusive education, a school's goal, vision, and core values that sets high standards for children with disabilities, equity, inclusion, and social justice, etc.)
5. What factors impact the attitudes of regular education elementary teachers toward including students with disabilities?
6. Do you think that the school is ready for inclusion? (Probe for resources, curriculum, school environment, teachers' attitudes, parents' attitudes, etc.)
7. In your opinion, what should be done to improve the inclusive education practice in the school? (Please elaborate)

a. Teacher-centered () b. learner-centered ()

11. Other observations made by the researcher within the school compound as pertains To SNE implementation:

.....
.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX E: SCORING SHEET FOR TATIS

(T-Scores have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10; Percentile ranks range from 1 to 99)

Part 1: TATIS Factor Scores			
Item	Factor 1: POS	Factor 2: BEI	Factor 3: PRF
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
Factor Raw Scores	Add 1-6	Add 7-10	Add 11-14
Factor T-Scores (See tables 6 to 8)			
Factor Percentile Ranks (See tables 6 to 8)			
Part 2: TATIS Full Scale			
Total Raw Score	Raw score POS = _____ + (32-Raw Score BEI = _____) + Raw Score PRF = _____ = _____ <div style="text-align: right; margin-right: 50px;"><small>TATIS Total Raw Score</small></div>		
Total T-Score (See table 5)			
Total Percentile Rank (See tables 5)			

APPENDIX F: CONSENT FORM

Consent to participate in a Questionnaire The Attitudes of Stakeholders towards the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs in an Armenian School

I would like to invite you to participate in a research project by completing the following questionnaire. (I am a student at the Lebanese American University and I am completing this research project as part of my Graduate Study Research.). The purpose of this questionnaire / survey aims to better understand how teachers and principals perceive the inclusion of students with disabilities in classrooms, this study aims at investigating the attitudes of stakeholders (the school principal, elementary teachers, and middle school teachers) toward the inclusion of students with special needs in one Armenian school in Lebanon. Also, this study will explore the challenges of inclusion specifically when it comes to the push-in versus the pull-out sessions. Finally, this study aims to discover the barriers to inclusive education in one Armenian school, which in turn will help us come up with strategies to enhance the students' acceptance in the school.

There are no known risks, harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life. The information you provide will be used to enhance and improve the practice of inclusion inside the school. You will not directly benefit from participation in this study. The study will involve twenty-two participants. Completing the survey will take 15 minutes of your time.

By continuing with the questionnaire / survey, you agree with the following statements:

- 1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project.*
- 2. I understand that my answers will not be released to anyone and my identity will remain anonymous. My name will not be written on the questionnaire nor be kept in any other records.*
- 3. **When the results of the study are reported, I will not be identified by name or any other information that could be used to infer my identity.** Only researchers will have access to view any data collected during this research however data cannot be linked to me.*
- 4. I understand that I may withdraw from this research any time I wish and that I have the right to skip any question I don't want to answer.*
- 5. I understand that my refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which I otherwise am entitled to.*
- 6. I have been informed that the research abides by all commonly acknowledged ethical codes and that the research project has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University*
- 7. I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can ask the research team listed below.*
- 8. I have read and understood all statements on this form.*
- 9. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research project by completing the following Questionnaire.*

If you have any questions, you may contact:

<i>Name (PI)</i>	<i>Phone number</i>	<i>Email address</i>
<i>Lara Ajemian</i>	<i>+961 76 411167</i>	<i>Lara.adjemian@lau.edu</i>

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or you want to talk to someone outside the research, please contact the:

*Institutional Review Board Office,
Lebanese American University
3rd Floor, Dorm A, Byblos Campus
Tel: 00 961 1 786456 ext. (2546)
irb@lau.edu.lb*

Consent to participate in an Interview

The Attitudes of Stakeholders Towards the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs in an Armenian School

I would like to invite you to participate in a research project by completing an interview. (I am a student at the Lebanese American University and I am completing this research project as part of my Graduate Study Research.). The purpose of this interview is to better understand how teachers and principals perceive the inclusion of students with disabilities in classrooms, this study aims at investigating the attitudes of stakeholders (the school principal, elementary teachers, and middle school teachers) toward the inclusion of students with special needs in one Armenian school in Lebanon. Also, this study will explore the challenges of inclusion specifically when it comes to the push-in versus the pull-out sessions. Finally, this study aims to discover the barriers to inclusive education in one Armenian school, which in turn will help us come up with strategies to enhance the students' acceptance in the school.

There are no known risks, harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life. The information you provide will be used to enhance and improve the practice of inclusion inside the school. You will not directly benefit from participation in this study. The study will involve twenty-two participants. Completing the interview will take 30 minutes of your time.

By continuing with the interview, you agree with the following statements:

- 10. I have been given sufficient information about this research project.*
- 11. I understand that my answers will not be released to anyone and my identity will remain anonymous. My name will not be written on the questionnaire nor be kept in any other records.*
- 12. **When the results of the study are reported, I will not be identified by name or any other information that could be used to infer my identity.** Only researchers will have access to view any data collected during this research however data cannot be linked to me.*
- 13. I understand that I may withdraw from this research any time I wish and that I have the right to skip any question I don't want to answer.*
- 14. I understand that my refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which I otherwise am entitled to.*
- 15. I have been informed that the research abides by all commonly acknowledged ethical codes and that the research project has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University*
- 16. I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can ask the research team listed below.*
- 17. I have read and understood all statements on this form.*
- 18. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research project by completing the following interview.*

CONSENT TO ALLOW AUDIO RECORDING DURING INTERVIEW

I freely give my consent to allow the research team to record my interview. All of my questions regarding the recordings have been answered to my satisfaction. I know that I may refuse to allow my input today to be recorded in any way and that I may withdraw from the session at any time. **I freely give my consent to allow my input to be recorded through audio-recordings.**

I agree to have my interview audio-recorded

I do NOT agree to recording, and request note-taking only

CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY

I have carefully read the above information about this study. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I know that I may refuse to take part in or withdraw from the study at any time. **I freely approve the content of this form and give my consent to take part in this study.** I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in the study. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant Date (dated by the participant)

STATEMENT OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

I certify that I have fully explained to the person taking part in the study the nature of the above research study, the potential risks and benefits and I have offered to answer any question that he/she may have.

Signature of Principal Investigator/Designate Date

Name of Principal Investigator/Designate

Letter to the School

To: [REDACTED]
Beirut, Lebanon

May 10, 2022

Permission to collect data for an LAU research study entitled **“The Attitudes of Stakeholders Towards the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs in an Armenian School”**.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to request permission for my students to be able to collect data from your teachers. Lara Ajemian is a Graduate student at the Lebanese American University (Department of Social and Education Sciences) and would be visiting your facility only in order to complete a research project related to her research study, which aims at exploring the attitudes of stakeholders towards the inclusion of students with special needs in Armenian schools. The targeted population is the elementary and middle school teachers.

I would like you to distribute the survey manually. It should take only 15 minutes or so of the participants' time.

The data collected will be kept anonymous and will not be used for any other purpose.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any additional information.

If you have any questions about this study, or you want to talk to someone outside the research, please contact the: IRB Office, Lebanese American University 3rd Floor, Dorm A, Byblos Campus. Tel: 00 961 1 786456 ext. (2546)

Sincerely yours,

Diane Nauffal, Principal Investigator

[REDACTED]
Diane Nauffal, Ph.D.
School of Arts and Sciences
Department of Social And Education Sciences
P.O.Box: 15-5053-Beirut, Lebaon
Tel. +961 1 786456 ext. 1232

Acknowledgement

Name:
Signature:
Date: