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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS IN LEBANON: CONCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES OF SCHOOLTEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND DECISION-MAKERS

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ABSTRACT

This study, a mixed-method research (MMR), investigated Inclusive Education (IE) conceptions and challenges through the eyes of 600 schoolteachers, 30 principals, and 15 decision-makers nested within the different layers of society in Lebanon. The main purpose of this study is to explore how participants view IE, and whether their conceptions differ in ways that could imply how they perceive the challenges when implementing it. Furthermore, significant differences in conceptions and challenges among the various groups are traced. The extent to which their gender, educational background, experience, training, and familiarity with Law 220 lead to more positive conceptions and fewer challenges is checked. Consequently, this research will uncover whether the teachers, principals, and decision-makers serve as change agents in implementing the inclusion of SEN students in mainstream public and private schools in Lebanon. Guided by a blend of theoretical frameworks, IE is conceptualized as a human rights-based approach at micro, exo, and macro levels, and whose implementation is influenced by the change agents' conceptions towards IE, their knowledge of the nature and requirements for IE practices, and their subjective norms. Quantitative and qualitative instruments were utilized to collect data. Findings of 600 surveys, 212 anecdotes, and five focus group discussions (FGDS) involving schoolteachers of public, private, and inclusive schools answered research questions (RQs) one, two, three, and four. While the interviews of 30 principals answered the fifth and sixth RQs, the interviews of 15 decision-makers answered the seventh and eighth RQs. The survey targeted teachers

and included four parts:(I) Demographic data; (II) Conceptions of IE detected via the Inclusive Education Practices Faculty Survey developed by Maryland Coalition for Inclusive education (2000); (III) Teachers' perspectives on challenges when implementing IE detected via Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES) developed by Sharma and Desai (2002); and IV) Anecdotal evidence. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software through descriptive statistics and Ordinal Logistic Regression (OLR) whose output was presented in the form of graphs, tables, percentages, and charts. Qualitative data analysis adopted the constant comparative and thematic analysis whereby constructs, themes, and patterns relating to IE conceptions and challenges were identified. Findings indicated that Lebanese teachers have average IE conceptions and challenges that are inversely related; as the IE conceptions increase; teachers' concerns decrease. OLR analysis indicated that general education job category, young age, and teaching experience between 16 and 20 have a negative impact on IE Conceptions. In contrast, Inclusive School category, Special Education, and knowledge of Law 220 have a positive impact on IE conceptions. Further, Public School category, lack of Special Education background, and young age have significant and positive impact on teachers' IE concerns. While experience and special education training reduce IE teachers' concerns. Though most of the participating schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers display IE advocacy at the philosophical level, they do perceive several significant challenges concerning the lack of resources, teacher education and training, special educational need (SEN) stigma, rigid curriculum, academic standards, and inefficient IE policy. Building on prior analysis and implications of the main themes of conceptions and challenges that

affect the construction of IE in Lebanon, an inclusive school policy for SEN students is proposed.

Keywords*: *Inclusive education, mainstream schools, conceptions, challenges, schoolteachers, principals, decision-makers

التعليم الدامج في المدارس السائدة في لبنان: مفاهيم وتحديات المدرسين، ومديري المدارس، وصناع القرار

أسماء محمود سليمان تلاوي

مستخلص

بحثت هذه الدراسة، وهي عبارة عن بحث مختلط الأسلوب، في مفاهيم وتحديات التعليم الشامل من خلال عيون 600 من معلمي المدارس و30 مدير و15 من صناع القرار الذين يتواجدون في مختلف طبقات المجتمع في لبنان. والغرض الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف كيفية نظر المشاركين إلى التعليم الدامج، وما إذا كانت تصوراتهم تختلف بطرق يمكن أن تنطوي على كيفية إدراكهم للتحديات عند تنفيذها. وعلاوة على ذلك، يتم تتبع الاختلافات الكبيرة في المفاهيم والتحديات بين مختلف الفئات. وتم التحقق من مدى ما يؤدي إليه جنسهم وخلفيتهم التعليمية وخبرتهم وتدريبهم ومعرفتهم بالقانون 220 إلى مزيد من المفاهيم الإيجابية وتحديات أقل. وبالتالي، سيكشف هذا البحث ما إذا كان المعلمون والمديرون وصانعو القرار يعملون كوكلاء تغيير في تنفيذ دمج الطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة في المدارس الرسمية والخاصة في لبنان. مسترشداً بمزيج من الأطر النظرية، يُصوَّر التعليم الدامج على أنه نهج قائم على حقوق الإنسان على مستويات الميكرو، والإكسو، والماكرو ويتأثر تطبيقه بمفاهيم وكلاء التغيير، ومعرفتهم بطبيعة ومتطلبات ممارسات التعليم الدامج ومعاييرها الذاتية. تم استخدام الأدوات الكمية والنوعية لجمع البيانات. نتائج 600 دراسة استقصائية و212 حكاية وخمس مجموعات مناقشة مركزة تضم مدرسي المدارس الرسمية والخاصة والدامجة أجابوا على أسئلة البحث رقم واحد واثنان وثلاثة وأربعة. بينما أجابت المقابلات التي أجراها 30 مديرًا على الأسئلة البحثية الخامسة والسادسة، وأجابت المقابلات التي أجراها 15 من صانعي القرار على الأسئلة البحثية السابعة والثامنة. استهدف الاستبيان المعلمين وشمل أربعة أجزاء: (1) البيانات

الديموغرافية؛ (II) مفاهيم التعليم الدامج التي تم اكتشافها من خلال استبيان هيئة التدريس لممارسات التعليم الجامع والتي طورها Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (2000) ؛ (III) وجهات نظر المعلمين حول التحديات عند تنفيذ التعليم الدامج عبر مقياس القلق حول التربية الدامجة والذي طوراه Sharma and Desai (2002)؛ و(IV) أدلة قصصية. تم تحليل البيانات الكمية باستخدام برنامج الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS) من خلال الإحصاء الوصفي والانحدار اللوجستي الترتيبي الذي تم عرض إنتاجه في شكل رسوم بيانية وجداول ونسب مئوية. اعتمد تحليل البيانات النوعية التحليل المقارن والموضوعي المستمر الذي تم من خلاله تحديد التركيبات والمواضيع والأنماط المتعلقة بمفاهيم وتحديات التعليم الدامج. أشارت النتائج إلى أن المدرسين اللبنانيين لديهم مفاهيم متوسطة وتحديات غير مترابطة مرتبطة عكسيا؛ عند زيادة مفاهيم التعليم الدامج لدى المعلمين؛ يتناقص قلقهم. أشار تحليل الانحدار اللوجستي الترتيبي أن لفئة وظيفة التعليم في المدرسة الرسمية وصغر السن وخبرة التدريس بين 16 و20 عامًا تأثيرا سلبيا على مفاهيمهم للتعليم الدامج. في المقابل، تؤثر فئة المدارس الدامجة والتربية المختصة ومعرفة القانون 220 تأثيراً إيجابياً على مفاهيمهم للتعليم الدامج .علاوة على ذلك، فإن لفئة المدارس الرسمية ونقص في ثقافة التعليم الخاص وصغر السن تأثير كبير وإيجابي على التحديات الخاصة بالتعليم الدامج. في حين أن الخبرة والتدريب في مجال التعليم الخاص يقللان من تحديات االمعلمين. على الرغم من أن معظم معلمي ومديري المدارس وصناع القرار المشاركين يظهرون دعمهم للتعليم الدامج على المستوى الفلسفي، إلا أنهم يتصورون العديد من التحديات المهمة فيما يتعلق بنقص الموارد واعداد المعلمين وتدريبهم، وصمة العار لذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة، والمناهج التربوية الصارمة، والمعايير الأكاديمية، وسياسة التعليم الدامج الغير فعالة. بناءً على التحليل المسبق وآثار الموضوعات الرئيسية للمفاهيم والتحديات التي تؤثر على بناء التعليم الدامج في لبنان، تم اقتراح سياسة مدرسية دامجة للطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة.

الكلمات الدالة: التعليم الدامج، المدارس العادية، المفاهيم، التحديات، معلمو المدارس، مدراء المدارس، صناع القرار.

DEDICATION

To the love of my life, Omar Ghandour, my wonderful husband, thank you for encouraging and supporting me through this long process. You have always been by my side to give me strength and give me rides whenever I needed. I could not have made this without you. Thank you for overseeing our home and keeping up with the family, while I wrote and worked. Thank you for all the tasty dishes you prepared and the meals you delivered to me when I was at AUB library crushed in researching and writing. You have achieved this with me.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .... **II**

مستخلص .... **V**

DEDICATION .... **VIII**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .... **IX**

TABLE OF CONTENTS .... **X**

TABLE OF FIGURES .... **XIX**

LIST OF TABLES .... **XXIV**

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS .... **XXIX**

CHAPTER ONE **1**

INTRODUCTION **1**

BACKGROUND **2**

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM **6**

PURPOSE **8**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS **9**

RATIONALE **10**

SIGNIFICANCE **12**

SCOPE OF THE STUDY **14**

EDUCATION IN LEBANON **15**

Public Schools 18

Private Schools 21

Specialized Schools 21

Special Needs in Lebanon 22

Endorsement of International Conventions and Resolutions 24

Inclusive Education Models in Private Schools in Lebanon 28

Inclusive Education-Related Lebanese Policy: Law 220/2000 ... 28

The National Educational Plan for Persons with Disabilities ... 32

Role of International Organizations ... 33

Operational Definitions ... 35

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY ... 38

CHAPTER TWO ... 40

LITERATURE REVIEW ... 40

Criteria of Included Literature ... 41

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ... 42

Human Rights-Based Approach ... 43

Ecological Systems Theory ... 47

Theory of Planned Behavior ... 49

CONNECTION BETWEEN THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND THE PROPOSED STUDY ... 53

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ... 58

FROM EXCLUSION TO MAINSTREAMING, TO INTEGRATION, TO INCLUSION ... 59

The 1980s-1990s ... 62

From 2000 to the Present ... 65

DEFINING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ... 69

Inclusion versus Integration ... 76

Summary ... 78

SEN School Practices ... 78

CONCEPTIONS – HOW CAN THEY AFFECT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION? ... 86

CHALLENGES TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ... 88

CHANGE AGENTS AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ... 89

TEACHERS **89**

TEACHER-RELATED VARIABLES 91

IE CONCEPTIONS HELD BY TEACHERS 102

IE CHALLENGES PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS 113

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS **123**

IE CONCEPTIONS HELD BY PRINCIPALS 127

IE CHALLENGES PERCEIVED BY PRINCIPALS 134

DECISION-MAKERS **137**

IE CONCEPTIONS HELD BY DECISION-MAKERS 139

IE CHALLENGES PERCEIVED BY DECISION-MAKERS 139

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OVERSEAS **143**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 144

CANADA 145

EUROPE IE PRACTICES 147

ARAB COUNTRIES IE PRACTICES 154

THE LEBANESE CONTEXT 155

CONCLUSION **162**

CHAPTER THREE **168**

METHODOLOGY **168**

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK **169**

RESEARCH DESIGN **170**

QUALITATIVE METHODS 175

QUANTITATIVE METHODS 176

TRIANGULATION 177

POPULATION AND SAMPLE 180

DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOLTEACHERS' SAMPLE 183

DESCRIPTION OF PRINCIPALS' SAMPLE 188

DESCRIPTION OF DECISION-MAKERS' SAMPLE 193

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS 193

SURVEY 193

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE 201

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS 204

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDS) 205

PILOT STUDY 207

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES 209

THE INTERVIEW PROCEDURES 211

SURVEY PROCEDURES 213

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE PROCEDURES 215

FGDS PROCEDURES 216

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION 218

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE PROCEDURES 220

SUMMARY OF DATA GATHERING TOOLS 221

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE 221

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS 222

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY 224

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS 228

CREDIBILITY 232

SUMMARY 233

CHAPTER FOUR 235

RESULTS: TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES 235

TEACHERS' IE CONCEPTIONS – MICROSYSTEM 238

SEN INCLUSION 242

TEACHERS' ROLE 243

SCHOOL PRACTICES 244

TEACHERS' COMFORT 244

Teacher's IE Conceptions Ranked 246

Teachers' IE Challenges – Microsystem 247

Concerns about Resources 251

Concerns about Acceptance 252

Concerns about Academic Standards 253

Concerns about Workload 254

Teacher's IE Concerns Ranked 254

Relationship between Teachers' IE Conceptions and Concerns 258

Predictors of Teachers' IE Conceptions and Concerns 261

Results Emerging from Schoolteachers' Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) 268

Summary of Vignettes Presented at FGDs 270

Teachers' IE Challenge in Response to FGDs Vignettes 271

Teachers' Level of IE Challenge in Response to FGDs Vignettes as per School Category 276

Teachers' IE Success in Response to FGDs Vignettes 277

Teachers' Justification of the Most Challenging SEN Case 282

Results Emerging from Teachers' Anecdotal Evidence 288

Summary of Teachers' Results 294

Chapter Five 299

Results: Principals' IE Conceptions and Challenges 299

Principals' IE Conceptions – Exo, Meso, and Microsystem 301

Understanding of IE 302

Support to Implement IE 310

School SEN Practices 319

Teacher's Role 326

PRINCIPALS' IE CHALLENGES – EXO, MESO, AND MICROSYSTEM............. 343

INADEQUATE TEACHER PREPARATION 345

SEN STIGMA 347

INADEQUATE RESOURCES... 351

LACK OF AWARENESS... 354

RIGID CURRICULUM 357

INEFFICIENT IE POLICY... 358

WORKLOAD 359

ACADEMIC STANDARDS.. 362

DECLINE OF SCHOOL ACADEMIC STANDARDS. 363

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPALS' IE CONCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES 364

CHAPTER SIX 377

RESULTS: DECISION-MAKERS' CONCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES............. 377

DECISION-MAKERS' IE CONCEPTIONS – EXOSYSTEM 378

UNDERSTANDING OF IE 379

LEGISLATION 382

CONTRIBUTION TO IE 384

READINESS TO IMPLEMENT IE 386

DECISION-MAKERS' IE CHALLENGES – EXOSYSTEM....................................... 387

TEACHER PREPARATION 388

SEN STIGMA 388

INADEQUATE RESOURCES... 390

RIGID CURRICULUM 393

INEFFICIENT IE POLICY... 393

SUMMARY OF DECISION-MAKERS' IE CONCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES 394

CHAPTER SEVEN 399

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS 399

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: SCHOOLTEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND DECISION-MAKERS **400**

IE CONCEPTIONS **409**

UNDERSTANDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION 409

TEACHER'S ROLE 412

TEACHER'S COMFORT 415

SCHOOL PRACTICES 418

PRINCIPALS' SUPPORT TO IMPLEMENT IE – EXO, MESO, AND MICROSYSTEM 421

DECISION-MAKERS' CONTRIBUTION TO IE – EXOSYSTEM 425

PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE SCHOOLS' READINESS TO IMPLEMENT IE 428

IE LEGISLATION – EXOSYSTEM 428

IE CHALLENGES **429**

INEFFICIENT IE POLICY 429

INADEQUATE TEACHER PREPARATION 431

SEN STIGMA 433

INADEQUATE RESOURCES 437

RIGID AND HEAVY CURRICULUM 444

DECLINE IN ACADEMIC STANDARDS 445

INCREASED WORKLOAD 447

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' IE CONCEPTIONS AND CONCERNS **450**

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' BACKGROUND FACTORS AND IE CONCEPTIONS AND CONCERNS **451**

CONCLUSIONS **457**

DILEMMA OF IE POLICY 459

DILEMMA OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM 460

DILEMMA OF TEACHERS' COMPETENCIES AND MINDSETS 462

DILEMMA OF INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY 464

LIMITATIONS 465

IMPLICATIONS 467

PROPOSAL OF AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL BLUEPRINT FOR SEN STUDENTS: BASED ON EMPIRICAL RESEARCH IN LEBANON 468

Rationale and Aims 469

Definition of an Inclusive School 470

Indicators of an Inclusive School 470

Inclusive Teacher Profile 472

A NATIONAL INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FRAMEWORK 475

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY STAKEHOLDERS 475

The Government – MEHE - Macro 475

Schools – Meso + Micro 479

Universities and Teacher Preparation Schools – Macro 483

Community – Meso + Micro 484

FINAL WORDS 485

REFERENCES 487

APPENDIX A 542

PERMISSION TO USE IEPFS AND CIES SCALES 542

APPENDIX B 544

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION PERMISSION 544

CONSENT LETTER 548

APPENDIX D 550

SURVEY 550

APPENDIX E 563

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS 563

APPENDIX G 564

PRINCIPAL'S BACKGROUND FORM AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 564

APPENDIX H.. 567

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION VIGNETTES 567

TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1.1. VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH ELEMENTS 9

FIGURE 1.2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY 14

FIGURE 2.1. VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO IE. 47

FIGURE 2.2. VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS MODEL 48

FIGURE 2.3. THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR (AJZEN, 1991, 2005) 53

FIGURE 2.4. VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.................. 59

FIGURE 2.5. STEPS FROM EXCLUSION TO INCLUSION (UNESCO, 2005) 60

FIGURE: 2.6. INTERNATIONAL POLICIES IN SUPPORT OF IE 1948-2016 68

FIGURE 2.7. EDUCATION THROUGH THE INCLUSION LENS (UNESCO, 2005).............. 81

"SEEING EDUCATION THROUGH THE INCLUSION LENS IMPLIES A SHIFT FROM SEEING THE CHILD AS A PROBLEM TO SEEING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AS THE PROBLEM THAT CAN BE SOLVED THROUGH INCLUSIVE APPROACHES" (UNESCO, 2005, P. 27).... 81

FIGURE 2.8. VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF TEACHERS' IE CONCEPTIONS 104

FIGURE 2.9. VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF TEACHERS' IE CONCERNS 115

FIGURE 2.10. VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF MODELS OF LEBANESE SEN SCHOOLING 162

FIGURE 3.1. MMR RESEARCH DESIGN 172

FIGURE 3.2. TRIANGULATION DESIGN... 179

FIGURE 3.3. RESEARCH SAMPLE 182

FIGURE 3.4. TEACHERS' EDUCATION... 186

FIGURE 3.5. TEACHERS TRAINING IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS...................................... 186

FIGURE 3.6. NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO MENTIONED HAVING SEN STUDENTS IN THEIR CLASSROOMS 187

FIGURE 3.7. PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS AWARE OF LAW 220 187

FIGURE 3.8. SCHOOL CATEGORY OF PARTICIPATING PRINCIPALS (N=30) 188

Figure 3.9. Gender of participating principals (N=30) 189

Figure 3.10. Principals' highest level of education 189

Figure 3.11. Principals' years of experience (N=30) 189

Figure 3.12. Principals' training in SE (N=30) 190

Figure 3.13. Principals' contact with SEN students (N=30) 190

Figure 3.14. Principals' knowledge of Law 220 (N=30).................................... 190

Figure 3.15. CIES (Sharma & Desai, 2002)... 199

Figure 3.16. Research Timeline 210

Figure 3.17. Visual representation of the numbers of individual interviews
.... 213

Figure 3.18. Visual representation of collected anecdotes......................... 216

Figure 4.1. Analysis of teachers' QUAN+QUAL responses 236

Figure 4.2. Teachers' IE conceptions mean scores ranked 247

Figure 4.3. Teachers' IE concerns mean scores ranked 256

Figure 4.4. Visual representation of the relationship between IE
conceptions and concerns... 259

Figure 4.5. Visual representation of predictors of teachers' IE conceptions
.... 262

Figure 4.6. Visual representation of predictors of teachers' IE concerns 265

Figure 4.7. Teachers' level of challenge in response to the first vignette
(Learning Disabilities).. 274

Figure 4.8. Teachers' level of challenge in response to the second vignette
(Behavioral and Emotional Disorders) 274

Figure 4.9. Teachers' level of challenge in response to third vignette
(Communication Disorder) 275

Figure 4.10. Teachers' Level of challenge in response to the fourth vignette (Visual Impairment).. 275

Figure 4.11. Teachers' level of challenge in response to the fifth vignette (Physical Disabilities) 276

Figure 4.12. Teachers' level of success in response to the first vignette (Learning Difficulty).. 280

Figure 4.13. Teachers' level of success in response to the second vignette (Emotional and Behavioral Problems).. 280

Figure 4.14. Teachers' level of success in response to the third vignette (Communication Disorders) 281

Figure 4.15. Teachers' level of success in response to the fourth vignette (Visual Impairment) 281

Figure 4.16. Teachers' level of success in response to the fifth vignette (Physical Disability) 281

Figure 5.1. Principals' interview themes treemap 300

Figure 5.2. Principals' IE Conceptions.. 302

Figure 5.3. Visual representation of principals' understanding of IE 304

Figure 5.4. Principals' visualization of their support to implement IE........ 310

Figure 5.5. Visual representation of school SEN practices.......................... 320

Figure 5.6. Principals' conceptions of teachers' role................................... 327

Figure 5.7. Visual representation of general ed. teacher's view of IE 328

Figure 5.8. Visual representation of a general ed. Teacher's readiness for SEN services.. 329

Figure 5.9. Visual representation of general ed. Teacher's acceptance or refusal to teach SEN students 331

Figure 5.10. Visual representation of special ed. teacher's readiness to teach the whole class 333

Figure 5.11. Visual representation of impact of special ed. teacher on the whole class 334

Figure 5.12. Visual representation of teachers' ability & willingness to collaborate 336

Figure 5.13. Visual representation of teachers' ability and willingness to implement IEPs 338

Figure 5.14. Visual representation of teachers' ability and willingness to deal with technology 341

Figure 5.15. Visual representation of teachers' comfort when dealing with SEN students 342

Figure 5.16. Principals' IE Challenges 344

Figure 5.17. Visual representation of teacher preparation as an IE challenge 346

Figure 5.18. Visual representation of SEN stigma as an IE challenge 348

Figure 5.19. Visual representation of inadequate resources as an IE challenge 351

Figure 5.20. Visual representation of the lack of awareness as an IE challenge 354

Figure 5.21. Visual representation of the rigid curriculum as an IE challenge 357

Figure 5.22. Visual representation of the inefficient policy as an IE challenge 358

Figure 5.23. Visual representation of workload as an IE challenge 360

Figure 5.24. Visual representation of academic standards as an IE challenge 363

Figure 6.1. Decision-makers' interview themes treemap 378

Figure 6.2. Visual representation of decision-makers' IE conceptions 379

Figure 6.3. Visual representation of decision-makers' understanding of IE 380

Figure 6.4: Visual representation of decision-makers' IE challenges 387

Figure 6.5: Visual representation of SEN stigma as an IE challenge 389

Figure 6.6. Visual representation of inadequate resources as an IE Challenge 391

Figure 7.1. Visual representation of IE dilemmas in Lebanon 459

Figure 7.2. Visual Representation of the Proposed Inclusive School Blueprint 474

Figure 7.3. Visual representation of RTI 482

Figure 7.4. Visual representation of RTI implementation 483

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 3.1 182

SAMPLE OF TEACHERS SURVEYED, RESPONSE, AND SELECTION RATES (N = 600) 182

TABLE 3.2 183

TEACHERS' JOB CATEGORY 183

TABLE 3.3 183

TEACHERS' DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION 183

TABLE 3.4 186

TEACHERS WHO MENTIONED HAVING SEN STUDENTS IN THEIR CLASSROOMS (N= 600) 186

TABLE 3.5 191

PRINCIPALS' DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION 191

TABLE 3.6 195

THEMATIC CATEGORIES OF IEPFS (MARYLAND COALITION FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, 2000) 196

TABLE 3.7 214

SAMPLE OF TEACHERS SURVEYED AND THEIR RESPONSE AND SELECTION RATES (N = 600) 214

TABLE 3. 8 217

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS 217

TABLE 3.9 221

SUMMARY OF DATA GATHERING METHODS AND RATIONALES 221

TABLE 3.10 225

RELIABILITY STATISTICS OF IEPFS & CIES-L 225

TABLE 3.11 225

Cronbach's Alpha Results for the IEPFS Sub-scales 225

Table 3.12 226

Cronbach's Alpha Results for the CIES – L Sub-scales 226

Table 3.13 231

Example of Data Analysis Taxonomy 231

Table 4.1 239

Three Quantitative Indicators for IE Conceptions 239

Table 4.2 239

Mean Scores of Teachers' Conceptions (N = 600) 239

Table 4.3 239

Conceptions Score Frequency Distribution 239

Table 4.4 240

Teachers' Responses to the Conceptions Section 240

Table 4.5 246

Ranking of Teachers' IE Conceptions (N = 600) 246

Table 4.6 248

Three Quantitative Indicators for IE Concerns 248

Table 4.7 249

Teachers' IE Concerns Statistics (N = 600) 249

Table 4.8 249

Concerns Score Frequency Distribution 249

Table 4.9 250

Teachers' Responses on the Concerns Section 250

Table 4.10 255

Teachers' IE Concern Means Arranged in the Descending Order 255

TABLE 4.11 256

FACTOR AND ITEM MEANS FOR THE CIES AS USED IN THE CURRENT STUDY AND FACTOR MEANS AS SHOWN BY SHARMA ET AL. (2018) 256

TABLE 4.12 259

LOGIT MODEL I: TEACHERS IE CONCEPTION AND CONCERNS 259

TABLE 4.13 260

TABLE 4.14 261

LOGIT MODEL I GOODNESS-OF-FIT 261

TABLE 4.15 261

LOGIT MODEL I PSEUDO R-SQUARE 261

TABLE 4.16 263

LOGIT MODEL II FITTING INFORMATION 263

LINK FUNCTION: LOGIT. 263

TABLE 4.17 263

LOGIT MODEL II GOODNESS-OF-FIT 263

LINK FUNCTION: LOGIT. 263

TABLE 4.18 263

LOGIT MODEL II (TEACHERS' BACKGROUND VARIABLES & CONCEPTIONS) 263

TABLE 4.19 265

MODEL FITTING INFORMATION 265

TABLE 4.20 266

GOODNESS-OF-FIT 266

TABLE 4.21 266

PARAMETER ESTIMATES (TEACHERS' BACKGROUND VARIABLES & CONCERNS) 266

TABLE 4.22 268

Composition of Focus Groups by Schools ... 268

Table 4.23 ... 271

Teachers' IE Challenge Frequency Score Distribution in Response to Vignettes ... 271

Table 4.24 ... 272

Teachers' IE Challenge Ranked Mean Scores in Response to Vignettes ... 272

Table 4.25 ... 272

Teachers' Responses to the First Question on the Vignettes ... 272

Table 4.26 ... 277

Teachers' Level of Challenge in Response to FGDs Vignettes as per School Category (N=56) ... 277

Table 4.27 ... 278

Teachers' Level of Success Frequency Score Distribution in Response to Vignettes ... 278

Table 4.28 ... 278

Teachers' IE Success Ranked Mean Scores in Response to Vignettes ... 278

Table 4.29 ... 279

Teachers' Responses to the Second Question on the Vignettes Level of Success (N = 56) ... 279

Table 4.30 ... 282

Teachers' Success in Response to FGDs Vignettes as per School Category ... 282

Table 4.31 ... 289

Teachers' IE Conceptions and Challenges from Anecdotal Evidence ... 289

Table 5.1 ... 344

Principals' Reported Challenges ... 344

TABLE 6.1 379

DECISION-MAKERS' COUNT RESPONSES ON THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF IE 379

TABLE 6.2 388

DECISION-MAKERS' COUNT RESPONSES ON SEN STIGMA 388

TABLE 6.3 390

DECISION-MAKERS' COUNT RESPONSES ON INADEQUATE RESOURCES 390

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

AUB: American University of Beirut

BT: Baccalaureate Technique

CAS: Central Administration for Statistics

CERD: Centre for Educational Research and Development

CRPD: Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

DM: Decision-maker

DOPS: Department of Orientation and Guidance

EfA: Education for All

GE: General Education

GO: Governmental Organisation

IE: Inclusive Education

INCL: Inclusive

LPHU: Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union

NCOD: National Council on Disability

MEHE: Ministry of Education and Higher Education

MOSA: Ministry of Social Affairs

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NIP: National Inclusion Project

NIPL: National inclusion project Lebanon

Pr: Private

Pub: Public

PWD: Person with Disabilities

RQ(s): Research Question(s)

SE: Special Education

SEN: Special Educational Needs

SKILD: Smart Kids with Individual Learning Differences

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNESCO-IBE: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization International Bureau of Education

USA: United States of America

WHO: World Health Organization

YAB: Youth Organisation of the Blind

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

> Every learner matters and matters equally ... Implementing this message will likely require changes in thinking and practice at every level of an education system, from classroom teachers and others who provide educational experiences directly, to those responsible for national policy. (UNESCO, 2017, p. 12)

Data on inclusive education (IE) are varied, but the majority of researches conclude that if properly implemented, inclusive education can significantly benefit all students, school communities, and the entire society. Inclusive education is one of the primary principles of the 2030 Education Agenda (UN, 2015) represented in the Sustainable Development Goal 4, SDG4 which calls for endorsing equitable quality IE and sustaining lifetime learning chances for all individuals. The latest call of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2017) recommends bringing the principles of equity and inclusion into education by: "Implementing changes effectively and monitoring them for impact, recognizing that building inclusion and equity in education is an on-going process, rather than a one-time effort" (p. 13).

Literature suggests that successful IE in mainstream schools provides a unified educational system in which schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers work collaboratively to deliver comprehensive services for all students. Background information about a variety of critical factors should be acknowledged and addressed when moving toward IE. These key factors include understanding effective inclusive schooling, accountability, and roles of change agents (teachers, principals, and decision-makers).

Background

One of the most substantial changes that have seen the light in educational practice is the implementation of IE worldwide. Inclusion is defined as educating students with special needs in regular mainstream school classrooms together with their age-appropriate peers free of disabilities. UNESCO (2005) refers to inclusion as an effective way of acknowledging diversity while considering personal differences as chances for improving learning rather than problems. Inclusion is viewed as a process by which the conventional educational system caters for all learners of different needs by providing them with custom-made programs of a shared vision that minimize exclusion within and from education (UNESCO, 2005).

According to the Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2016), poor children are four times more prone to drop out of school and five times more prone not to finish primary education than rich children. In developed countries, some students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) either leave school without worthy certificates or are segregated away from mainstream educational practices, and some drop out (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006). Human Rights Watch (2018, p. 1) found children with disabilities in Lebanon are excluded from school “due to discriminatory admission policies, lack of reasonable accommodations, lack of inclusive curricula, and discriminatory fees and expenses.” Confronted with such a challenge, researchers have an increased interest in the idea of IE.

In practice, IE involves providing ways of easing the participation of children with (SEN) in mainstream schools where discrimination is prevented, friendly and inclusive societies are built, and education for all is achieved (UNESCO, 1994). To cater to the demands of all children, the school system needs to be modified to foster effective inclusive schooling that supports learning for all students.

A considerable movement towards embracing inclusive schooling into the state education policies of many countries has emerged. Though many countries have decreed to ensure the eligibility of all SEN learners to obtain an education in the regular classroom, their IE practices differ. Some countries, such as Denmark and Sweden, are more dedicated to full inclusion, while others are committed to a variety of services extending from segregated special schools to the full inclusion of SEN children, such as Australia, the US and the UK (Peters, 2007). The countries that certified the Salamanca Statement dedicated themselves to refining the education of students with disabilities and to the establishment of education systems where "all children should learn together, whenever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have" (UNESCO, 1994, p. 11). As a concept, inclusive schooling, therefore, implies developing welcoming schools and classrooms to the distinctive needs and attributes of all learners (Ainscow & Miles, 2008).

Education systems, including teachers, principals, and decision-makers, can either strengthen or weaken IE. Some collaborative teaching services are used to support general education (GE) teachers who have SEN students in their classrooms (Idol, 2006). To increase their responsiveness to the learners' needs, educators utilized some methods such as flexible curriculum, differentiating instruction, cooperative learning, accommodations and facilities for curricular inclusion, teaching responsibility, and reliable assessment of student performance (Villa & Thousand, 2005).

Having presented the value of IE; it is of worth to acknowledge a key factor in the process of IE is accountability. Accountability answers the complex question of who should hold the responsibility for what, how they can be evaluated, and with what results? Its rather multifaceted scope includes the following change agents:

- Teachers and other front-line professionals, who are in charge of realizing policies and employing their competencies and jurisdiction to educate students with SEN efficiently
- School principals, who are in charge of transforming policies into administrative measures and of checking their implementation
- Decision-makers, who are in charge of releasing appropriate laws and providing the necessary funds to enable them to be enacted

Therefore, constructing useful IE necessitates support from advocates who are external for the reform and internal change agents (Frankel, 2006). When examining IE, the most crucial factor is the role of change agents; in the case of this research, these are schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers. An educational system should be governed, supported, and implemented: teachers, principals, and decision-makers (Mitchell, 2010).

Schoolteachers have a significant role in realizing IE. The highest responsibility for the students' day-to-day learning is that of the teacher whose principal role is very significant in realizing an IE system as clarified by the UNESCO (2009) Policy Guidelines. To function properly, teachers are expected to have the essential background on inclusive practices. Although inclusion has led to encouraging transformations for students with SEN, there are still disparities that should be handled regarding pre-service teachers' education and in-service teachers' training programs (Winter, 2006). Most GE teachers tend to voice their irritation when having SEN students in their class simply because they do not accept them, as clarified by Wehbi (2006). Consequently, they refer the child to the special education (SE) teacher or counselor whenever he/she exhibits inappropriate behavior. Not

having received the needed training to cater to their needs, it may be hard for those teachers to deal with those students.

School principals play an essential role in developing a constructive educational setting that provides opportunities for educating both students with and without (SEN). Principals as instructional leaders have a critical role in determining its success. Villa and Thousand (2005) have explained five necessary arrangements principals should assume in order to assist inclusive practices: (a) a vision of inclusive schooling, (b) on-going professional development to have inclusive educators, (c) incentives to shift to inclusive practices (e.g., accommodating meetings, training, staff concerns, collaborative decision-making), (d) human and teaching resources; and (e) actions to encourage spreading the new vision among the community.

Despite their critical role, most school principals are neither prepared, nor do they hold positive conceptions about inclusion (Crockett, 2002; Doyle & Doyle, 2005). A set of challenges for the principal as well as the school staff is encountered. There is more pressure on the principals to support and maintain the specialized programs in the school, and, thus, they face several challenges when attempting to have an inclusive school. The first challenge is that of accountability in reauthorization, demanding special education (SE) students to participate in official testing and accountability programs. Another challenge comprises disagreements from external groups such as support groups about the value of inclusive practices. Besides, there is the necessity for collaboration between general and SE teachers and paraprofessionals to modify their curriculum and teaching methods. Finally, principals encounter the difficult task of coordinating the administrative challenges with SE challenges involving buildings and facilities, funding for education, and fear

of grievances. Generally, region level administrators are expected to manage the SE program, staffing, preparation and professional development, and facilities. Nevertheless, with the increasing prominence of inclusion programs, the challenges for principals increase.

Being accountable to the Parliament and public, education decision-makers need to enhance the quality of education, govern transformation as well as expenses. This can only be achieved through legislation, regulations, funding, and inspection (Pijl & Frissen, 2009). Albeit IE is espoused in the rhetoric, legislation, and policies of many countries, practices often fail. Due to many barriers, a policy-practice gap exists. These barriers originate from social beliefs and principles; financial factors; shortage of measures to monitor adherence to policies; outdated teachers' background and skills, teacher training programs; parental resistance; strict curricula and assessment methods; unstable self-governing schools; poor institutional infrastructures; large classes; and lack of adequate preparation of schools and communities to IE (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002; Pijl & Frissen, 2009).

All of the input above requires the existence of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers who advocate and develop among all school personnel a steady belief in educating all students in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study is defined as a perceived lack of information about the issues surrounding IE among educators represented by schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers. Research has shown that educational leaders' understanding of IE in mainstream schools and their perceived challenges to implementing it are considerably influenced by their conceptions about the nature of IE (Ainscow, 2003; Glazzard, 2011; Hodkinson, 2005, 2006;

Hodkinson & Devarconda, 2009; Kim Fong Poon-McBrayer, 2017; Kim, 2011; Kurniawati, De Boer, Minnaert, and Mangunsong, 2017; Robinson, 2017).

Children with special educational needs (SEN) either drop out of school or are excluded from formal education. They are gradually and deliberately dismissed of the school system because schools are not perceptive of their backgrounds and learning styles. It is out of sympathy that some children are categorized and placed in segregated special schools or separate classes within the same school, withdrawn from their peers. This has resulted in the formation of two separate systems of education, regular and SE. However, approaching the edge of the last decade, the logic for having two similar systems of education emerged, and the underpinnings of SE have begun to collapse. The view that has developed in the disability field has had significant impacts not only on SE but also on regular education school practice. Present rational calls for welcoming ALL learners in the regular classroom.

Researchers and practitioners have long reviewed the critical value of inclusion in mainstream schools and showed how it influences student achievement (Burdette, 2010; Frost & Kersten, 2011; Glazzard, 2011; Rujis, 2017). For years, SEN students and their families have had to struggle for the chance to study in GE settings. The emergence of the notion of IE in the Arab world in general and Lebanon, in particular, was not too long ago. Regretfully, to some people, SEN children have been considered burdensome and shameful. Based on the observation of the researcher, some are embarrassed to concede that their child has SENs. Consequently, many SEN children are sheltered away at home or in segregated welfare institutions receiving SE or related services.

In the 1980s, sometime after the establishment of IDEA in the United States, very few schools welcomed students with learning problems or disabilities. In 1994,

the Lebanese Government espoused the Educational Reform Plan prepared by the National Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD). This plan emphasized caring for SEN students. On the other hand, in 1998, the Lebanese Parliament adopted a decree on free and compulsory primary education, which concerns all school-aged children, including those with SEN. However, the shy efforts to thoroughly implement this plan and law still lag. Although Lebanon has developed Law 2000/220 to SE, up to this date, there are no adequate sanctions and interventions neither at the macro nor at the micro level. At the macro level, not any attempt of change has been noted in relevance to mandating the law, restructuring of the curricula, or teaching resources and methods. At the micro level, some private schools' efforts have made significant leaps forward to endorse IE and successfully implement it.

Nevertheless, some other private and public schools are still taking their first baby steps – and in some cases stumbling along the way. The first and foremost factor behind such a status quo is in the underlying conceptions and challenges of the change agents concerned, which may either promote or hinder inclusion. Thus, teachers, principals, and decision-makers' conceptions about IE, together with their challenges to the effective implementation of inclusive practices, merits further investigation. As such, barriers to IE in mainstream schools in Lebanon will be mapped out so that efforts to overcome them are considered.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this study is to explore schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers' conceptions and challenges regarding IE in mainstream schools. Consequently, this research will uncover whether the teachers, principals,

and decision-makers in Lebanon serve as change agents in implementing the inclusion of SEN students in mainstream public and private schools in Lebanon.

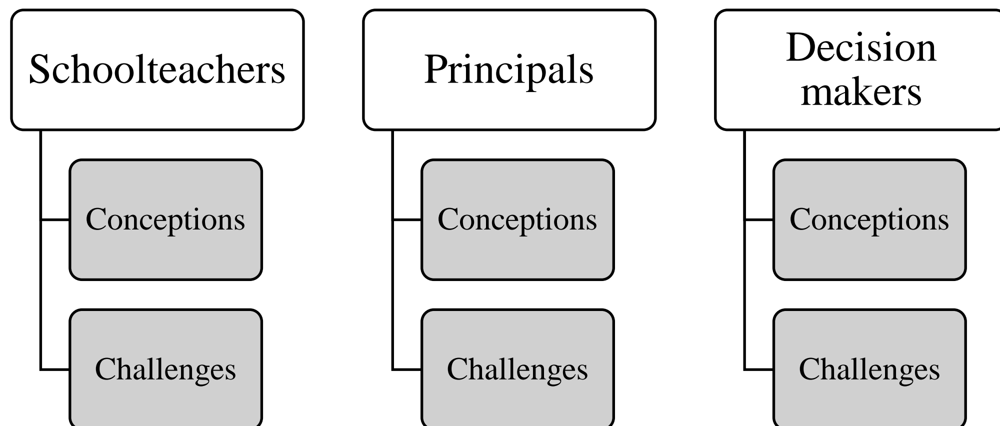

Figure 1.1. Visual representation of the research elements

In this study, as illustrated in Figure 1.1, the researcher is interested in how participants view IE, and whether their views differ in ways that could imply how they perceive the challenges when implementing it. Furthermore, significant differences in conceptions and challenges among the various groups will be tracked. Finally, the extent to which their gender, educational background, experience, training, and familiarity with Law 220 lead to more positive conceptions and fewer challenges will be checked.

Research Questions

This research explores the conceptions of and challenges policymakers, principals, and teachers encounter when implementing IE in mainstream schools. It aims at answering the following questions:

1. What are the schoolteachers' IE conceptions?
2. What are the school teachers' perspectives on the concerns they face when implementing IE?
3. Is there a relationship between teachers' IE conceptions and concerns?

4. To what extent do teachers' age, educational background, job, and school category, training, experience, contact with SEN, and knowledge of Law 220 contribute to their IE conceptions and concerns?
5. What are the school principals' IE conceptions?
6. What are the school principals' perspectives on the challenges they face when implementing IE?
7. What are decision-makers' IE conceptions?
8. What are the decision-makers' perspectives on the challenges they face when implementing IE?

Rationale

Educational leaders represented by schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers are the change agents in the field of IE, one of the leading international topics in education. The extent to which they know about IE is very critical to its effective implementation. However, their understanding of inclusion and their perceptions of its challenges are still vague. The conceptions and principles of inclusion must be present for change to be introduced (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010), and the successful implementation of inclusive schooling necessitates eliminating cultural and environmental constraints which influence to a certain extent individual needs and community goals (Ainscow, 2005; Armstrong, Armstrong, Lynch, & Severin, 2005; Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

Most policies are formed and issued in a top-down approach. With accountability declarations in mind, school personnel must follow the laws governing SE and service delivery to students identified as exceptional (Bateman & Bateman, 2014). Considered as the educational leaders in the process of school improvement, teachers, principals, and decision-makers are held accountable to enact

pertinent laws and ensure the provision of IE for students with SEN. The discussion of inclusive schooling needs to link up to the written educational policy environment to an understanding of the specifics of schools and their instructional leaders. Thus, change is prompted by the knowledge of change agents (teachers, principals, and decision-makers) and the elimination of the barriers that deter its progress.

Research in developing and developed countries indicates that the success in applying effective inclusive practices in mainstream schools depends on several critical factors, including change agents' conceptions or beliefs of inclusion (Florian & Rouse, 2010; Gajewski, 2014; Hamman et al. 2013; Kuyini & Desai, 2007; Robinson, 2017; Subramanian & Manickaraj, 2017; Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2012; Smith & Tyler, 2011).

Further, the challenges and concerns these agents perceive when implementing inclusion practices, voiced through a recognized inclusive school climate and culture, have been found to enable appropriate school reform and, consequently, useful IE (Round, Subban & Sharma, 2016; Thompson, Lyons, & Timmons, 2015; UNESCO, 2009; Yadav, Das, Sharma, & Tiwari, 2015; Yan & Sin, 2014; Watkins & Ebersold, 2016).

However, in the promotion of inclusive schooling in the Lebanese milieu, are schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers mitigating or generating impediments? Besides, do their conceptions obstruct or stimulate the school staff to accept the inclusion of SEN students? Western literature can never explain the effect of the Lebanese culture that directly impacts the formal expectations and goals of any local organization. In as much as the success or failure of IE depends to a certain extent on the change agents' conceptions and actions, this necessitates exploring schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers' conceptions and challenges while

considering the unique features of the Lebanese culture. Therefore, this study seeks to identify some of the discourse on IE by exploring conceptions and challenges of change agents.

Significance

Throughout people's life span, it is not guaranteed to live free of disability, for anyone is subject to any form of disability or physical defect at any time. Not only natural disasters like earthquakes or floods, but also human-made calamities such as car accidents or wars may happen. Regardless of one's status, be it rich or poor, educated or illiterate, these accidents are unconditional, and thus, any service provisions have to consider disability. Education is one of these services that require further concern, which is the focal point of this research. Accordingly, this study is significant since its results will: (a) clearly indicate the conceptions or misconceptions of the concerned change agents, (b) lucidly uncover the challenges for the provision of IE in mainstream schools, and (c) alarm the governors to reflect on what change could be made in schools to cater for students with different disabilities.

Even though Lebanon is a signatory of various international agreements for impartial education for all, the researcher finds it inefficient. This research is unique for it approaches an under-researched field of the inclusion of SEN children in Lebanese mainstream schools with a good percentage that has increased over the past decade. Much of the evidence obtained regarding IE in Lebanon has been anecdotal and collected in narrow contexts from small samples. On top of this, the few researchers (El Zein, 2009; Khochen, 2017; Khochen & Radford, 2012; Kustantini, 1999; Mansour, 2001; McBride, Dirani, & Mukalid, 1999; Oweini & El Zein, 2014; Rizk, 2007; Wehbi, 2006) who have conducted such studies in Lebanon recommend

future researches to explore to uncover additional challenges and facilitators that they have faced.

If Lebanon is heading towards inclusive schooling, it seems timely, therefore, to conduct this study since its findings will provide much-needed insights into school reform to be led by schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers. Exploring the diverse conceptions and challenges of these change agents may help rule out anticipated barriers and support the implementation of IE policies within Lebanon. Insights from this study should aid current and prospective educational leaders in accommodating an efficient and welcoming environment for SEN students to grow into well-equipped independent individuals.

Inclusion in schools has long been the backbone of school change by addressing disadvantaged children in regular schools, thus advocating “Education for all.” The responsibility of decision-makers to establish and enforce the necessary laws is exceptionally fundamental. Conversely, the principal’s role in IE is pivotal and has been mentioned as prominent in creating school vision and culture (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). Whilst schoolteachers are the mediators between the state, diverse stakeholders in education, the parents and the students, since they are accountable for implementing the inclusive settings promoting and spreading the principles of inclusion in the classroom (Forlin, 2004; Gajewski, 2014; Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhie-Richmond, 2009; Rouse, 2009; UNESCO, 2009)

Schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers’ IE conceptions and challenges can either help establish or obstruct the so-called least restrictive school environment that defeats discrimination in all its faces. Because a broad range of SEN students is marginalized and not well attended in the Lebanese mainstream

schools, supporting their successful attainment of basic education mitigates the percentage of dropouts and promotes the development of a well-rounded society.

Therefore, this study is significant and the first of its kind because it may serve as an incentive to realize IE by identifying the existing conceptions, misconceptions, and challenges, which act as barriers to the establishment of similar education setups for all children in their classrooms. That clarified, the dissertation seeks to contribute right to the advance of the education environment in Lebanon and similar developing Arab countries by enabling change agents to overcome the challenges to the implementation of IE.

Scope of the Study

The study focused on the conceptions and challenges of IE in the eyes of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers, as illustrated in Figure 1.2.

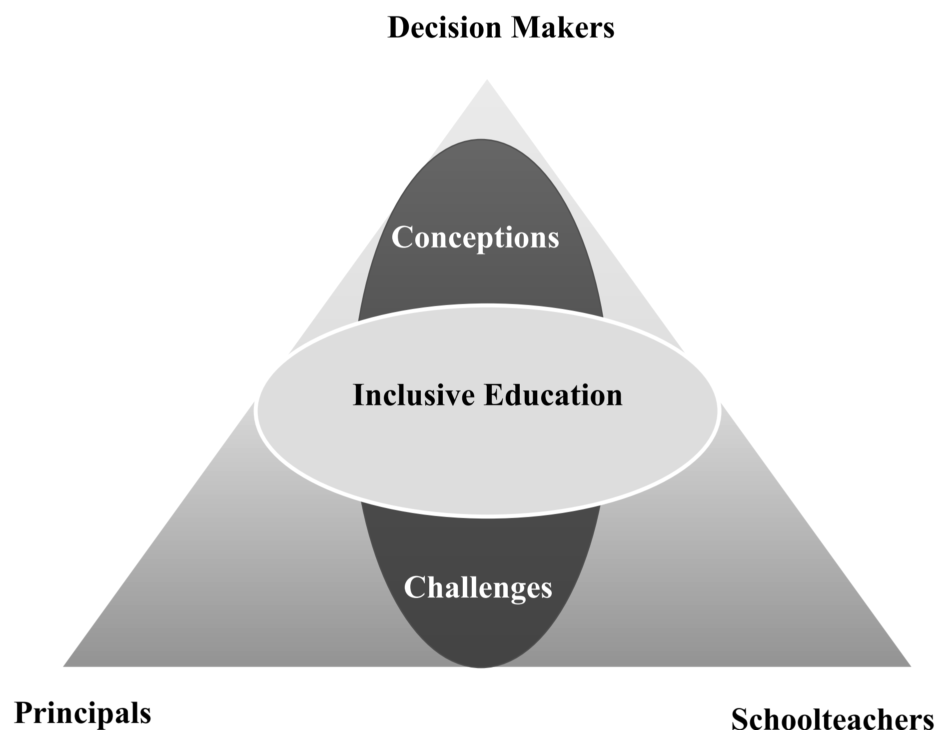

Figure 1.2. Scope of the study

It considered a sample population of public and private mainstream schools having Cycle I, II, and III in the three areas of Beirut Capital. The study took six years, which is the time that extends from the proposal writing and approval, data collection, analysis, writing of the findings, and submission to the university.

In the following section, the path toward IE in Lebanon is presented but preceded by an overview of the Lebanese educational system.

Education in Lebanon

Lebanon has one of the uppermost literacy percentages in the Middle East. About 94% of its youth and adult population is literate, a ratio of 84% of students attended pre-compulsory education, and 97% of students enrolled in compulsory primary education according to the 2016 United Nations Development Report (UNDP). About half of the Lebanese people are bilingual, and a good number of those who attended private schools are trilingual (Zouein, 2003). For instance, in one conversation, most people communicate by alternating between Arabic, French, and English.

Following Lebanon's independence in 1943, the Ministry of Education was established to prepare its citizens and enable them to be involved in the development of the state (Frayha, 2003). The Lebanese education system is governed primarily by two entities: The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD). MEHE is in charge of supervising the whole education sector, from the authorization of national policies to the running of service delivery in public schools, in addition to overseeing private schools and other educational institutions. CERD, a self-governed entity under the auspices of MEHE, is responsible for national strategic planning, development of curriculum and textbook, educational research, teacher training, and evaluation.

The initial goal of MEHE and CERD is to develop the state's system that provides free remarkable education as evidenced within the MEHE's 2013 mission statement. The Mission of the National Education Strategy (MEHE, 2004) in Lebanon states that the MEHE is concerned to provide equal opportunity education. While the statement to build the education system outlined in the Ministry's vision was well-founded, the public school system wished-for has been incompetent.

During the civil war, the Lebanese schools suffered a great deal and resulted in poor quality education (World Bank, 2000). In specific, the educational system of public schools was incompetent and disintegrated due to various political and religious parties (Frayha, 2003). Post-civil war, extensive efforts were initiated to reform education. The outcome was three education reforms, two of which took place in 1994 and 2010. The third contemporary reform, Reaching All Children with Education, RACE I (2014-2016) followed by RACE II (2017-2020), emerged after the Syrian crisis (MEHE, 2017). The Plan for Educational Reform in 1994 resulted in the implementation of a new curriculum in 1997. However, the updated Lebanese national curriculum and correlated pedagogical benchmarks still needed to be more student-centered and to cater for necessary life skills. In 2006, a second education reform initiative started and ended in the publication of "Quality Education for growth, National Education Strategy Framework and Education Sector Development Plan (GE) 2010 – 2015". The current RACE project caters for the Syrian refugee students and the Lebanese students alike as per the MEHE publication (2017).

Private as well as public schools adopt the basic National Curriculum mandated by the Lebanese government. Private schools supplement this curriculum with topics relevant to the goals of each school (Haidar, 2002). The majority of

public and private schools are co-educational with most of the teachers and administrators being women.

Three levels of formal education exist in Lebanon: (1) Pre-school education (ages 03-05); (2) basic education (ages 06-14), further distributed into Cycle I (Grades 1 to 3), Cycle II (Grades 4 to 6); and Cycle III (Grades 7 to 9); and (3) Secondary education or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (ages 15-18). Hence, education starts with pre-school at the age of three and graduating at the age of 18 when they pass the 12th-grade official exams prescribed for all students by MEHE. The 12th grade is equivalent to the first/freshman year in the American system of education and is called the Lebanese Baccalaureate (LB). The LB certificate, similar to the French Baccalaureate, allows the students to join universities as sophomores. A Compulsory Education Act (Law 686/98) states the responsibility of the government to provide free compulsory primary education for all Lebanese children aged 6 to 11 years old. Law 150 passed in 2011, extended the age for compulsory education to 15, but it is yet to be enacted.

Arabic is the official language in Lebanon taught in schools. All schools offer bilingual education, having Arabic as the first language and French or English as the second language. In nursery grade levels, Arabic, along with the foreign language, is introduced. The foreign language turns to be the language of instruction for most subjects in the upper elementary and secondary grades, and a second foreign language is taught in Cycle III. Many schools are introducing a second foreign language at the primary level.

As reported in the Statistical Bulletin for the Academic year 2016 – 2017 (MEHE, 2017b), several types of schools are distributed all over the Lebanese

territory: (a) 1257 Public schools, (b) 1527 private schools; and (c) 67 United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools.

Public Schools

One thousand two hundred and fifty-seven (1257) state schools, also called public or government schools, are spread in all the Lebanese regions and are free of charges at all levels (MEHE, 2017b). The schools function under governmental authorities and welcome all those who apply if they meet the appropriate age range for their group, pass the entrance exam live in the school neighborhood.

The MEHE controls all the public education institutions through centralized regional education bureaus, which act as a liaison between public schools and the directorates of the governorates of Lebanon. Principals of these schools have little authority, for almost everything seems to be decreed to them by the MEHE starting from the recruitment teachers and staff, distribution of teaching hours to teachers, student distribution in classes, and registration. Hence, principals have no say in decisions relating to their schools.

Challenged by shortages of qualified teachers and aging infrastructure, education in Lebanon is highly privatized and serves less than a third of school-aged children enrolled in public schools. To the advantage of private schools, the registration of Lebanese students in public schools has been declining due to the quality gap between the two systems and the convenience of semi-free private schools commonly affiliated to organizations.

On the bright side, the recovery plan set by the MEHE in 1994 succeeded in: (a) Updating the curricula by the end of 2000; (b) drafting a law that has not been ratified by the Parliament to mandate basic education until the age of 15 instead of 12; (c) providing free public education funded by beneficiary grants; (d) providing

professional development to school administrators with support of the Faculty of Education of the Lebanese University; and (e) improving the performance of MEHE and the integration of Educational Management Information System.

As per the MEHE's "Quality Education for Growth plan" (2010) and the progress report published by the Council of Development and Reconstruction (2016), the main problems within the education sector in public schools are: (a) providing equal opportunities for every student in enrollment, school attendance and success, (b) poor education quality, specifically the Kindergarten and primary cycle curricula, (c) shortage in qualified teachers and staff, (d) inadequate buildings and educational resources; and (e) insufficient administrative staff at the school level; (f) restricted protocols to sustain reform.

In 2009, the Educational Development Project (EDP) funded by a World Bank loan finalized the rehabilitation of 11 public schools and adopted an Education Strategy. Between 2010 and 2015, the Education Development Project was put into action through the collaboration of the MEHE, the Educational Center for Research & Development (CERD), and foreign funding sources. The offspring was the USAID-funded Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools and Teacher Improvement (D-RASATI) program. According to USAID's D-RASATI II (2016), quality public education is far from being reached in Lebanon because of inadequate resources, infrastructure, educational technology facilities, and competent teachers of English language and Information Communication Technology (ICT).

By the end of the project, 183 public schools and six training centers were reformed, 1282 public school infrastructure was examined, the science labs of 238 secondary public schools and six training centers were renovated, the National Educational Technology Strategic Plan (ICT) was launched to be realized via an

action plan, 170 inspectors and counselors were trained to do class observation for teacher evaluation, training the trainers on methods of teaching, in addition to English language training for teachers and leadership professional development for principals (USAID, 2016; CERD, 2016).

Despite the efforts to make ICT plan succeed and the training of teachers to employ technology in their classrooms, results were unsatisfactory and less than anticipated. Since the researcher trains pre-service teachers in public schools, she has witnessed that only the student teachers made use of the computer tools available in the classrooms. About 40% of the teaching and administrative staff of public schools do not hold university degrees as per CERD’s latest report (2016).

With the Syrian crisis and the immense burden laid on the education sector, the MEHE and some Education Sector associates developed an education response plan, the Reaching All Children with Education (RACE I) Strategy (2014-2016) followed by RACE II (2017-2020). The general goals of RACE program are to provide equitable admission to schools, enhance the quality of schooling, as well as improve the decrees and monitoring of the Lebanese education system. In collaboration with international parties, the MEHE enrolled around 42% of Syrian children in public schools in 2015-2016. Other children were registered in regulated Accelerated Learning Programs (ALP) devised to help their transfer into formal education (UN, 2017).

Fortunately, few public schools are ready to deliver academic materials and additional activities such as sports, arts, and music. MEHE has reconstructed several public schools to accommodate large numbers of students and closed several inefficient small schools. Further, charity organizations are providing donations to the renovation of a number of public schools.

Private Schools

The private school system has a long history of religious affiliation; they may get the support of local Islamic associations, French Jesuits, American, or British Protestant missions (Najjar, 2008). One thousand five hundred and twenty-seven (1527) fee-paying and government-subsidized private schools are spread all over the Lebanese territory (MEHE, 2017). Some are fee-paying; while some others are government-subsidized. The well-off Lebanese attend the considerably high fee-paying private schools.

Unlike public schools and under slight authority from the MEHE, private schools, are autonomous institutions whose principals are free to decide on the curriculum, recruitment, extra-curricular activities, fund-raising, professional development, and student admission. To maintain a prestigious reputation, school image, and high scores on the national official exams, most private schools strive to attract and cater for the privileged elite students leaving behind poor achievers and specifically, SEN students.

Some private mainstream schools in Lebanon offer SE services and are categorized as 'Inclusive Schools' (N = 75) in the Directory of Inclusive Schools published by CERD (2016). The number of private inclusive schools are as follows: Beirut (N= 21); Mount Lebanon (N=23); North of Lebanon (N=7); South of Lebanon (N=12); and Bekaa (N=12).

Specialized Schools

Advocates of civil society and Not-for-profit (NGO) organizations run these specialized free of charge schools. These schools depend on grants, donations, and funded projects. The Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) provides partial funding to these institutions. The main function of these schools is to provide primary SE and

vocational training as an alternative to regular mainstream education for students with special needs. Some of these schools are the foster house of many children with average to severe disability.

Special Needs in Lebanon

IE in Lebanon has been an issue because of the social and economic fluctuations happening in the country. The 2012 Central Administration of Statistics (CAS), estimated poverty in Lebanon at 27%. The latest datasets revealed that almost 28% of Lebanese families are classified as poor (CERD, 2016). Poverty is still growing with the prevalent sum of SEN children whose parents cannot afford the required services (UNESCO, 2013a). Hence, those children are not receiving the help needed to deal with their disabilities, which increases the number of SEN children. Not only poverty but also the civil war coupled by the 2006 war with Israel did add the impairment of thousands of more individuals, the consequences of which are still being suffered today.

Clear statistical data on those with SEN in Lebanon is essential, for there are no available statistics on the SEN population as per CAS. While the percentage of people with disabilities is estimated to be 1.5% of the population, a UN survey expects the figure to be 10% of the global population (UNESCO, 2013a). The reason behind that is the lack of a conventional definition system of disability categorization (Mansour, 2001). Even though the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) has started to provide the disability card to individuals with disability, who register themselves voluntarily since the 1990s, many have been reluctant to register. Until the end of January 2013, only 80,703 were registered disabled persons in Lebanon, corresponding to 18% of the whole disabled population (UNESCO, 2013a).

Within the Lebanese context, SEN children have difficulties accessing many public and private schools in Lebanon whose buildings are not equipped, curricula are not adapted and whose human and physical resources are not provided. Most of the SEN students are not in an IE system. SENs are dealt with through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), organizations launched by parents of SEN children, and other service providers under the umbrella of the MOSA, which monitors the educational and rehabilitation programs of those centers. Children with mild SENs are generally not accepted in public or private schools (Wehbi, 2006), and if they happen to be admitted, they are left to suffer or drop out as very few schools are professionally able to cater to their needs.

A survey, launched by Tabet from CERD (2014), aimed at identifying the numbers and types of SEN students in public schools as a part of The National Educational Plan for PWD. According to the results of this study, 75,671 SEN students were included in public schools distributed all over the Lebanese regions, unlike the figures of school-aged disability cardholders issued by the MOSA (Tabet, 2014). Responses received from secondary teachers were disregarded due to the limited response rate. CERD referred this to the limited enrolment of SEN students in secondary mainstream education in Lebanon. The results of the survey revealed a discrepancy in the responses between different education regions concerning the identified SEN students having a ‘disability.’ Khochen (2017) referred this to the definition of ‘disability’ that the survey adopted and to the population’s failure to identify SEN students.

Recently, some private schools pioneered serving SEN children by providing an inclusion program that offers a curriculum modified and tailored to mild SEN. Inspired by the demonstrated effectiveness of this program, a small number of

private schools are now in the prospect of developing IE programs for children with SEN. However, what they describe as inclusion ranges from simple full physical inclusion to partial inclusion in a regular classroom without providing appropriate support. It may be due to their unawareness of, or dedication to, the essential practices of inclusion. The predicament escalates with the shortage of teachers and other paraprofessionals who advocate the philosophy and believe in the convenience of inclusion.

Even though the present framework of educating children SEN in Lebanon seems uninviting, there is a potential hope of a better upcoming future. A number of factors underlie this potential hope energized by five pillars: (a) Lebanon's endorsement of international conventions and resolutions, (b) IE models in some private schools, (c) Law 2000/220, (d) the National Educational Plan for Persons with Disability; and (e) role of international organizations.

Endorsement of International Conventions and Resolutions

Like several other countries in the Arab region, Lebanon has ratified several international conventions related to human rights and disability issues. We can mention several international conventions, such as (a) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), (b) the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), (c) the World Declaration on Education for All (1990), (d) the International Convention on the Rights of Children (1990), (e) the Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993); (f) the Salamanca Declaration concerning the principles, policies and practices for the education of persons with special needs (1994). The latest one is the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that Lebanon adopted among 193 states (2015). Aiming at leaving no one behind, the agenda is a commitment of member states to several goals

whose result is a more sustainable world, one of which is quality IE represented in SDG4.

Thus, Lebanon has endorsed a number of international conventions that uphold the right to education for everyone, opening with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights through many United Nations statements, and concluding with the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993), which pushes countries to upgrade their educational systems and serve people with disabilities.

Lebanon's first ambassador to the U.S. and UN, Charles Malik, was one of the key people that framed the Declaration. The Lebanese Constitution of 1990 commits Lebanon to apply the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and human rights treaties. However, not all aspects are considered. According to a UN report on human rights practices in Lebanon (2017), although banned by law, persons with disabilities struggled under discrimination. The MEHE specifies that the construction of new school building includes all necessary accommodations in order to receive the students with physical needs; yet, almost all of the public schools are not ready to receive SEN students.

In 1964, Lebanon ratified the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 2013). Going further, Lebanon took part in the World Conference on Education for All that was held in Jomtien, Thailand. Lebanon also signed the World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs (EFA); the resolution of a UNESCO sponsored conference held in Jomtien, Thailand (March 5-9, 1990). The Declaration states: "Basic education should be provided to all children... To this end, basic education services of quality should be expanded, and consistent measures must be taken to reduce disparities" (UN, 1990, Article 3.1,

p. 3). The principles of the Declaration are incorporated into the National Educational Plan for Persons with Disabilities that was launched in January 2012, which stresses providing special consideration to the learning needs of persons with disabilities and taking the necessary procedures to ensure the accessibility of all categories of disabilities as part of the educational system. (UNESCO, 2013b)

In 1991, Lebanon decided to follow and implement internationally accepted standards for all children, and thus, ratified the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which states among other things the following: “Children have the right to education. Primary Education should be free, and all children should be required to attend. Secondary Education should be accessible to every child.” However, in 1996, the Convention on the Rights of the Child reported Lebanon was not implementing the necessary measures to meet the requirements delineated in the mandate (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1996). Up to this date, Lebanon has submitted five reports (reports four and five combined) to the UN International Committee on the Rights of the Child on its progress in realizing the CRC (2017). In the latest report of June, 2017, the Committee appreciated the State party for the high enrolment rates in public schools, for raising the age of compulsory education to 15 years, for expanding early childhood education and for adopting numerous measures to ensure Syrian refugee children have access to education, including the implementation of the Convention in terms of “Reaching All Children Through Education” (RACE I & II) initiative, and the Education National Strategy 2010-2015: Quality Education for Growth presented earlier.

In addition, Lebanon, among 92 governments and 25 international organizations sanctioned the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, adopted at a UNESCO sponsored conference held in

Salamanca, Spain (June 7-10, 1994), which upholds that schools are to welcome all children and support IE.

In May 2000, the Lebanese Parliament enforced Law 220. This law, which presents a legislative frame for guarding the rights of people with disabilities will be further, studied in a subsequent section.

In 2004, the MEHE published the National Strategy for Education for All (2004-2015), based on the objectives of the World Conference on Education for All. Going further, in 2007, Lebanon signed but has not ratified, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Despite 2013 was declared as the year of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention was predicted to be endorsed, the process was interrupted due to political issues (UNESCO, 2013b).

In 2010, the MEHE published Quality Education for Growth (2010-2015) to confirm the right to education for all and emphasize international declarations and conventions to which Lebanon is a signatory. It highlighted some priorities like promoting equal opportunity to quality education, having the infrastructure to welcome SEN learners.

In September 2015, Lebanon, among 193 states, adopted the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development agreed upon at the Sustainable Development Summit. The historical agenda, which includes 17 SDGs built on the preceding MDGs, envisioned how the world should look like in 2030 (UN, 2015). Aiming at leaving no one behind, the agenda is a commitment of member states to several goals whose result is a more sustainable world, one of which is quality IE represented in SDG4. Goal 4 of the SDGs dictated: “inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all” (GPE, 2018, p. 4). Accordingly, the IE agenda

with a focus on SEN children continues to move forward under the SDGs that were launched in 2016.

Inclusive Education Models in Private Schools in Lebanon

A number of private schools in Lebanon have initiated different models of inclusion, which can be categorized as follows: (a) Full inclusion in a regular classroom with accommodations; (b) full inclusion in a regular classroom with a shadow teacher; (c) partial inclusion in a regular classroom with pull out sessions; and (d) SE classes in a regular school (Dirani, 2018; Nadjarian, 2009; Oweini & El-Zein, 2014). Other schools accept mild SEN students who can manage the mainstream education requirements on their own or with the support of their parents. In several cases, SEN students are enrolled in mainstream schools where they receive support provisions from the special schools or NGOs to which they are affiliated. Here the student receives a basic form of support from mainstream school along with the provision of a special visiting teacher that helps in customizing the subject materials, assists in exam reading/writing, and transports the child to and from school (Khochen, 2017). Moreover, many SEN students registered by MOSA with the disability card are enrolled in private inclusive schools through the financial support of the government.

Inclusive Education-Related Lebanese Policy: Law 220/2000

In conjunction with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), the bill of rights, drafted by advocacy groups including war-injured and disabled individuals, was finally declared as Law 2000/220, in May 2000. This Lebanese law was the outcome of lobbying and advocacy of stakeholders in the country, such as Disabled People Organizations (DPOs). This Lebanese law, according to UNESCO (2013), "… is comprehensive in terms of covering all aspects connected to the life of PWDs"

(p.11). It also defined the strategy to be followed by the National Council on Disability (NCOD). "… even though the Lebanese law does not adopt the rights-based approach paradigm, it meets many of the basic international standards" (p. 11). Despite its issuance in the year 2000, the law still lacks executive mandate and enforcement. DPOs have been the most determined dynamic members of the NCOD in pushing the implementation of the law.

The term 'disability' in the new International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF), is described as: "an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. It denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors)" (WHO 2001, p. 213 as cited in WHO & World Bank, 2011). In the same vein, a broad and inclusive definition of disability is set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006). CRPD explained that "Recognizing that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (Preamble, Paragraph e). It was stated that "Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (Article 1, p. 4).

However, Article 2 of the Lebanese law 220/2000, adopts the medical model and excludes the social model of disability in the above definition. The researcher discusses the medical and social model of disability in the next chapter under the theoretical framework.

On the other hand, a disability, by itself, is not a limitation to enrollment in any educational institution, as stated by article 60 of the law. On the right to education, the Lebanese law 220/2000 states equal educational and learning opportunities are to be guaranteed for all children and adults with disabilities in public or private GE classrooms. Accordingly, exams should be prepared for different forms of disability. Nevertheless, in a critical review of Law 220, Al-Hroub (2015) argues that the inclusion of people with disabilities in GE schools is not plainly stated in the law, and, hence, it cannot be generalized that Law 220 endorses the policy of inclusion in the Lebanese context.

Article 63 specifies that an educational committee specialized in the education of PWD, to be headed by the Director-General of the MEHE and includes a member of the National Committee of PWD is accountable for attending the implementation of the sections related to education in the law. However, the National Council of Persons with Disability, a committee elected by persons with disability, stakeholders, and representatives of the MOSA, does not have any executive responsibility.

While the purpose of Law 220 is to maintain IE in mainstream educational settings; the results are still elusive because of poor governmental implementation (LPHU, 2003; Coalition of Civil Society Groups Active in Lebanon, 2010). Since the establishment of Law 220, the proportion of SEN students in mainstream Lebanese public schools is still negligible (UNESCO, 2010; The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010) The articulation of Law 220 is evident to ensure rights and of SEN individuals, but decree is yet to broaden the definition of disability and to state the mechanisms necessary to apply the law (LPHU, 2011). One of the main causes for slow advancement in implementing IE is the stigma associated

with ‘disabilities’ producing negative mindsets of denial by the typical society (Coleridge, 1993; Nagata, 2008; Peters, 2010; Wehbe & Lakkis, 2010).

Albeit the law 220, many schools still refrain enrolling students with SEN simply because they are either ill-equipped with resources or lack trained professionals that are essential for providing a suitable education to SEN students. If an ill-equipped school accepts SEN students, they are kept to suffer unattended and marginalized.

The reason that justifies the current situation is that our educational system, as well as teachers, are not capable of implementing the law. Accordingly, many SEN children are still generally blocked out of private or public schools, and they are referred to NGO specialized centers supported by the MOSA. As such, they enroll either in specialized schools or in government-subsidized institutions. Children with SEN are either at-risk of failure or dropping out of school since most schools are not ready or willing to cater to their learning differences. Nevertheless, the law gives the MOSA the authority for disability issues and appoints a National Committee on Disability Affairs as the executive agency for supervising the implementation of the law.

On the other hand, in the law, it is specified that the MEHE is to finance specialized schools and their education facilities (article 61). However, the ministry does not have a unit to address the needs of SEN students, not even administering interventions of sign language or Braille. Instead, the MOSA runs specialized education or vocational rehabilitation institutes.

To that end and up to the date of this study, this law has not been translated into executive decrees nor executive decisions, except for the issuance of certain decrees on educational subjects, such as exemptions from official examinations

(CERD, 2012) for students with learning difficulties or exemption from a scholastic year for those who excel. Aside from that, not any decree has been announced to fully enact the law that was declared 17 years ago.

While Lebanese decrees proclaim free and mandatory education and inclusion of SEN students, binding decrees are yet to support these laws. Specific measures and practical mechanisms for the enforcement of the law need to be taken. It is when putting-into-effect these instigating decrees that security forces have the power to monitor and protect marginalized children. Alas, if accountability measures are not developed, this law will remain a cliché slogan.

The National Educational Plan for Persons with Disabilities

A spark of hope appeared in the skyline in 2012 when the Center for Educational Research and Development of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (CERD) revealed the blueprint of the National Educational Plan for Persons with Disabilities. The plan reveals the objectives of realizing IE in public schools.

The plan was piloted in several public schools distributed in some areas in Lebanon; unfortunately, it was not executed in all public schools because of the lack of funding. To that end, the MEHE has taken only one-step during the past five years in developing a strategic plan for the educational integration for SEN students, which is yet to be adopted and executed.

From the bright side, the MEHE in collaboration with CERD has resumed their work on National Educational Plan for Persons with Disabilities (personal communication with Dr. Samar Ahmadieh, CERD). Thirty public schools distributed all over the Lebanese regions are piloting the program of inclusion set by CERD

(2012). The ministry is in the process of training the teachers of public schools as per the set plan, and many paraprofessionals and specialists have been recruited.

Role of International Organizations

Several international organizations have a considerable contribution to school improvement and reform such as The United Nations (UN), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the British Council.

In association with MEHE, many international organizations in Lebanon, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)] lead by the Arab Regional Office of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) located in Beirut, planned three national conferences on SE (held in April, 1999 and June, 2000) to collect recommendations of stakeholders and formulate an action plan. Upon the appointment of a new Cabinet of Ministers including a new MEHE, the conference follow-up activities to form committees and delegate projects were discontinued. Besides, the UN organizations, along with other international organizations, have a significant job in promoting the educational and social services in Lebanon.

In 2008, the 48th session of the International Conference on Education (ICE) was held in Geneva and resulted in a broadened concept of IE aiming to achieve quality education for all (UNESCO IBE, 2008).

Further, the British Council contributed towards developing IE provision by launching the National Day for Students with learning difficulties in April 2013 followed by a set of workshops by UK consultants. In the same direction, a Memorandum of Understanding was established between MEHE, Smart Kids with Individual Learning Differences (SKILD), CERD, and British Council as a

framework of collaboration towards supporting inclusion in Lebanon. A conference to support the inclusive practice facilitated by UK professionals followed by campaigns to raise IE awareness during April (British Council, 2017). Along the same line, in 2013, the British Council organized a study visit to the UK where many Lebanese teachers, policymakers, and parents participated in a training program, conferences, and workshops, run by UK experts and teachers. The participants were inspired by the study visits, where they saw some of the ways that the requirements of SEN children are met (Walsh, 2014).

In 2013, UNESCO Office in Lebanon completed an Assessment of the Level of Inclusiveness of Public Policies (UNESCO, 2014). Because of increasing inclusiveness and social sustainability, especially of Persons with Disability (PWD), the assessment attempted to upkeep national efforts to evaluate, compare and reform national policy and governing frameworks after the Parliament adoption of law 220/2000 on disability. The report highlighted the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities prepared by CERD in 2012. Add to this the national strategy for accessibility of children with disabilities prepared by the Higher Council for Childhood (HCC). Meanwhile, there is no law to protect PWD, MOSA with the help of some NGOs are working to offer them the needed services.

Toward the end of 2015, UNESCO in partnership with the Lebanese National Association for the Rights of Disabled People (NARD) organized the National Conference on "The right to education and knowledge for people with disabilities in Lebanon." The conference involved major stakeholders from civil society, ministries MEHE, and MOSA, educators working in educational inclusion in Lebanon. Emphasizing the educational status of the SEN individuals, the conference reviewed the plan of the Centre of Educational Research and Development (CERD) and the

related agendas of the Ministry of Education aiming to merge the people with disabilities in schools and aspired to have ratified a national plan for educational inclusion ratify. In the same venue, the UNESCO model policy for information and communication technology (ICT) in education for people with disabilities was discussed.

Having given an overview of the educational system and the path to inclusion in Lebanon, the following section presents the operational definitions of the key terms used in this research.

Operational Definitions

The following operational definitions are provided to promote uniformity of understanding for this study.

Challenges: The challenges in this study are perceived difficulties, concerns, or barriers that inhibit or prevent an action.

Conceptions: Conceptions in this research will be referred to as one's beliefs, understandings, or views.

Decision-makers: These are governmental or non-governmental stakeholders in charge of making decisions in relevance to SEN learners and the Lebanese education system.

Inclusive Education: IE as a term is commonly used in research to refer to the approach of including students with SEal needs (SEN) in the GE settings by improving their participation and minimizing exclusion within and from Education. It is defined as "Ordinary schools accommodating all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other condition" (Salamanca, 1994, p.6). The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) refers to inclusion as:

> … a process that involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures, and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. (UNESCO-IBE, 2011, para 4, p. 7)

In other words, IE is meeting the needs of learners with special needs (SEN), which happen as a result of learning difficulty or disability. Modification to the GE environment should be made to cater to the needs of SEN students allowing them to participate in the classroom activities in the least restrictive environment. In Arabic, inclusion is translated into ‘Al-Damj’, and IE is ‘Al Taaleem Al Daamej’ as used in the Directory of Inclusive Schools (2016) developed by the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD). Adopting the UNESCO definition of inclusion, which focuses on that in Education, was deemed to be appropriate for this study.

Individualized Educational Plan: Every child who receives SE services within the mainstream school should have a unique Individualized Education Plan (IEP) designed for this student to meet the required educational needs. It describes how the student learns and best demonstrates that learning. The IEP also allows all the school staff to work together as a team to improve educational results for children with SEal needs. The IEP is developed after examining the special needs of the student that need to be addressed to help the student progress in the general curriculum (Rouse & McLaughlin, 2007).

Knowledge: A familiarity with someone or something, which can include facts, information, descriptions, or skills acquired through experience or education.

Least Restrictive Environment: (LRE) is one of the six main principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This principle provides the legal basis for IE in a way that children with disabilities, in public or private

institutions, are educated with nondisabled children; and that different classes or schooling happens only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that learning in conventional classes with utilizing supplemental facilities and services cannot be achieved agreeably.

Mainstream school: This is a school of general or regular education whose majority of learners are typically developing students that do not receive special education.

Principal: The principal is the positional or functional director of the elementary, middle, secondary, or whole school.

Schoolteacher: A general education (GE) or Special Education (SE) teacher teaching in a mainstream school. A GE teacher is an educator that holds a bachelor degree or higher and a valid teaching certificate from an accredited higher education institution. An SE teacher is an educator that holds a bachelor degree or higher and a valid teaching certificate from an accredited institution of higher education. The SE teacher provides specialized instruction for SEN students

Special Education (SE): This term refers to the individualized instructional program that offers facilities to students who are not entirely accepted in the GE setting because of learning, physical and /or emotional disabilities, and who need extra instruction-related support beyond those of regular students (Bonds & Lindsey, 2001, Heward, 2009). It even goes beyond disabilities to serve all children who need extra support (Florian, 2007). This includes a wide range of facilities that are designed to help schools meet the student needs, such as program coordinator, instructional aides, speech therapy, shadow teacher, and separate class instruction.

Special Educational Needs (SEN): The term 'SEN,' as used in this study, refers to young learners who have a disability or a learning difficulty that could

require special accommodations for them to partake in Education. In Arabic, the term 'people with SEN' is translated as 'dhwyu al ihtiajat al taelimia al khasa and has been used in Lebanon as well as other Arab countries. In this research, the term 'disability' is not used, for it implies that the disability is caused by the impairment of the individual and not by the society that restricts him/her as clarified in the social model of disability (Oliver and Barnes, 2010). Similarly, Armtrong, Armstrong, and Spandagou (2011) explain that disability is due to social, environmental, and attitudinal barriers that impede the active involvement of disabled people, unlike others without SEN in the society. Thus, the term 'SEN students' is used instead except for contexts when the researcher refers to in cited works. The study refers to the different categories of SEN like behavioral, emotional and social development needs (e.g., ADHD), communication and interaction needs (e.g., speech problems, autism), sensory and/or physical needs, and learning difficulties.

Organization of the Study

This study examines the IE conceptions of and challenges of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers in mainstream schools in Lebanon. The research will be presented in eight chapters, respectively. Chapter I is an introduction that presents background information, the purpose of the study, the primary research questions, rationale, significance of the study, and definition of terms. Chapter II includes a review of selected literature relevant to the study. Chapter III describes the methods and research design used in conducting the study, a description of the population and sample, data collection tools, the procedures that were followed to collect and analyze data, and the limitations of the study. Chapters IV, V, and VI present the data analysis of teachers, principals, and decision-makers, respectively. A summary of the

significant findings, discussion, conclusions, limitations, implications, and a proposal of an inclusive school are presented in Chapter VII.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

In an attempt to meet the fourth Sustainable Development Goal, to ensure inclusive quality education for all, change agents around the world need to be ready to meet the needs of SEN students. This dissertation intends to investigate the conceptions of IE in mainstream schools by teachers, school principals, and decision-makers. It also addresses their perceptions of the challenges they face when implementing IE. As well, the extent to which the educational background, experience, and professional development contribute to higher conceptions and lower IE challenges is explored. Eventually, it aims to contribute to improving the understanding of IE of SEN students and to ward off the misconceptions around this issue.

This chapter reviews the literature regarding the inclusion of SEN students in GE. The topics covered in the chapter are criteria of included literature, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, from exclusion to inclusion, a historical background, defining IE, and IE overseas. Other main sections on SEN inclusion are change agents' conceptions of and challenges to implementing IE. The chapter concludes by looking at the development of IE overseas and locally. Finally, it gives insight into the current situation in Lebanon concerning the status of IE, problems, and challenges that have arisen as mainstream schools have become responsive to IE. The importance of reviewing such literature lies in its relevance to the objectives of this study and in setting a solid ground to find answers to the posed research questions.

Criteria of Included Literature

It is astonishing to realize that IE has firmly implanted itself in public discourse and education in a short period. The genre of IE has flourished tremendously and flooded bookshelves and e-resources. The researcher undertook an earlier review of literature for the conceptions and challenges of IE upon launching the study back in 2013. Once primary data collection and analysis was complete, it was deemed useful to update the earlier review with new international literature and to include any further articles and themes that may not have been included previously.

Having accessed Google scholar in 2018, with the key term 'inclusive education,' about 3,270,000 entries appeared in 0.04 sec. In order to gain insight on IE conceptions and the perceived challenges encountered when implementing it, the researcher narrowed the key terms to references that targeted the conceptions and challenges of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers regarding IE. The review also includes a historical perspective of IE. Studies that included the operational definitions and the synonyms of the variables (i.e., conceptions and challenges) were included: beliefs, knowledge, barriers, and concerns.

The researcher had access to the libraries and databases of the American University of Beirut (AUB) for the sake of doing a literature review. Education Research Complete; ScienceDirect; SpringerLink; PsychINFO; EBSCOhost Databases; ProQuest; and Google Scholar are examples of the major education search engines from which articles were obtained. In addition, many reference lists from relevant books and all identified relevant reports were visited for additional references. Information was also accessed using state and government websites, as

well as sites dedicated to professional K-12 education, SE organizations, and the webpages of some participating private schools.

Key terms used in the search for literature included combinations of the following: inclusive education; special needs; disability; mainstreaming; SE; decision-makers' conceptions/knowledge/beliefs of inclusive education; decision-makers' challenges/ concerns/ barriers to inclusive education; principals' conceptions/ knowledge/beliefs of inclusive education; principals' challenges/ concerns/ barriers to inclusive education; teacher education and training/preparation and inclusive education; teachers' conceptions/knowledge/beliefs of inclusive education; teachers' challenges/ concerns/ barriers to inclusive education.

Articles in this review were required to be published between 2001 and 2018 to ensure currency of information, except for the articles based on theoretical premises and the classical article of Lloyd Dunn (1968) who was a pioneer in paving the way to IE. Research articles that explored IE in the eyes of teachers, principals, and decision-makers combined or independently were considered in this review. The studies must have been published in reputable sources and peer-reviewed journals. International agencies such as UNESCO, the UN, and other multiparty agencies were also deemed to be reputable sources. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies make up the bulk of research considered. Each piece was analyzed for concepts, theoretical basis, participants, location, SEN included, and method/instrument used. Besides, some unpublished topic-related theses (Ph.D. and MA papers) were reviewed.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that controlled this study draws on the agentic view within the human rights-based approach, the Ecological Systems Theory

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and the Theory of Planned Action (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). The variables selected for the study (IE conceptions of and challenges of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers) will be investigated in the context of this blend of theories. The suitability of considering this theoretical framework as a background of the study is justified below.

Human Rights-Based Approach

By adopting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) in 2006, international attention has been directed towards the recognition of SEN people as right-holders rather than defects to be solved (UNESCO, 2012). That said, SEN persons are no longer perceived in association with the charity, medical treatment, and social wellbeing but as individuals with rights. Before the emergence of the human rights-based approach, the two most dominant models that appeared in the twentieth century in terms of educating SEN students have been the medical and the social model. The human rights model emerged afterward with CRPD.

The medical model regards disability as an impairment that needs to be treated, cured, fixed, or at least rehabilitated (Pfeiffer, 2001). Hence, disability is seen as a deviation from the usual health condition resulting in the exclusion of SEN people from society due to individual impairment. The philosophy of the medical model is built on resolving specific impairments through the provision of personalized, medical interference, and assistive technology where the need arises. Therefore, according to the medical model, disability is restricted to the specialty of medical disciplines: doctors, nurses, SE teachers, and rehabilitation experts (Degener, 2016). This model gave rise to SE classes separate from GE back between the 1910s and 1930s, where SEN labeled students were served (Winzer, 2014).

Nevertheless, because of its emphasis on individuals' impairments, the medial model led to stereotyping and labeling people their limitations, a matter that paved the way to the social model.

Unlike the medical model, which relates to a condition of the body or the mind, the social model is the result of the way the environment and society respond to that impairment. In different words, it points to the failure of society rather than the individual and does not call for the healing or rehabilitation of the concerned person. Conversely, it calls for their accommodation to be served by the societal systems as a whole. Michael Oliver (1990), one of the founders of the social model, has referred to the medical model as the politics of disablement. While to Degener (2017), the medical model negatively affects human rights from the perspective of segregated shelters and welfare as well as guardianship laws. Since an individual's disability is the outcome of particular social and economic structures, the social model sought to address discrimination. Thus, in the 1960s, the new conceptions of social justice embraced individual rights, equity, and equal opportunity, and emerged in the social model, which rejected the traditional medical model (Winzer, 2014).

Although the social model and the human rights model are virtually referred to as interchangeable, Degener (2017) highlights some significant differences between them. Human rights model recognizes the human dignity of disabled people, by incorporating their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, by considering their pain, diminishing quality of life and death due to impairment, by taking into account the importance of minority and cultural identification, by acknowledging the likelihood that protection policy can have on the rights of persons with disabilities, and finally by providing a directives for change for the benefit of persons with disabilities.

Based on what has been discussed, the concept of IE originated in human rights and social justice principles and is apparent in international literature, legislation, policies, and documents. It is based on the key features of equity, opportunity, access, and rights, and/or on the removal of factors that exclude or marginalize. The presence of these features in school organizations contributes to a culture of inclusion. In regards to human rights, history has shown that when rights are not being influential, they must go through the process of explicitly defining them as the first step towards realizing them. This study presents IE as a human right for SEN students whereby policies are the stimulator of this right and the ground level of the implementation process in accord with the broader rights-based inclusion policies. That said, human rights issues begin with national policies that are then extended to the greater international community via worldwide conventions, conferences, and research papers.

Hence, the idea of inclusion is "generally understood around the world as part of the human rights agenda that demands access to, and equity in, education" (Florian, 2008, p. 202). Developing a mindset from those assumptions is the premise that all children deserve a rights-based education system, which "means that children should be seen as holders of the right to education, which implies not only the right to have access to education, but also that human rights must also be applied in education and promoted through education" (Sandkull, 2005, p. 2). A human rights approach to IE means that SEN children are not objects of welfare and charity but rights-holders who have a say in the distribution of resources and educational needs assessment. In other words, educational reform and school development projects need to target marginalized and excluded children. Like this, support of all students requires equity and access to educational opportunities and contexts established for

ensuring social justice for SEN students in school systems. Sapon-Shevin (2003) rationalizes that as long as inclusion is at the core of social justice, it aims at eradicating marginalizing educational practices. In this way, "by embracing inclusion as a model of social justice, we can create a world fit for all of us" (p. 26-28). Thus, social justice leaders, those in charge of the educational system and others who operate in schools, are expected to challenge and change structures that produce inequities for marginalized students in their localities. According to Pantić and Florian (2015), IE requires the alliance of agents of change, such as teachers, families, and other professionals to challenge the prevailing situation and foster social justice. The likelihood of realizing IE within the premise of social justice requires:

> (a) Nurturing commitment to social justice as part of teachers' sense of purpose, (b) developing competencies in inclusive pedagogical approaches, including working with others, (c) developing relational agency for transforming the conditions of teachers' workplaces, and (d) a capacity to reflect on their own practices and environments when seeking to support the learning of all students (Pantić & Florian, 2015, p. 333).

Based on what has been articulated in the aforementioned literature, it can be quite understood that the human rights-based approach to IE has a two folds goal: (a) Empower right-holders (SEN students and their families) to practice and demand their rights and (b) reinforce the ability of change agents who have a particular responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the marginalized SEN students (see Figure 2.1).

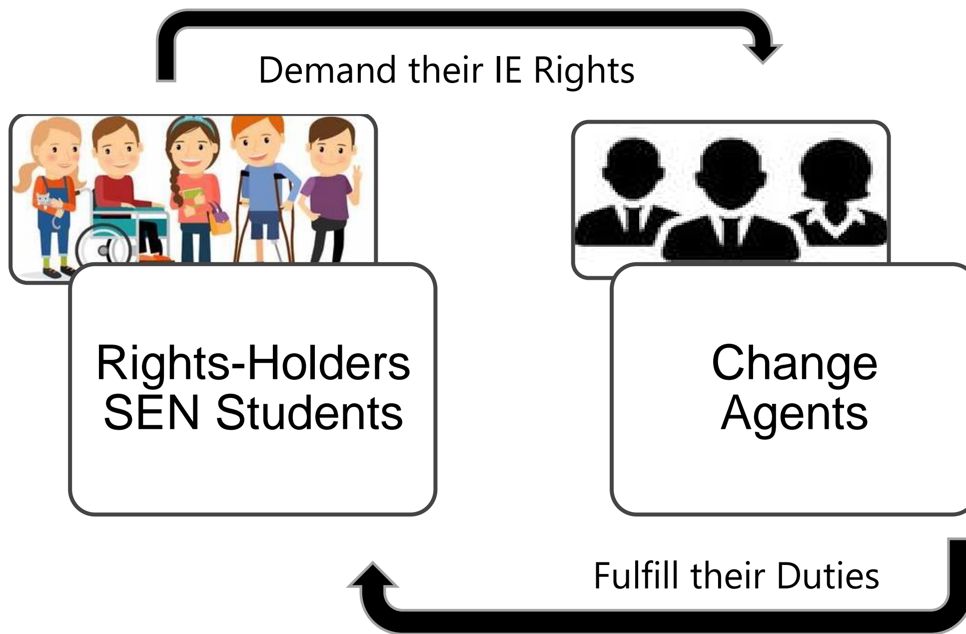

Figure 2.1. Visual Representation of Human Rights-Based Approach to IE

Therefore, the foundation underlying this research originated from the concept of human rights and social justice as its core premise since the notion of IE emerges from multiple discourses such as social justice, equity, diversity, and equal opportunity.

Ecological Systems Theory

As expressed by many scholars, the society comprises several systems, which synchronize, are in constant interaction and, as a result, influence and are influenced by the surrounding systems. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998), since a child does not live isolated from the environment that surrounds him, parts of the environment serve as stimuli throughout development and socialization. His theory is built on the child, the environment, and the continuous interaction between the two.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979,) Ecological Systems theory described the development of the person as happening within a series of nested systems, each of

which is surrounded by more extensive settings. Figure 2.2 shows the fundamental structure and the way that all the different levels of systems are interrelated.

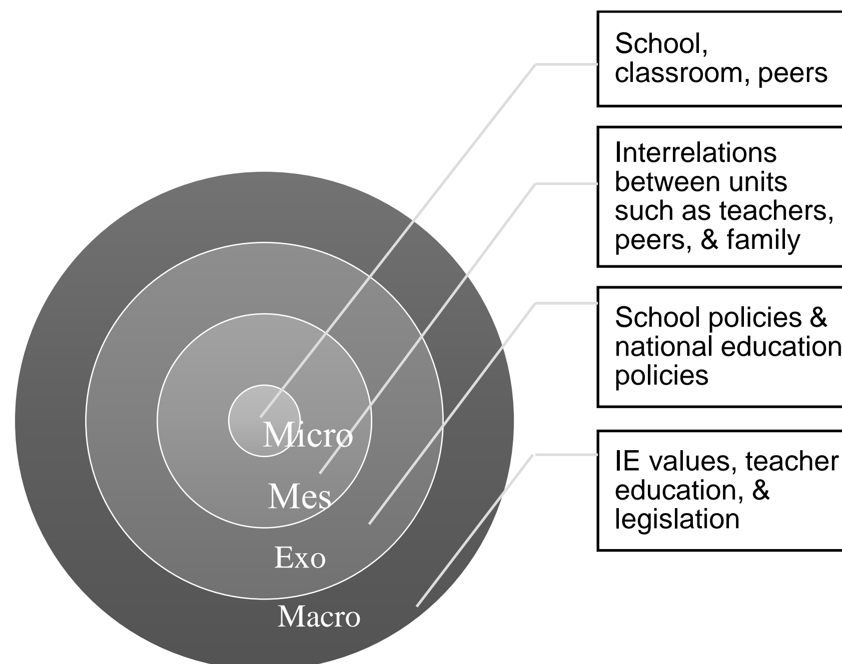

Figure 2.2. Visual Representation of the Ecological Systems Model

At the microsystem layer, is the developing child. The subsequent layer, mesosystem, loads the influences that occur between microsystems, which can extend to the different settings that the developing child moves into (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

After the mesosystem is the exosystem, which comprises the interaction existing between one of the child's microsystems and another system to which he does not belong (e.g., relationships between his school and the school board). This can refer to regulatory bodies, social policies or equality and inclusive related advocacy, established by policymakers or leaders who might exert influence on inclusive classes and students. Broader still is the macrosystem, which includes the society he dwells influenced by the culture, legislation, institutions, religion, and so forth (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

For the needs of the current research, these systems will be portrayed about the inclusion of SEN children in regular schools. Anderson et al. (2014) stated:

> The ecology of inclusive education provides a framework with which researchers can better understand not only the factors that influence IE but also the relationships and connections they have with one another and the environments in which they sit. (p. 31)

Hence, the researcher found Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theory, which has been used to research IE in multiple studies (Khochen, 2017; Ruppar, Allcock, & Gonsier-Gerdin, 2017; Sabella, 2016) suitable for researching IE conceptions and challenges through the eyes of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) has been adopted to examine change agents' conceptions and challenges about IE. The variables selected for the study (IE conceptions of and challenges of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers) when seen in the context of Ajzen's (1991) TPB, collectively represented the determinants of behavioral intention. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) is an extension of Fishbein and Ajzen's (1979) The Theory of Reasoned Action to predict an individual's intention to participate in a behavior at a specific time and place.

TPB distinguishes three categories of beliefs and is composed of six constructs that jointly embody one's actual control over the behavior. The three factors determine behavioral intention: a) beliefs about outcomes of the behavior (behavioral beliefs), b) beliefs of the others' normative expectations and motive to meet these expectations (normative beliefs), and c) beliefs about the presence of elements that may promote or prevent attainment of the behavior and one's thought

of his/her power within these factors (control beliefs) (Ajzen, 1991). If a person has a positive view of behavior, is self-assured of executing it, and believes that other important people would like the behavior, he/she is more prone to perform the behavior (i.e., their motivation or intention increases) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1991).

Ajzen (2011) contended that TPB cannot detect the foundation of a person's beliefs, but it can surely explore background aspects that impact a person's beliefs. These background aspects could be categorized into three areas: Personal, social, and informational. The personal aspect includes personality traits, such as intelligence, values, and emotions. While gender, age, religion, race, ethnicity, educational background, and income fall under the social aspect. The informational aspect has to do with previous knowledge and experience. These background factors influence a person's attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms, which in turn affect his/her intention to execute the behavior (Ajzen, 2005).

Several studies (Ahsan, Deppeler & Sharma, 2013; Ahmmed, Sharma & Deppeler, 2013; Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel & Malinen, 2011; Kuyini & Desai, 2007; Sharma & Jacobs, 2016) employing The Theory of Planned Behavior in a number of educational settings have proven the suitability of these theories in predicting relationships between the different variables. The reviewed literature in this regard has explored different relationships between these key variables in educational settings. For instance, research indicated that teachers who hold the belief that they can cater to the needs of SEN children in their classroom report more positive attitudes toward IE (Avramidis, Bayliss, 2000). Kuyini and Desai (2007) used multiple regression analyses to investigate Ghanaian teachers' attitudes towards IE, knowledge of IE (perceived behavior control element), and principals'

expectation (subjective norm element) of teachers' teaching practice. Results indicated that attitude and knowledge were strong predictors of adaptive instruction in the inclusive classroom, but principals' expectation was not.

Going further, applying TPB for investigating attitudes towards IE of regular primary and secondary school teachers in Victoria, Australia, Mahat (2008) indicated that the theory was successful in predicting teachers' intention towards IE through measuring their attitudes towards IE. Another study (Randoll, 2008) conducted in Canada measured teachers' attitudes (attitude construct) toward IE, teachers' self-efficacy (perceived behavioral control construct) to employ IE practices. As well, he explored how principals' and colleagues' attitudes (subjective norm construct) toward IE could influence teachers' attitudes. Both studies reported the fact that teachers' attitude towards IE is influenced by the teacher, school, and course-related variables. Another study by Ahsan (2014) used this theory to explore the impact of background variables on the key constructs of TPB that included: attitudes and perceived teaching efficacy of pre-service teachers, and beliefs of department heads towards IE to predict their intention to act in inclusive settings. The mixed-method design study applied a survey questionnaire on 1623 pre-service teachers predicting their attitudes and teaching-efficacy for IE. The study discovered significant positive correlations between attitudes and teaching-efficacy scores and significant negative correlations in concern scores for both attitudes and teaching-efficacy scores. The researcher concluded that if the concerns of pre-service teachers are lowered during their teacher education program, their confidence level would increase and make them more supportive of IE. Moreover, as the experience in teaching SEN students increased, the level of concern declined. Likewise, interaction with SEN people and

knowledge about the local policy on IE predicted a high score of teaching-efficacy and low levels of concerns.

Main, Chambers, and Sarah (2016) aimed at employing survey instruments that examined beliefs and attitudes, consistent with Azjen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, to explore whether the unit of study covered by the in-service teachers in Seychellois, Australia, increased their readiness to teach in inclusive settings. Findings showed that the teachers held more positive attitudes and beliefs about the inclusion of SEN children in regular classrooms at the end of the unit. Nevertheless, there were concerns about dealing with the challenging and disruptive behavior of SEN students and collaborating with parents. The researcher concluded that teachers needed to master additional skills and strategies to manage challenging behavior and have more inclusive school settings (Main et al., 2016).

In his most recent publication, Ajzen (2014) reminds of variables that can influence intent and action signifying that "events occurring between assessment of intentions and observation of behavior can produce changes in intentions, and unanticipated obstacles can prevent people from carrying out their intentions" (p. 2). That said, implementing effective inclusive practices requires a set of activities and interactions on the part of professionals, including school teachers, principals, and decision-makers, in order to provide school and classroom provisions for SEN students (see Figure 2.3).

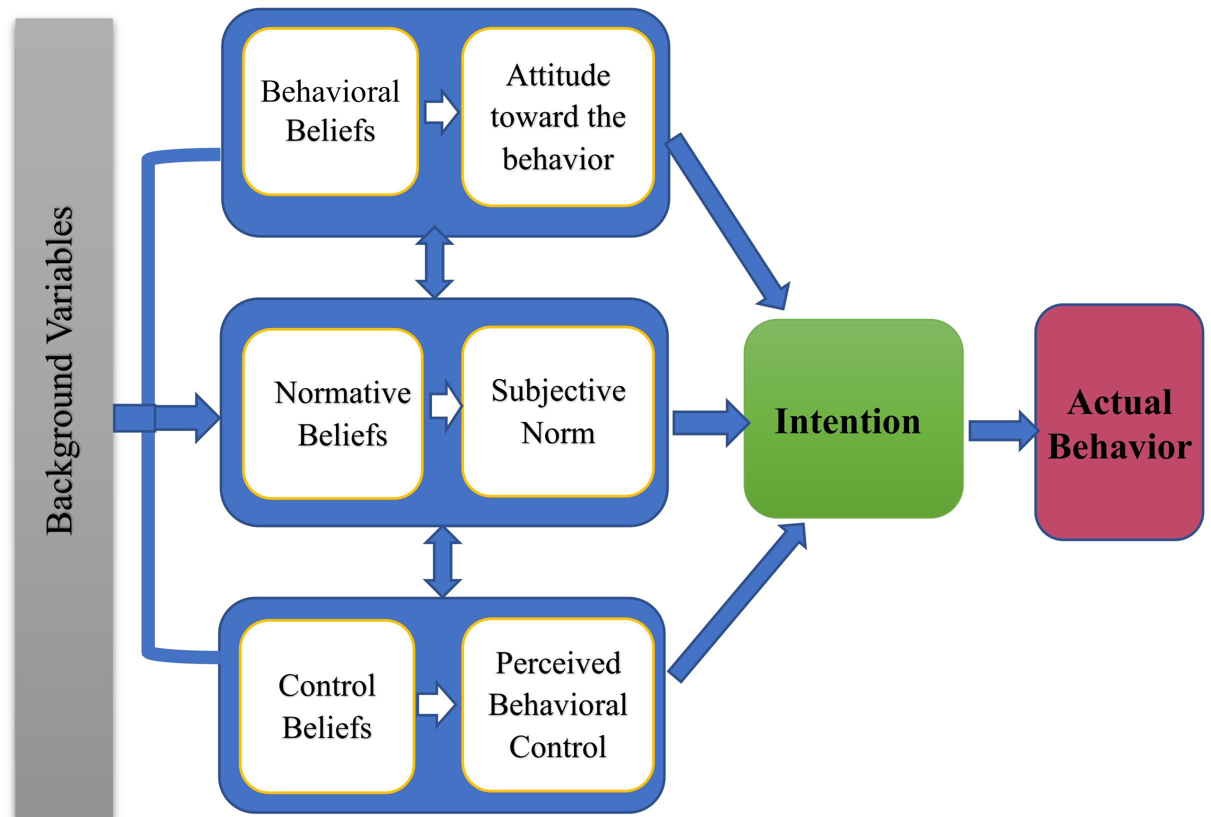

Figure 2.3. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991, 2005)

Thus, the educators' conceptions of IE, their knowledge of its nature and requirements, and subjective norms (principals' expectations) influence their activities, and interactions.

To that end, the following section offers a description of how this study fits within the view of the aforementioned theoretical framework.

Connection between Theoretical Framework and the Proposed Study

In this study, a blend of theoretical references was employed: (a) Human Rights-based Approach, (b) the Ecological System (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and (c) the theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Notably, the researcher worked from an understanding that IE results from reciprocal interactions between SEN children and the multiple layers of environment where their human-rights to accessible

quality education is safeguarded in mainstream schools. The interactions that affect SEN children's development are aligned within change agents' IE conceptions and challenges because of the relationship between their background variables and their intended behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

To begin with, the microsystem, made up by the people that are closest to the child, has the most substantial influence on the child's development. Here is the environment within the classroom, the teacher and the classmates, as well as the parents. The classroom in which the students interact with their teachers is the microsystem where the implementation of inclusion can be depicted.

The mesosystem has a broader context and encompasses the interaction of the teacher, classmates, and parents with one another, or in other words between school and home. For example, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team involves several microsystems, such as school staff, administrators, and parents, who interact to develop a plan that features a student's access to the GE curriculum (Ruppar, Allcock, & Gonsier-Gerdin, 2017). IEP team members are expected to deal with the SEN student directly in microsystems (e.g., teachers and related paraprofessionals work with the student at school, and parents work with the student at home). Members of different microsystems meet to jointly utilize their knowledge and experience for the sake of making placement decisions and devising an appropriate IEP customized to each SEN student (Ruppar et al., 2017).

The exosystem includes the broader social context, like the school board and the government, educational policies (general or IE related), teacher education and training, and the services that are provided to SEN children (Ruppar et al., 2017). Though this system has no direct link with the child, it does affect the school

practices, the teachers and peers, and in consequence, affect the development and behavior of the child.

From this angle, it is worthy to note that the third layer of the ecosystem model encompasses the beliefs of decision-makers, principals, and teachers about the inclusion of SEN children. These beliefs have the potential to strongly impact the process of their effective inclusion in the regular classroom (Jordan et al., 2009).

The largest circle in the figure of ecological systems is that of the macrosystem that incorporates the SEN student, the micro-, meso- and exosystem and represents the values, the ideologies and all the key sectors of the society, like the political system, economic system, health system, and the national and international legislation.

As Lebanon's education system is in the process towards inclusion, it is of equal importance to examine change agents' development as that of the child especially that their conceptions and actions have a significant influence on the progress of children in mainstream classrooms. Teachers exist in both the microsystem, where their readiness to teach inclusively or exclusively is depicted and the mesosystem, where the family and educational system interact. Accordingly, research is necessary to investigate not only what affects students' progress in the microsystem of the classroom, but also how change agents' conceptions and concerns are related to changes and developments in the exosystem and the macrosystem of the Lebanese society. Principals, assuming overlapping positions, find themselves in the exosystem (due to their relationship with the school board and decision-makers), in the mesosystem (due to their relationship with teachers and staff), and in the child's microsystem (due to their direct connections with the child and parents) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Situated at the exosystem as well, decision-

makers, by virtue of their position, are expected to endorse IE, issue, mandate, and implement IE legislation (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

MEHE's exosystem of the policies and plans influence every classroom in Lebanon. Of the theoretical responsibilities of MEHE, is to plan, monitor, and assess the school curricula in addition to funding allowances to state schools, and, consequently, affect the mechanisms of each classroom. Principals, activists in the civil society, and decision-makers that represent MEHE, MOSA, and the civil society make decisions that affect every school and teacher and therefore affect each classroom. MEHE's policies and rules about the school system and IE are central in the exosystem, which affects the teachers' IE conceptions and concerns in the microsystem of the classroom.

Teachers' IE conceptions and concerns, as well as educational expectations for SEN children, are also a direct product of the macrosystem that is Lebanon's national position towards SENs and IE. Both the cultural expectations of students and teachers and the expected role of SEN individuals in society significantly impact teachers' daily interactions with students in classrooms.

The investigation of participants' background variables, such as their school category (public, private or inclusive), education, previous training in IE, and contact with SEN students, is in part an examination of the macrosystem, as these variables are greatly affected by the national conceptions of SENs, which influence the participants' perceptions of IE challenges. The chronosystem clarifies how the other properties change over time. This is specifically important when examining participants' experience and knowledge of Law 220. The relationship between participants' IE conceptions and challenges and years of experience may show how their conceptions and challenges have changed based on years in their positions, or

may also show how IE conceptions and challenges vary depending on differences in the IE training they received. The correlation between participants' IE conceptions and challenges and their knowledge of Law 220 may reveal the variance based on their level of awareness of national IE legislation. Progress in the exosystem or macrosystem affects the variables of participants' IE conceptions and challenges, and thus, the progress of SEN children in mainstream classrooms.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystem model postulates particular emphasis not only on SEN children and on their progress, but also on the milieu they live in. Bronfenbrenner's model establishes a significant interaction between the multilayers, which in turn affect the development of SEN children. Therefore, this framework signals the worth of exploring participants' IE conceptions and challenges, and how they influence the microsystem of the inclusive classroom, in addition to exploring those background variables which are likely to affect participants' conceptions and challenge. That said, the researcher intends to explain how the exosystem and macrosystem affect the environment inside the classroom where SEN children are expected to learn and develop if their social justice and human rights are maintained.

In terms of connecting Ajzen's TPB to the current study, the researcher anticipates that achieving the right to quality education and social justice to which SEN children are entitled requires adequate IE provisions to be undertaken by Lebanese change agents. Given the appreciation of the influence of conceptions on behavior, the researcher estimates that educators in Beirut will include SEN students in regular classrooms depending on the following factors: (a) Conceptions: an individual's beliefs about the traits and outcomes of including/not including SEN students in their classrooms weighted by one's evaluations of these features or outcomes; (b) subjective norms: an individual's beliefs regarding others' approval or

disapproval of IE, weighted by one's motivation to comply with these others' beliefs; and (c) perceived behavioral control: an individual's perceived control over the implementation of IE (knowledge of strategies). Therefore, it can be said that the more favorable the conceptions and subjective norm, and the higher the perceived control, the stronger should be the person's intention to do the behavior – in this case IE. Teacher concerns, on the other hand, can be understood as mainly due to the first and the third factor, which will impact the implementation of IE programs. In different words, change agents in Beirut would include SEN students in regular classrooms depending on their IE conceptions and challenges; the more positive IE conceptions are, the less perceived challenges would be.

Having elaborated on the suitability of the theoretical framework employed in the current study, the next section describes the conceptual framework that the researcher used to develop this dissertation.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 2.4 conveys the themes that guided the study of the conceptions and challenges regarding IE in the eyes of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers. The themes have been categorized into two domains, labeled Conceptions and Challenges.

The elements of the two categories are representative of the concepts that have emerged from the researcher’s synthesis of literature (Ahsan, 2014; Blessinger, 2015; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009; Kuyini & Desai, 2007; Main et al., 2016; Randoll, 2008; Sharma & Jacobs, 2016; Sharma et al., 2012; Sharma & Desai, 2002; Yada & Savolainen, 2017). To have a general idea about how IE emerged, the following section presents an overview of how it evolved in international contexts.

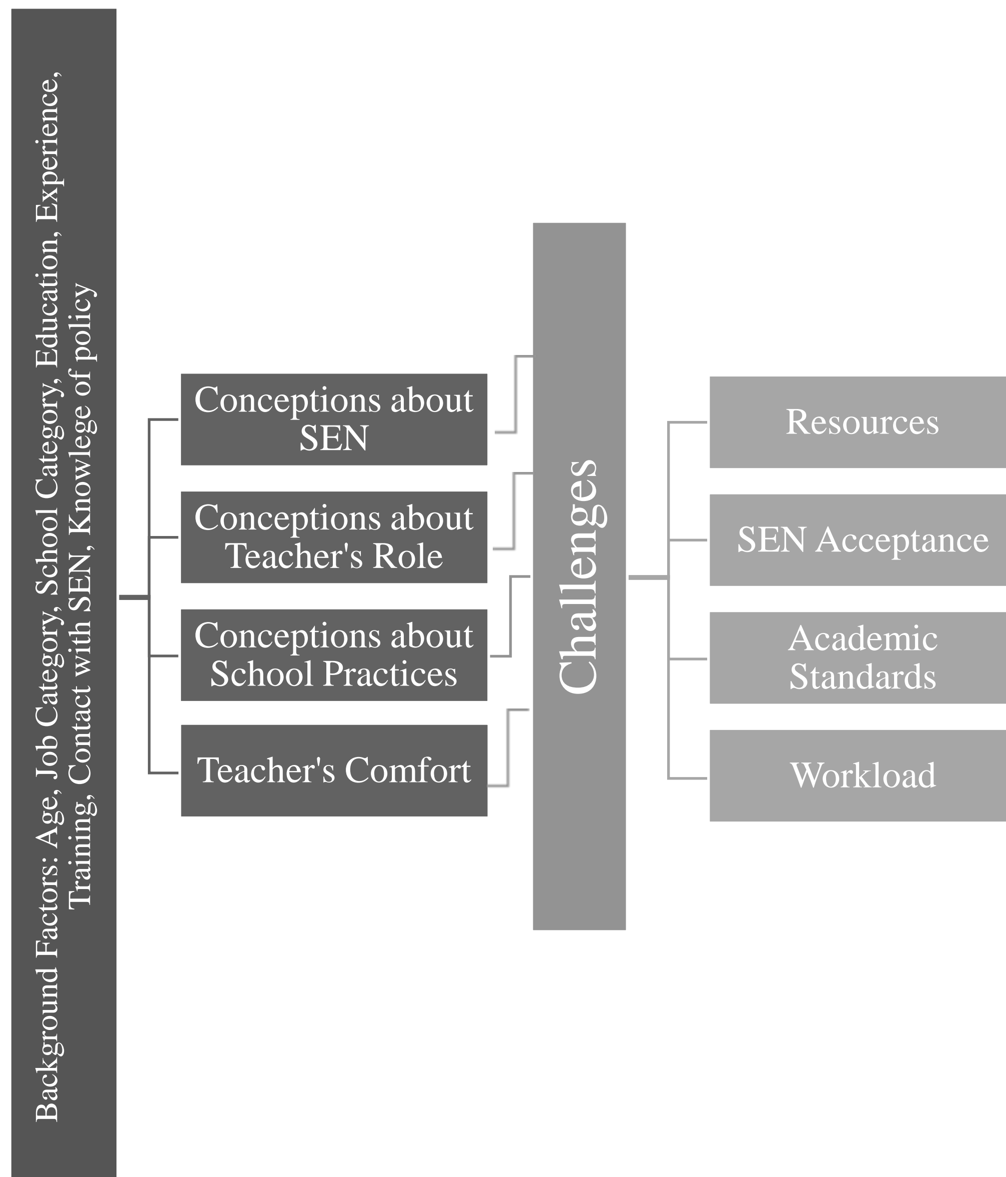

Figure 2.4. Visual representation of the conceptual framework

From Exclusion to Mainstreaming, to Integration, to Inclusion

A common issue in education has long been the provision of appropriate educational needs for SEN children. After the exclusion of learners with SEN in SE schools, the alternative was introducing SE services into the mainstream schools, especially in Western countries, in the 1980s (Mittler, 2000; Opretti & Belalcazar,

2008). A significant move from exclusion to IE occurred in many countries (See Figure 2.5). IE saw the light after realizing the necessity to cater to the needs of SEN students who are of considerable weight all over the globe.

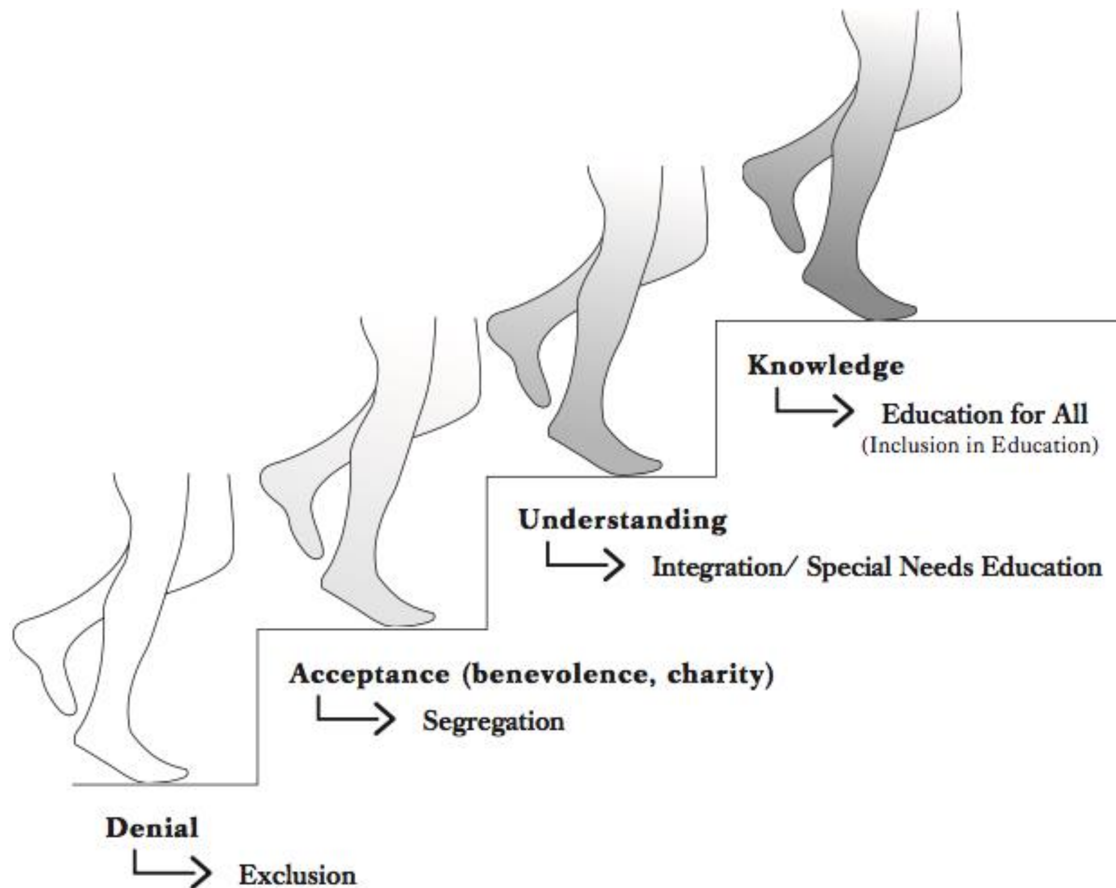

Figure 2.5. Steps from exclusion to inclusion (UNESCO, 2005)

In an attempt to review the literature relating to SEN of the last two decades, one does not doubt that IE has become the new ideology of educational philosophy. IE, having gained high status, is a catalyst that requires schools and society to identify and get over the barriers that hinder students' choices and the ability to realize their full potential. Within such a frame, the authority of the state, schools as well as the accountability of stakeholders shall collaboratively understand the individual value, respect, and a commitment to the development of self.

The path to IE has involved many legal and legislative initiatives over the last decades. In the past years, the trend and practice of IE have gained global attention.

It started with the so-called Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 to the more recent 2016 UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as illustrated in Figure 2.6 on page 68.

The UDHR laid the foundation for future conventions protecting the specific rights of children and including education as a fundamental human right (UNESCO, 2005).

In light of that, international communities have advocated the vision of realizing the policy and practice in the direction of education for all. The following provides an overview of the historical background and the evolution of IE.

Back by the 1960s, life for SEN children was different from the way it is today. Back then, SEN children were considered uneducable, and were thus, segregated and left behind. A beam of hope appeared with the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the convention that bans any exclusion from, or limitation to, educational chances on the basis of socially recognized or perceived differences including SEN students.

In the 1960s, Lloyd Dunn initiated the change. In 1968, Exceptional Children published a paper he had written called "SE for the Mildly Retarded—Is Much of It Justified?" In the paper, Dr. Dunn stated that reliance on special classes for children with mild disabilities was ineffective and inexcusable. His pioneering 1968 paper criticizing the isolation of SEN children into separate educational tracks forced scholars and educators to reconsider which students need SE and when SE services should be mainstreamed into the regular classroom. Calling for fundamental changes in the structure and practices of the field of SE, debates and subsequent legislation paved the way for the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act

(EHA) of 1975, which has been amended and expanded several times, and it is now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

In that sense, mainstreaming aimed at bringing SEN students into the GE classroom with little expectation other than interaction with age appropriate peers. In 1974, with better anticipations for mainstreaming, Birch described mainstreaming as an "amalgamation of regular and SE into one system to provide a spectrum of services for all children according to their learning needs" (p.iii). Then, Meisels (1978) provided a parallel representation of mainstreaming as "a form of educational programming that integrates special needs and non-special needs children in regular classrooms" (p.1).

Further to the new legal protections and educational access provided to SEN students, SE teachers were required to write individualized education plans (IEPs) to address each student's needs. Bowen and Rude (2006) stated that IEP has provided educational services in a separate SE setting while students were mainstreamed in GE classrooms without any additional support from an SE teacher. To that end, mainstreaming emerged as an approach to include students with disabilities in GE classes with little expectation for the SEN student to learn.

The 1980s-1990s

In the 1980s, mainstreaming was the term that most educators referred to when describing the partial time that SEN students spent in regular classrooms. Thus, SEN children were placed in regular classes only if learning was likely to happen (Lewis & Doorlag, 1991). Wang (1981) went further to polish the definition of mainstreaming as “An integration of regular and exceptional children in a school setting where all children share the same resources and opportunities for learning on a full-time basis” (p.196). Going further in time, some resourceful teachers and

parents recognized the failure of mainstreaming and moved toward “integration.” In that phase, partial or full-time one-on-one supports and accommodations were provided to SEN students rather than dumping them in regular education classes. Despite this progress in physical integration, social integration could not be maintained as the interaction between the SEN child and other classmates or classroom teacher was almost missing (Snow, 2008). Therefore, mainstreaming changed into the integration of SEN students in GE classrooms where all children are expected to learn and have the same opportunities on a full-time or part-time basis.

Whilst at that time there was no mention of the term inclusion, the first reference to the practice of IE appeared in the 1980s with the Regular Education Initiative (REI), a movement initiated by Madeline Will in 1986. REI called for rethinking services to SEN students. Will (1986) suggested merging special and regular education into a unified system and returning children with learning problems to the regular education classroom, with appropriate support from SE teachers acting in consulting roles. The term Regular Education Initiative (REI) has come to favor including all children, regardless of their SEN, in regular education settings by referring to a system where SE services are brought to the child rather than transporting the child to the program (Will, 1986).

In 1989, the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was released. Among other things, this resolution states the right to education with primary education to be free and secondary education to be accessible to every child. The convention also makes clear that “Education should develop the child’s personality, talents, mental and physical abilities.”

Later on, the World Declaration on Education for All at Jomtein, Thailand (UNESCO, 1990) clearly stated equal access to education for persons with

disabilities (Article III, p. 5): "Steps need to be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disabled persons as an integral part of the education system." Henceforth, the IE movement developed with the program of Education for All (EfA) by 2015. This international program, which resulted from the World Conference on Education for All assembled in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, implied the commitment to guarantee that every learner receives good quality primary education (UNESCO, 2000). Yet, according to Miles and Singal (2010), some less developed countries did not consider students with disabilities or special needs under the "all" term and related that to the fact that a genuinely IE take a long time.

The major stimulus for IE was the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, held in Salamanca, Spain, June 1994. The seedling of the conference was an agreement on a declaration that precisely advocated IE for students with a disability. Ninety (90) countries supported Article 2 of the Salamanca Statement, "Regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all." (UNESCO, 1994, p. ix). Another significant indication from the statement recommended countries to, "...adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of IE, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise." (UNESCO, 1994, p. 9).

In 1990, the USA Congress reauthorized EHA and changed the name to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The 1990 reauthorization modified the language of the law by removing the word handicap and included the disability categories of autism and traumatic brain injury. However, the following 1997 reauthorization of the SE law, referred to as IDEA 1997, led to some of the

most comprehensive changes in how a disabled child's access to the regular classroom is viewed (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). With the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997, Congress specifically referenced the need for students with disabilities to have appropriate access to the general curriculum with appropriate supports and services (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). IDEA 1997 also included decrees that students with disabilities participate in statewide and other assessments like their GE peers.

From 2000 to the Present

Significant changes in the education of SEN students have taken place since 2000. The new term to describe when SEN students are in a GE classroom is IE, which has become more accepted in the education society. Hence, over time, the term evolved from exclusion to mainstreaming, to integration, and finally, inclusion. Considerable endeavors to orient educational policy and action plans in the direction of inclusive schooling has been in progress worldwide (Hegarty & Alur, 2002; Mittler, 2000).

Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000) emerged to confirm the need to achieve Education for All (EfA) by 2015. Afterward, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000-2015 surfaced. Heads of states around the world agreed upon these eight goals to bring about substantial growth for developing nations in the areas of health, education, eliminating poverty, promoting equality, and more. Closely aligned with the EFA goals was the education aspect of the MDGs to ensure access to primary education worldwide. Including SEN students is part of the statement in order to guarantee the provision of quality primary education for all children by 2015. In Lebanon, the national plan of IE (2012) considered this statement in its blueprint that is not put into effect yet (Oweini & El-Zein, 2014). Up

to this date, special and regular education services are still provided separately as clarified in the section of Education in Lebanon introduced in Chapter I.

In 2006, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) emerged. The CRPD, the first international human rights treaty of the twenty-first century, which adopts the social model of disability, is the rise of a distinct epoch for people around the world living with disabilities as the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan pointed out in a press release (2006). Anan added that, in the chronicle of international law, the CRPD, with its 50 articles, was the most rapidly discussed treaty that has to be ratified and implemented by all states instantly (UN, 2006). With this Convention, oppression based on disability might be ceased if the necessary social change is ensured (Wehbi, Elin & El-Lahib, 2010). By the end of 2016, 164 countries signed and ratified the Convention, except for Lebanon that signed but is yet to ratify it. Not ratifying an agreement, the country is not forced to meet its requirements (Khochen, 2017). Having signed a treaty implies the states would convey their consent but not their obligation to act accordingly.

According to Carr (2016), the CRPD aims at promoting, protecting and ensuring the full privileges of PWD; thus, the Convention alters the conceptions about disability from a social welfare concern to the so-called human rights matter. That said acknowledges societal barriers and biases as disabling. Furthermore, UNESCO says the CRPD tends to include difference into the education system so that PWD learn the skills to participate effectively in a typical society while exposing learners without disabilities to benefit from the experiences of students from diverse backgrounds. Hence, differences become opportunities to enrich learning rather than impediments to be fixed (UNESCO, 2015).

Article 24 of the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, (CRPD) demands that an inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education is accessed by persons with disabilities (PWD) on an equal basis within their communities in which they live. By ratifying a convention, and after the treaty comes into force, a country accepts its legal obligations under the treaty. As such, this treaty encourages the development and implementation of IE policies, programs, and disciplines to ensure equal education chances for persons with disabilities.

Nevertheless, though the CRPD made a powerful international statement for the inclusion of SEN individuals, 'Education for All' or fruitful accomplishment of the MDGs could not be realized without the actual inclusion of SEN people (Peters, 2007). That said, to build on the foundation of the MDGs, the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) followed.

The latest 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015), focusing on neglecting no one, provides a unique opportunity to build more inclusive and equitable societies. This should start with IE systems. Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG) on education calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. It emphasizes inclusion and equity as laying the foundations for quality education and learning. SDG 4 also recommends constructing and renovating education accommodations that are child and disability sensitive and for providing safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.

Therefore, important international policies and statements stressed that inclusive settings are the most suitable way to cater to the educational needs of SEN children.

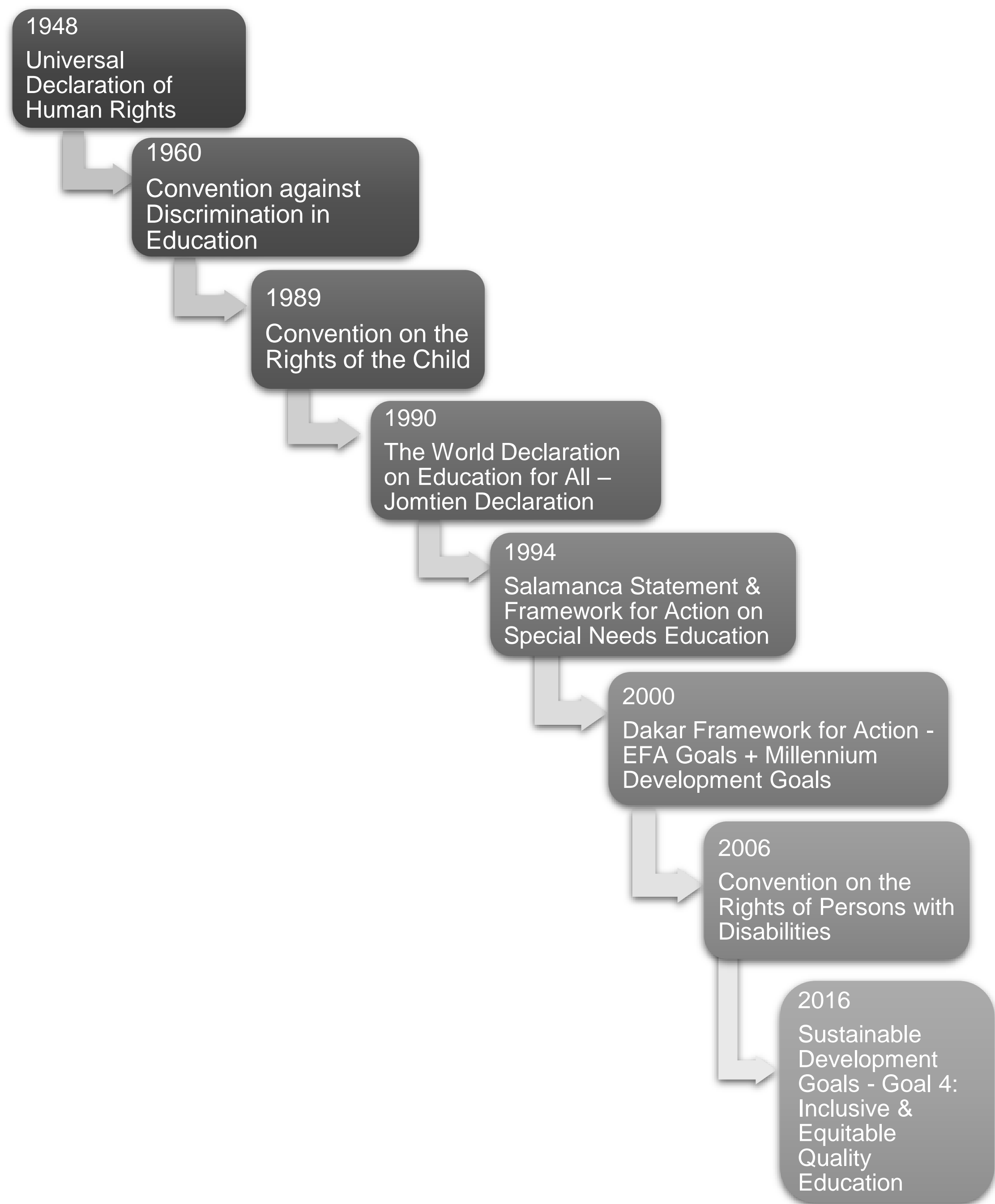

Figure: 2.6. International Policies in Support of IE 1948-2016

Having shed light on the historical background of IE, the following section tends to identify the definition of IE.

Defining Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is the process of reaching out to all learners by approaching all kinds of exclusion and marginalization, disparities, and inequalities in access, participation, and learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2017).

Upon reviewing the literature to find a definition of IE, two statements emerged. The first statement is that IE is not merely about the physical placement of SEN students (Ainscow, 2005; Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Kershner, 2009; Slee, 2008; Slee & Allan, 2005;). The second statement is that due to various interpretations, IE is hard to define (Ainscow, 2011; Alan & Slee, 2008; Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson 2006; Artiles, Kozleski, & Waitoller, 2011). The term 'inclusive education' is little more than a cliché: "a politically correct term that is used for speeches and policy-makers to silence all woes" (Azzopardi, 2009, p. 21). Thus, the central dilemma is that there is no shared understanding of the term. It means different things to different people and interests and cultural values shape interpretations of inclusion.

Inclusion goes back in origins to SE as presented earlier in the chapter. In the process of providing a suitable service to SEN children, education systems have explored different ways stemming from the evolution of the SE field. In certain situations, SE has been practiced as an extra supplement to the GE process, unlike other situations where it has been utterly independent. Recently, the suitability of distinct systems of education has been debatable.

The idea of IE is an echo of the social 'model of disability' (Mittler, 2000). While the social model of disability concerns itself with the identification and reduction of barriers to the participation of SEN people in regular societies, IE concerns itself with the identification and reduction of obstacles to the participation of SEN students in regular schools. Mittler (2000) stated that the disability

movement, focused initially on the rights of adults, is now concerned with children and is working together with organizations that are calling for IE.

While Inclusion and IE are frequently and globally used in education research, education system, and policy, they do instigate “competing discourses through which meaning and understandings differ” (Graham & Slee, 2008, p. 277). In 2005, Mel Ainscow, a key scholar in the development of concepts of IE, advised that within a just society, schools have to provide ‘education for all.’ Advocates such as Booth et al. (2006) believed that any segregation creates injustice and that society would benefit from an education system, which recognizes the diversity of all its students. Correspondingly, Slee and Allan (2005), examining the exclusion of disadvantaged pupils in education, argued that inclusion “represents a fundamental paradigm shift...a social movement against educational exclusion” (p. 15). Thus, IE should be the concern of schools and their systems, and in specific, the restructuring of mainstream schools so they are ready to cater for the diversity of all students (UNESCO, 2005).

The comprehensive series of definitions and understandings of IE goes back to how this movement is interpreted and implemented within culturally, politically, and socially fueled contexts (Artiles, Kozleski, & Waitoller, 2011; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2015).

According to UNESCO (2013), inclusion is viewed as a process of addressing and responding to the different needs of all children, youth, and adults by increasing their involvement in learning, cultures, and communities, and lessening and overcoming exclusion within and from schools. It includes changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures, and strategies, with a shared vision

that covers all appropriate age range children and a principle that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.

UNESCO's 2005 "Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All," recommends making national plans more inclusive and presents several strategies to assist in this critical process.

While Florian uses the term 'inclusive pedagogy,' referring to: "... an approach to teaching and learning that supports teachers to respond to individual differences between learners, but avoids the marginalization that can occur when some students are treated differently." (2014, p. 289)

Thus, inclusion transforms the education system and the learning environments to serve the diverse needs of students in formal and informal contexts, where both teachers and learners are comfortable with diversity and consider it as an enriching challenge, not a problem. In addition, students with physical, social, and/or emotional disabilities are to be served in GE to be called inclusive. Nevertheless, inclusion keeps space for a personal option of having individual support and/or the facilities in need be (UNESCO, 2005). To conceptualize inclusion, it has to be looked at as a process to identify and remove barriers in a setting where all students, including those who are vulnerable to underachievement, are present to participate and achieve quality education.

All of the above definitions of inclusion are alike as long as they include having SEN students in the GE classroom accessing the same curriculum as their peers without SENs. Meanwhile, the early definitions of inclusion focused on where the SEN student was educated and not so much on how much they were learning, over time the definition of inclusion has transformed into having that SEN student be

as successful as possible at achieving the learning outcomes taught in the GE classroom.

A great deal of research indicates that students with SEN have better educational outcomes in general classrooms than in isolated classrooms and that the effect on students without a disability is insignificant (e.g., Kalambouka et al. 2005; Ruijs et al., 2010). However, the inclusion of children with disability is not challenge free since teachers are expected to be able to provide appropriate educational environments for all students in their classrooms (Curcic 2009).

IE has been a considerable challenge facing school systems throughout the world. However, there still exists a dilemma to enable the evolvement of policy and practice in a further inclusive path. Educational researchers, policymakers, and professionals around the world still debate what IE means and whether the Western model will work in developing countries or not. Going further, some researchers wonder how far IE works in Western countries. To Mitchell (2010), despite many Western countries are apparently and theoretically committed to the trend of IE, in practice, it often falls short.

Anderson, Boyle, and Deppeler (2014) discerned three factors that have been tracked along with the literature on IE: (a) Participation, (b) achievement; and (c) value. Booth and Ainscow (2002) define ‘participation’ in the Index for Inclusion as “learning alongside others and collaborating with them in shared learning experiences. It requires active engagement with learning and having a say in how education is experienced” (p. 3). Achievement, in terms of learning outcomes rather than of standardized scores, implies a learner needs a 12-months of schooling to achieve 12 months of learning (Hattie, 2012). The final factor is the value of a person to be accepted and respected through the actions and relationship with others. Hence,

within an IE environment, learners should be participating, achieving, and valued (Anderson et al., 2014). While it is acknowledged that this raises a challenge for teachers, schools, and decision-makers, the costs of not including all students are way more undesirable.

Despite the significance of IE to government policy, its progress is complicated and challenging. In some countries, inclusion is often perceived as a Western concept (Ainscow, & Sandill, 2010). Nonetheless, within the context of 'Education for all,' it is increasingly being held to as stemming from social justice and human rights, in different countries (Miles & Ahuja 2007).

The Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education endorsed the idea of IE (UNESCO, 1994) resulting in the most important international document that has ever appeared in the special needs field. The Salamanca Statement confirms that regular schools with an inclusive orientation are "… the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society, and achieving education for all." Additionally, it suggests that such schools can "… provide an effective education for the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately, the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system." Subsequently, significant activity to move educational policy and practice in a more inclusive trend appeared in many countries (Hegarty & Alur, 2002). Hence, based on Salamanca Declaration (1994) and as a social-ethical discourse which is strongly focused on values, inclusion requires a restructuring of mainstream schooling where every school accommodates every child regardless of disability and ensures that all learners belong to a community (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

As encouraged by the Salamanca Statement, doing these practices within the context of GEal provision is the universal trend (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Hence, it

is worthy to note that efforts are being made to provide better educational systems that cater for all children, no matter what their individualities are. According to UNESCO (2009), there are some justifications behind inclusion. The first justification is educational since it entails teaching all students together, which implies devising teaching strategies that meet individual differences. The second justification is social; for educating all children together in an inclusive setting can adjust attitudes toward diversity and minimize discrimination. The third justification behind inclusion is economical because it is less costly to build and support schools that teach all pupils together rather than having different types of schools specializing in the different categories of SE. Hence, inclusive schools are worthy of fighting for. Hence, the UNESCO 2000-2015 Education for All monitoring report states:

There is no universal agreement on what constitutes inclusive education. Broadly, its provision requires governments to take responsibility for and educate all children regardless of their needs. More ambitious approaches to inclusion are commonly grounded in a rights-based approach that aims to empower learners, celebrate diversity, and combat discrimination. It suggests that, with adequate support, all children, irrespective of their different needs, should be able to learn together in mainstream classrooms in their local communities (UNESCO, 2015, p.101).

Educators and practitioners have been involved in theoretical debates about whether inclusion is the “right” way to teach SEN students since the idea of including students with SEN in “typical” schools and classrooms emerged (McLeskey, 2007). School practices across the country continuing to isolate students

with disabilities, while others include nearly all students regardless of the SEN label or its significance reflect these theoretical debates.

Shoulders and Krei (2016) recently defined inclusion “as occurring when general and SE teachers work together in the same classroom, which incorporates students with disabilities with their typically developing peers” (p.23). That said, the best SE practices are blended into the GE classroom where all students can benefit (Friend, 2008; Shoulders & Krei, 2016). Friend (2007) recommends that the general educator implements the content and curriculum in the classroom, while the special educator focuses on the student’s learning process by differentiating and modifying instruction and activities for SEN students. Some other students without SEN might benefit from the modifications and differentiation in the classroom, and, thus, inclusive settings can help all students achieve maximum success. Inclusion can even be implemented when SEN students are catered for in the general classroom without the support of a collaborative SE teacher or paraprofessional to assist the GE teacher (Friend, 2008).

Although the inclusion of SEN students in GE classrooms is debatable among educational scholars, it is understood that IE is not a short-lived trend that will go away with time. Advocates of IE maintain that it is beneficial to all students in terms of academic and social growth. To many scholars, it is an issue of social justice where the marginalization of SEN students is a burden on the shoulders of those critics. Meanwhile, opponents of inclusion claim the shortage of empirical studies that prove the benefits of IE; the irony lies in the absence of evidence that verify the assumed rewards of isolated classrooms.

Nevertheless, when writing about IE, it is essential to have a definition of the construct (Anderson et al., 2014), and for this study, the researcher refers to IE as

defined by UNESCO "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education" (2005, p. 14). Even though IE can be regarded as aiming at an equity agenda for all students, it is often understood as concerning only students with disabilities and those requiring special needs education (Artiles, Kozleski, & Waitoller, 2011). Therefore, in the current study, IE is best defined as including SEN children into regular classrooms.

Inclusion versus Integration

When SE services were hosted into the mainstream, the approach was referred to as integration. Alongside their peers without SEN, pupils with SEN were integrated to work in the same classroom but usually without the essential assistance that would have allowed their full engagement. This integration took different models, starting with partial separation in SE schools and mainstream schools to full placement in mainstream schools and irregular pull-outs from mainstream classes for placement in 'special classes' and remote group activities. By integration, extra provisions will be arranged within a school that stays mostly unchanged to cater to the needs of pupils with disabilities; IE, on the other hand, tends to restructure the school in order to meet the learning needs of all learners (Ainscow, 1995).

However, inclusive schooling, in the first instance, acknowledges that SENs can stem of social, psychological, economic, linguistic, cultural as well as bodily (or disability) factors, hence the use of the term children with SENs rather than children with disabilities. Second, it acknowledges that any child can experience difficulty in learning, short-lived or long-term, at any time during the school career and, therefore, the school must continually review itself to meet the needs of all its learners.

While the terms integration and inclusion are frequently used correspondently (Mittler, 2000), there are significant conceptual discrepancies between them in terms of their purposes and disciplines. 'Integration' refers to the partial or full placement of SEN learners in mainstream schools, whereas 'inclusion' is more profound than physical presenceUnlike integration, inclusion implies a restructuring of mainstream schools to ensure that every child, regardless of disability, is fully involved in a school's community (Hodkinson & Deverokonda, 2011). Inclusion requires changing values, attitudes, systems, and practices in the school framework and the surrounding community. For more than two eras, inclusion has been a mainstream expression; nevertheless, the battle to achieve 'education for all' has been a old battle for more than five eras (Polat, 2010).

The systems of income-rich countries have influenced most developing countries' education systems. Adopting such systems has brought difficulties and confusion in use and the application of terminologies and concepts. Unlike inclusion, integration does not affect the organization of the school, its curriculum, nor its teaching methodologies. As such, a significant barrier to the execution of the policies of inclusive schooling results from the absence of administrative and pedagogical change, a factor that is ultimately important to positively cater for student diversity (UNESCO, 2005).

The education of SEN students has been served through a progression of pull-out programs to full-time inclusion. The current trend is the inclusion of SEN students in the GE setting for the majority of the school day; whereas in the past the SE teacher was the main person in charge of their education in a separate classroom most of the time. Nowadays, SEN provisions are shifting to be the duty of the GE teacher in the mainstream classroom (Royster, Reglin, & Losike-Sedimo, 2014). This

transformation in the educational approach for teaching SEN children has found some GE teachers inexperienced in teaching these students alongside their nondisabled peers. Straightaway, one might wonder if GE teachers are not trained in IE, do they feel comfortable to teach SEN students in their GE classrooms? In light of that, to be held accountable for student performance and progress, GE teachers need the tools to effectively teach SEN students in an inclusive setting, the support of SE staff, as well as ongoing professional development.

Summary

Starting with mainstreaming and heading towards the most recent definition and practice of inclusion, the central prominence is to have students with SEN in the GE classroom for as much of the school day as possible. Placing the SEN child in the GE classroom was the main target of mainstreaming. Later, this has progressed to the latest implementation called inclusion, which is having the SEN children not just present in the GE classroom but educated in the GE classroom with proper modifications and accommodations, as well as necessary supports, to provide as much access as possible to the GE curriculum. Inclusion does not mean that a student with SEN will progress at the same rate as students without SEN; however, that outcome is a possibility.

SEN School Practices

Since the language of IE has evolved from mainstreaming to integration to inclusion, so too has the school practice. Inclusive practice refers to the various actions and activities that professionals in schools and other educational settings do to give meaning to their understanding of IE (Florian, 2009). To Curcic (2009) these practices may range from scheduling to belonging in various teams, to communication, to resource provision, to transportation, in addition to other areas. In

the same line, the notion of EFA demands a large part of the school's curriculum and way of teaching to be aligned by inclusion. Because pupils have different needs, quality education should reach them all. Thus, schools should place learners at the center of teaching and learning built on an appreciation of their variances in acquiring information.

Thus, inclusion is not viewed as passive but as a dynamic and flexible process that involves all children. Having this in mind, the curriculum has to be flexible, accessible, and away from being rigid or difficult to attain (EFA, 2005). Therefore, as implied in the reviewed literature (Bateman & Bateman, 2014; Curcic, 2009; Dixon, et al., 2014; Florian, 2009; Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin, 2013; McLaughlin, 2009; UNESCO, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005; Toppings, 2012; Walsh, 2012; etc.) it can be concluded that IE involves various factors incorporated in school practices: (a) School culture; (b) flexible accessible curriculum; (c) collaboration; (d) differentiation in teaching; (e) accessible infrastructure; and (f) accessible human and physical resources.

School climate. A prerequisite to efficient IE is a positive school climate that fosters the inclusion of SEN children. Carrington and Robinson (2006, cited in Loreman et al., 2016) indicated that diversities at each of the macro, meso, and micro levels are to be welcomed by an open social climate. A welcoming climate, usually correlated to inclusive schools (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006), depends on the positive beliefs and attitudes of all members of the educational organization as will be discussed in subsequent sections. Some of the principal peculiarities identified in the literature on the process of developing inclusive schools reflect the necessity for raising a shared vision across the school (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000).

The Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) emphasizes two sections under the dimension of school culture: Building community and establishing values. Community indicators include welcoming all, encouraging students to cooperate, reinforce mutual respect between staff and students, strengthen collaboration between school and families, and decision-makers. Inclusive values indicators, on the other hand, incorporate raising students' potentials, shared inclusion philosophy, mutual respect, joint efforts to overcome inclusive schooling and bias."

Flexible – accessible curriculum. A flexible curriculum allows its modification and adaptation to meet the individual needs and abilities of each student overcoming the view of "one size fits all." In addition to flexible curricula, flexible teaching methodology needs to be hosted. This implies that pre-service teacher education should train student teachers on IE pedagogies and to modify school subjects as well as their teaching methodologies to serve SEN students better. Schools are expected to provide flexible curricula and learning materials with accessible, SEN friendly formats (UNESCO, 2005).

Having said that implies viewing education from an inclusive lens where the SEN child is no longer a problem, but the education system is (See Figure 2.7. Education through the Inclusive Lens). Therefore, it can be asserted that quality teaching that reaches all children, with and without SEN, is the fundamental key to school improvement.

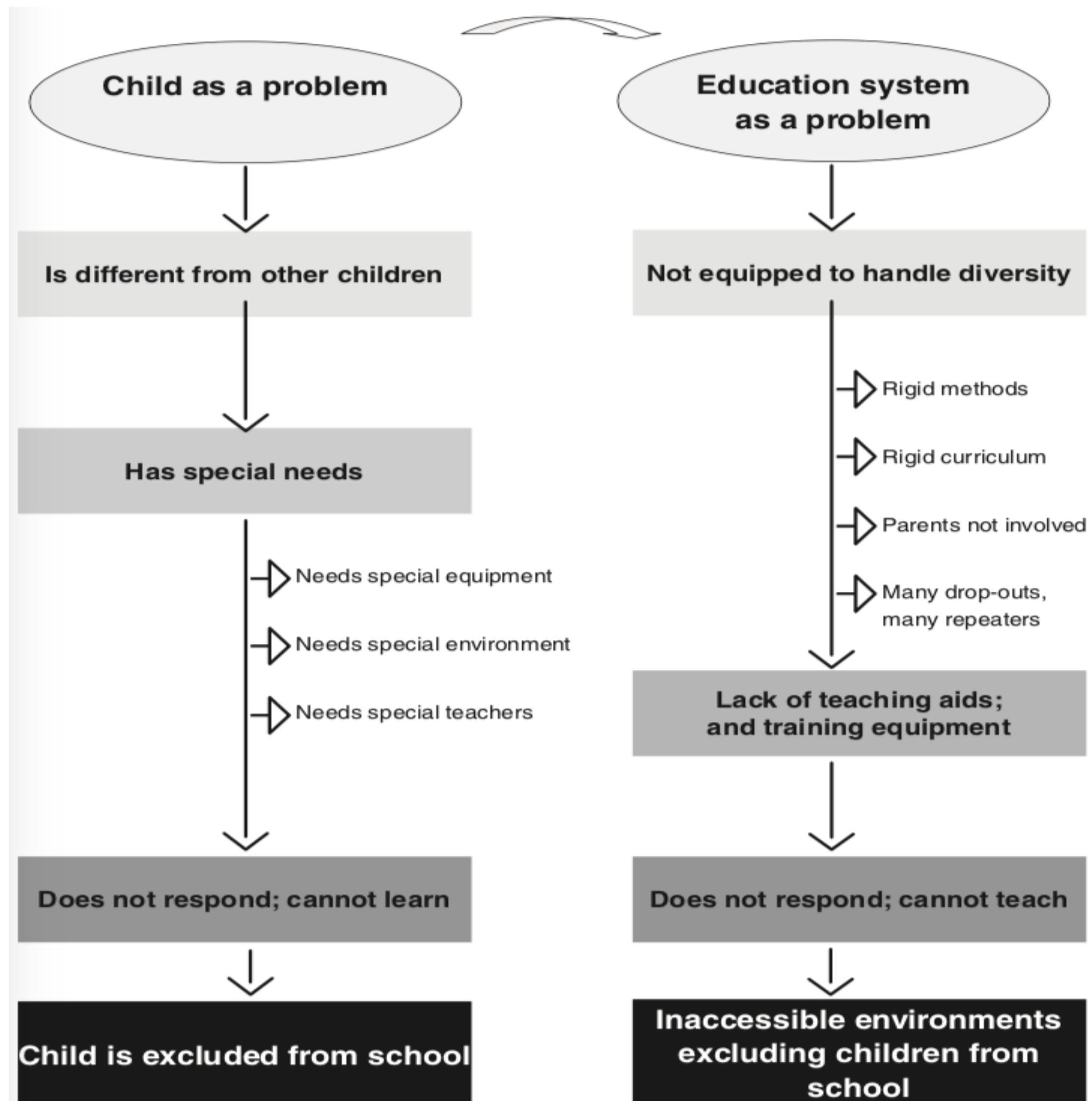

Figure 2.7. Education through the Inclusion Lens (UNESCO, 2005)

"Seeing education through the inclusion lens implies a shift from seeing the child as a problem to seeing the education system as the problem that can be solved through inclusive approaches" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 27).

An accessible curriculum allows a flexible time-frame for learners to study specific subjects, teachers' freedom to select their teaching methods, individual support in practical subjects, periods allocated for other traditional school subjects, giving time for further classroom work, and considering pre-vocational schooling (UNESCO, 2005).

Collaboration. Not only is flexible-accessible curriculum pivotal in IE but also collaboration. Collaboration at all levels is a crucial feature of successful IE.

Literature indicates that inclusive practices are most likely to develop from collaborative performance, reflection, and investigation (Florian & Rouse, 2010). By decreasing teachers' concerns around inclusion (Forlin, Keen, & Barrett, 2008), collaboration becomes more treasured since SE and GE teachers co-teach with different education and expectations in the GE classrooms. Collaboration practice is an essential criterion for inclusive capacity building (Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin, 2013; Villa & Thousand, 2005; Florian & Linklater, 2010) which in turn reduces the distinction between SEN students and their peers without SEN (Hwang & Evans 2011; Solis et al. 2012).

The literature indicates that collaboration intrinsically reinforces teachers' capacity for inclusion, both encouraging and assisting a spontaneous process of professional development through continued access to, and sharing of, knowledge and expertise (Forlin, 2010b). Solis et al. stated that due to teacher interest and context, the collaborative practice might vary. Going further, some limitations might hinder collaboration such as role ambiguity, limited shared time, inadequate administrative support, and the lack of professional development (Sharma et al., 2012). Other limitations mentioned by Copfer and Spekht (2014) include lack of training, communication, and problem-solving, and lack of willingness of educators to collaborate with outside resources and programming.

Altogether, these factors strengthen the intrinsic capacity building where shared IE knowledge, skills, and practice are prerequisites to collaboration practice. Mulholland and O'Connor (2016) studied the perceptions and experiences of collaborative practice among primary school teachers and support teachers in primary schools in Ireland. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study sought to explore the nature and extent of collaboration between these teachers and to

recognize the benefits and obstacles to implementation. The findings revealed that though teachers knew the value of collaboration, its implementation was aspirational due to several challenges relating to time constraints, ad hoc planning and limited professional development opportunities (Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016).

Practice in collaboration influences teachers' feelings of proficiency in working with SEN students. Even if teachers are particularly trained to help SEN children, they need the determination to do so, and, hence, lack appropriate continuous professional development aimed at IE that can mainly be attained through collaboration (Sharma et al., 2007). The primary responsibility for improving teacher attitudes and skills about inclusion and collaboration goes with teacher-preparation. Over the long term, a shortage of collaboration might sway students' success, but it is not known why there is a barrier in collaboration, at least in terms of an overarching reason. In a survey of over 350 schools, for example, "a lack of training programs in SE and integration for regular classroom teachers was a major obstacle in implementing integration programs in their schools" (Sharma et al., 2007, p. 97). When teachers lack either direct knowledge or collaborative skills, they are more likely to become frustrated and withdraw from the process of teaching.

One of the most broadly used methods in implementing inclusive classrooms is co-teaching that involves the collaboration of GE and the SE teacher to provide instruction to SEN students (Solis et al., 2012). Though in many cases, it is more complicated than expected, co-teaching is a highly effective practice when implemented successfully. Walsh (2012) found that co-teaching classrooms succeeded when given high priority from school administrators who are responsible for identifying the crucial factors, such as time and resources. Therefore, the school administration, general, and SE teachers need to personally commit to collaboration

that combines their values, expertise, and experiences to create further a culture that encourages positive education for all.

Differentiation. Differentiation may be the most significant component in inclusive classrooms. If teachers are going to be effective, they must take into account all of the needs of a diverse student population (Corbet, 2001; villa & Thousands, 2005; Tomlinson, 2005). Tomlinson (2005), a principal professional in this domain, defines differentiated instruction as a philosophy of pedagogy rather than a single instructional strategy built on the premise that students learn best when their teachers accommodate the differences when working on developing their essential skills.

To clarify things more, Kershner (2009) recommends that IE adopt strategies that depend on current psychological understandings of group learning such as situated cognition, distributed intelligence, dialogic teaching, and multimodal learning. Besides, Gregory and Chapman (2012: 5) stated, "As with clothing, one size does not fit all, so in classrooms, one way is not the only way" (p.5). Most children accept that in a classroom, they are not similar, that while some have potentials in sport, others may be academically strong (Tomlinson, 2000). While it is accepted that the common basis for them all is a need for acceptance, nurturing and respect (Tomlinson, 2005), it is necessary to consider the vast discrepancies among students inside a classroom, recognizing student's individual strengths while supporting their shortcomings (Guild, 2001). SEN Students have been able to demonstrate significant progress when taught in truly differentiated classrooms (Morgan, 2014). Acosta-Tello and Sheperd (2014) found that differentiated instruction is a strategy that works for all students ensuring SEN students can be included in the GE classroom. Corbett (2001) states that it is the adaptation of

teaching and learning materials customized for the individual differences in learning style. A study conducted by Affholder (2003) on differentiated instruction strategies used by teachers concluded that: (a) Teachers who used these strategies more intensively showed improved individual perception and adopted greater responsibility for student growth; (b) teachers utilizing higher levels of differentiated techniques experienced better feelings of self-efficacy and demonstrated greater willingness to try new instructional approaches; and (c) differentiated instruction was favored by more experienced teachers who were familiar with the curriculum they taught and who had received extensive training prior to implementing these methods in the classroom.

Gregory and Chapman emphasize that differentiated instruction is based, in part, on the effective grouping of students with a variety of options available to GE teachers for structuring instructional groups (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). In other words, using differentiated instruction, the teacher will continuously modify his or her classroom organization, curriculum, instructional methods, and assessment procedures to address the individual learning needs of the students in the class (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). Thus, one size does not fit all if the target is education for all.

Resources. Education should be served to children with and without SEN. While IE may help attain this goal, the inclusion of SEN students in mainstream schools requires more considerable attention. Adequate human and physical resources would have to be allocated to help these children learn. According to some studies (Horne & Timmons, 2009; Idol 2006; Thompson, Lyons, & Timmons, 2015), though teachers are generally supportive of an inclusive approach, they feel hindered

to teach children with diverse needs in regular classrooms due to concerns about time and resources.

Physical resources are essential for the proper provisions of IE. These resources include teaching materials, IT equipment, computer-assisted instruction, a restructured physical environment that is fit to receive SEN students. Many scholars have cited the lack of physical resources as an obstacle to including SEN students (Adedoyin, & Okere 2017;). Placing SEN students in mainstream schools without considering their specific additional support needs should not be overlooked. Thus, Toppings (2012) clarifies that sufficient specialist time, place, educational supplies, and maintaining professional development are absolutely vital. The research conducted by Ahmmed et al. (2013) found that Perceived School Support influenced teachers' intentions more than attitudes, teacher efficacy, teachers' age, and teaching experience.

Human resources refer to learning support assistants, SE teachers, speech therapists, and paraprofessionals such as speech therapists. Therefore, adequate funding would support provisions for special educators, paraprofessionals, sufficient devices, teaching resources, and appropriate learning activities.

Conceptions – How Can They Affect Inclusive Education?

In general, conceptions are based upon those beliefs, ideas, and knowledge, which people hold to be true or untrue. In Webster's Online Dictionary (n.d.), conceptions refer to "the sum of a person's ideas and beliefs concerning something." Thus, people may hold conceptions about constructs that they consider untrue or harmful.

Lazenby (2016, p. 66) differentiated between the terms' concept' and 'conception: "The term 'concept' refers to a general notion or idea. The term

'conception' refers to a specific interpretation of a notion or idea." Thompson (1992) referred to conceptions "as a more general mental structure, encompassing beliefs, meanings, concepts, propositions, rules, mental images, preferences, and the like" (p. 130). Conceptions signify different categories of ideas behind educators' descriptions of how educational things are experienced (Pratt, 1992). Thus, conceptions represent a framework through which an educator views, interprets, and interacts with the educational environment (Marton, 1981).

Conception is the term used in this research to describe the knowledge or mental beliefs about education, teaching, and learning. Conceptions are one of the significant variables in influencing teaching practice and are very similar to attitudes because it also encompasses emotions and ratings (Thompson, 1992). Throughout this study, the term 'conceptions' will be used to connote those ideas and principles, which teachers, principals, and decision-makers hold to be right about IE.

Many constructed beliefs about disability and IE are rooted in the historical understandings of disability. Changing educators' conceptions beliefs concerning inclusion and disability can be a challenge; mainly when the conceptions and beliefs have been rooted in one's belief system for most of his/her life. According to Carrington (1999), educators are often not mindful of the assumptions, theories, or educational beliefs they hold. Hence, teachers may embrace constituents of a viewpoint that is likely to be 'right' to them at a particular point in their profession, possibly because they match the expectations of colleagues they admire.

In the realm of IE literature review, the researcher came across many studies (to be synthesized in subsequent sections of this chapter) that emphasized educators' conceptions, knowledge, skills, and practices where the effective inclusive practice has been linked directly to their attitudes and beliefs about IE.

Challenges to Inclusive Education

The emphasis in this section is on the challenges of implementing IE. While many challenges inhibiting successful IE implementation are traced in literature, IE continues to face challenges. A challenge is defined in Webster's Online Dictionary (n.d.) as "a difficult task or problem; something that is hard to do; a summons that is often threatening, provocative, stimulating, or inciting."

While educators' conceptions are essential as potential predictors of success or failure of inclusion, equally important are their challenges to inclusion. IE is much more than placing SEN learners in an inclusive system that is receptive to their diverse needs. Booth (2003) asserts that inclusion is about the prevention of barriers to learning and participation for all children, young people, and adults. It has been emphasized that many of the obstacles to IE are traced within the control of schools (DfES, 2004). Nevertheless, one might argue that barriers to IE are mainly controlled by the schools, staff, and local community that support them. Clough and Garner (2003) argue that inclusion is being hindered because educational institutions are not fit to include all children due to the barriers of "lack of knowledge, lack of will, lack of vision, lack of resources and lack of morality" (p. 87). Other significant barriers to IE suggested by Hodkinson (2005) are teachers' attitudes and competencies due to inadequate teacher preparation and training. On top of that, the attitude of society is an additional challenge that continues to create significant barriers to inclusion (Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008).

In Lebanon, the challenges that face schools in order to include SEN learners are numerous. Such considerable barriers to the implementation of IE in mainstream schools could justify for students to be continually educated in segregated special schools.

In the subsequent sections, relevant research studies on the challenges of IE in the eyes of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers will be synthesized.

Change Agents and Inclusive Education

An improved school implies an inclusive school (Ainscow et al., 2006). School improvement is not necessarily the result of individual people doing remarkable things independently but from a group of people working jointly in many diverse modes and roles, using the collection of different available resources (Pantić & Florian, 2015). Thus, IE involves changes on many different levels – from policy and structural levels, teacher training, family, and partnership to the level of schooling – through changes to the curriculum and teaching strategies. The literature shows that the factors contributing the most to this result are qualified teachers and principals, effective collaboration between teachers and paraprofessionals engaged in the provision of SE, the appropriate resources available to schools, and the policies and legislation. However, research has shown that the struggle to become inclusive is still in progress, and system reform is a significant challenge.

Teachers

Teachers seem to be a fundamental element for successful inclusion because they hold a key position in education. Held in the middle, in the micro and mesosystem, teachers are the mediators between the state, various stakeholders in education, the parents and the students, since they are responsible for implementing the inclusive settings, sharing, and promoting the principles of inclusion in the classroom. Teachers are central in regulating what happens in classrooms, and others confirm that the development of more inclusive classrooms requires that teachers modify or differentiate the curriculum to cater to diverse student learning needs (Forlin, 2004).

Portrayed as a reflection of their education systems, inclusive teachers are seen as playing a pivotal role in reinforcing IE. A teacher committed to IE must accept primary responsibility for the learning of all the children in the class (Jordan et al., 2009). This concurs with Rouse (2009), who contends that inclusion is dependent upon teachers': (a) 'Knowing' about theoretical, policy and legislative issues, (b) 'doing' by turning knowledge into action, and (c) 'believing' in their competence to educate all children. The first step, 'knowing,' means that teachers are expected to have content knowledge, policy, and legislation knowledge, in addition to teaching strategies for the diversity of students, including those with SENs. Accordingly, teachers need to be well informed and trained about: How children develop and learn, what they need to learn, classroom organization and management, how to get help when necessary, how to identify and assess problems, how to assess and monitor children's learning, as well as the legislative and policy context (Rouse, 2009). This echoes Bandura's (2004) statement that teacher success in inclusive classrooms is part of having training in IE to develop his/her competency and beliefs. The second step, doing, means transforming the acquired knowledge into action in the form of some practices that maintain education for all (Rouse, 2009). To Bandura (2014), a teacher's engagement in teaching practice is critical since it improves teacher's self-efficacy. Hence, when a teacher finds success in teaching, it is likely to increase their self-efficacy. The third step, beliefs, implies that teachers are expected to change their perspective and believe that all children can learn, and thus, deserve the efforts exerted to make a difference in their lives (Rouse, 2009). That said, teachers need to believe that such work is their responsibility, and not only a task for paraprofessionals. If properly employed, the three steps cited above are quite

valuable to develop teachers' skills and attitudes toward IE. Rouse (2008, p. 15) affirmed:

If two of the three aspects of development (knowing, doing, and believing) are in place, then other aspects will likely follow. If teachers acquire new knowledge and they are supported in implementing the new practice, using a 'just do it' approach, then attitudes and beliefs will change over time. Hence, teachers must be aware of the significance of their role as an important agent in constructing an effective IE.

In the following section, teacher-related variables and their link to IE conceptions and challenges will be presented as reviewed in the literature.

Teacher-Related Variables

Several teacher variables (background factors as per Ajzen's TPB) are known to influence their mindsets about IE, such as gender, age, education and training, years of teaching experience, and contact with SEN students are essential constructs to consider when studying IE. A great deal of Western research regarding teacher characteristics has sought to determine the relationship between those characteristics and teachers' conceptions and perspectives on the challenges in the case of implementing IE. An overview of the reviewed literature on these variables, followed by a synthesis of the research findings is presented below.

Gender. In relevance to gender, the verification shows inconsistency; some researchers noted that female teachers are more positive to IE than male teachers (Adedoyin, & Okere, 2017; Forlin et al., 2009; Kuyini & Mangope, 2011; Loreman, Sharma, Forlin, & Earle, 2005; Scheer, Scholz, Rank, & Donie, 2015; Tait & Purdie, 2000; Woodcock, 2008). However, other studies found no significant relationship between teachers' gender and their beliefs about IE (Carroll, Forlin, & Jobling, 2003;

Logan & Wimer, 2013; Monsen & Frederickson, 2004; Rana, 2012; Reusen et al., 2001; Yada & Savolainen, 2017).

Age-teaching experience. Teaching experience is another teacher-related variable that had a relatively small but significant influence on teachers' understanding of IE. This result corroborates those of previous studies indicating that teachers' age and length of teaching experience were statistically significant in predicting teachers' understanding of IE and intentions to get involved in inclusion practices (Ahmmed et al., 2013; Forlin et al., 2008; Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008; Yada & Savolainen, 2017). Younger teachers, but with same or fewer years of experience, were more open to inclusion than older colleagues. However, teachers with more years of experience were more willing than their colleagues with fewer years of experience.

The most experienced educators were the least accepting. Savolainen et al. (2012) indicated that as educators gained experience in teaching, they became less accepting of IE. In contrast, Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010) found that older teachers had a more positive attitude toward inclusion. The researchers reported that GE teachers 40 years of age or older had the most positive attitudes toward inclusion of SEN students due to their increased knowledge and confidence. In their study, teachers between the ages of 31 and 40 had the least positive attitudes toward inclusion of students with LDs. However, other investigators have reported that teaching experience was not significantly related to teachers' beliefs, attitudes and conceptions about IE (Avramidis et al., 2000; Logan & Wimer, 2013; Monsen & Frederickson, 2004; Van Reusen et al., 2001; Villa et al., 1996).

Contact with SEN students. Several studies cited contact with SEN children as an essential variable in shaping teacher views about inclusion. Here, the

‘contact hypothesis’ indicates that when teachers implement inclusive practices and get closer to SEN students, their attitudes might become more positive (Chhabra, Srivastava, & Srivastava, 2010; Subban & Sharma, 2006). Chhabra et al. (2010) denoted that teachers who had not worked in inclusive settings beforehand revealed positive attitudes if they had a friend or family member with SEN. Negative teacher attitudes serve as educational barriers to learning for students with disabilities. However, some other studies did not indicate a significant relationship between positive IE views and personal contact with SEN pupils (Monsen & Frederickson, 2004).

Teacher education, training, and inclusive education. The first step in creating a culture that is accepting of inclusion is to examine teachers' professional needs. Teachers are more likely to accept the idea of inclusion if they feel they are adequately prepared (Rouse, 2009; Slee, 2010). Many scholars view the increased need for more adequate teacher education programs, specialized training, and professional development is viewed as critical to the success of IE by (Ashby, 2012; Ainscow, 2005; Briggs et al., 2002; Hamman, Lechtenberger, Griffin-Shirley, & Zhou, 2013; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Florian & Rouse, 2010; Florian, 2009; Forlin, 2010; Opertti & Brady, 2011; Sharma & Desai, 2002; Sharma et al., 2012; Subramanian & Manickaraj, 2017; Vaz et al., 2015; Villa & Thousand, 2005; UNESCO IBE, 2008).

Since, IE necessitates teacher education to maintain their readiness for this change (Forlin, 2010a), the 48th ICE outcomes document recommends training which equips teachers with the necessary facilities for teaching learners of various needs by professional development, preservice education programs about IE, and customized schooling (UNESCO IBE, 2008).

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) stated that professionals and staff in schools must be trained and that "such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities" (p.4). Conversely, research indicates that many GE teachers are not prepared to meet the unique needs of SEN students (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009; McCray & McHatton, 2011).

In previous studies, (e.g., McCray & McHatton, 2011; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009) teachers have revealed the need for more training before being placed in an inclusion classroom. Khochen and Radford (2012) reported the shortage of qualified and trained professionals when investigating the attitudes of teachers and headteachers towards people with a disability in mainstream primary schools in Lebanon. This lack of training often leads to teachers feeling underprepared to work with students with 'disabilities' (Smith & Tyler, 2011). Insufficiently trained teachers face many challenges in teaching students with disabilities. As a result, several countries are now starting to adapt their teacher education programs to take account of the recent emphasis on IE, although they are addressing these issues in considerably varied ways (Mitchell 2010, Philpott, Fury, & Penney, 2010). It is also argued that teachers' actions in the classrooms are greatly influenced by their knowledge of the learning characteristics of their pupils and by their knowledge about available support services for SEN students (Pinar & Sucuoglu, 2011). When teachers are aware of the specific characteristics of a particular SEN and have knowledge about teaching methods to address these, they can cope better with the

diversity of students in the class. Therefore, knowledge about SEN and related teaching methods are essential factors in preparing teachers for IE.

An inspection of the university curricula supports this assertion. Many teachers graduate from university insufficiently prepared for the challenges presented by teaching in an inclusive setting (Smith & Tyler, 2011). Many colleges require GE candidates to take less than three courses directly relating to teaching students with disabilities. Some colleges only required one course. The UNESCO 2009 report highlights the importance of modifying the preservice and in-service teacher education programs to be aligned to IE where teachers are equipped with the pedagogical competencies necessary to make diversity work in the classroom and line with reformed curricula. Since IE is effective, programs of teacher education need to enable future teachers by developing better knowledge and understanding of IE conceptions and realization (Hodkinson & Devarconda, 2009). While the focal purpose is to ensure teachers provide effective teaching to the diverse learners through differentiation, Tomlinson (2005) and Dixon et al., 2014 recommend that the education programs prepare future teachers on this philosophy. Robinson (2017) attempted to identify the beliefs and practices behind effective inclusive teacher education for SENs in ordinary schools through an inclusive action research project. The findings revealed that practitioners become more confident and skillful in implementing inclusive practice if their education involves critical-theoretical, reflexive, research-oriented collaborations among a professional learning community.

There is also the challenge of training all involved educators and community members to support inclusive schooling. Mel Ainscow (2003) contends that teacher development needs to be the base for initiating inclusive practices in schools. Sharma

et al. (2007) state that even when teachers are trained explicitly for helping SEN children, they lack the confidence to do so and that they need relevant, ongoing professional development focused on IE. Gerber (2012) explains that general classroom teachers are unwilling and most often not equipped to deal with SEN students. That is why paraprofessionals are needed to assist in mainstream classrooms. In addition to providing SEN students with emotional, physical, and motivational support, paraprofessionals are prepared to ease active inclusion by handling the child's academics, behaviors, personal care, gathering student information, and smoothing social interactions between their peers.

An essential element to incorporate in teacher preservice and in-service education programs is IE legislation. In the context of Lebanon, Law 220 should be translated on the grounds of schools rather than maintaining its rhetoric representation. In addition, student teachers need to be educated and trained on IE pedagogies and on modifying school subjects as well as their teaching methodologies to serve SEN students better (Booth, Nes & Stromstad, 2003). Likewise, ensuring that teachers are trained in IE pedagogies is very crucial should success be maintained.

A small number of recent research projects have reported findings after examining teacher program and field experiences IE. Hodkinson (2005, 2006), who considers that the practice of inclusion goes beyond those SEN individuals, investigated the understanding of 80 newly graduated teachers. He found that trainees had a good understanding of the theory of inclusion but that their "knowledge and skills related to the practical delivery of an inclusive education were limited" (Hodkinson, 2005, p. 25). Follow-up data gathered one year later from a small percentage of the original participants in a subsequent study revealed that even

though novice teachers remained satisfied with their undergraduate training related to inclusion, they experienced barriers related to the implementation of their intended practices. It appeared that they adopted a rather pessimistic, less confident view regarding their ability to put to action inclusion practices in their classrooms after being in the field for a short time (Hodkinson, 2006). Another study conducted by Hodkinson and Devarakonda (2009) concluded that inclusion had been most successful in schools where levels of training were high and ones in which the ethos was positive and supportive of this important educational initiative.

Kim (2011) found that 110 students enrolled in 10 different teacher preparation programs revealed varying experiences in their coursework and field experiences regarding IE. Student teachers from combined (dual certification in SE and GE where curricula were interwoven) and separate programs (dual certification programs where curriculum for certifications was separate) had significantly more field experiences with SEN students than did teachers from GE, single certification programs (Kim, 2011). Such incongruence in course content and opportunities for implementing inclusion in teacher preparation programs highlights the need to reconsider the relevance of program components of preservice teacher training. Going further, Kurniawati, De Boer, Minnaert, and Mangunsong (2017) examined the effects of a 32 hour-training program on regular in-service primary school teachers' attitudes and knowledge about SEN and teaching strategies in Indonesia. Attitudes and knowledge were measured before and after the training program was performed. Findings revealed significant positive effects of the training program on attitudes, SEN knowledge, and teaching approaches in medium to large effect sizes.

Subban and Sharma (2001) revealed that teachers who reported having undertaken training in SE were found to hold more positive perceptions about

implementing IE. Similarly, Forlin et al. (2015) and Vaz et al. (2015) explained that training teachers how to be IE teachers is associated with positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion. In an international study about attitudes before and after IE training of four countries, Loreman, Forlin, and Sharma (2007) found that training was successful in improving attitudes. The researchers noted that close contact with a person with a disability, teaching experience, awareness of policy and legislation, and confidence levels had a significant impact on student teachers' attitudes. Another research compared methods of training between several Australian and international universities could not determine if a specific training module was more effective at improving attitudes and knowledge about IE than an infusion approach, which incorporated concepts of IE into several modules (Sharma et al., 2008). Furthermore, Sharma et al. (2008) suggested that teacher education programs about inclusion held in countries where strong IE legislation is emphasized, such as Canada and Australia, yield lower levels of concern than programs held in countries with weaker laws about inclusion, such as China and Singapore.

This implies that with suitable training, it is likely to change GE teachers' attitudes about inclusion positively. However, a positive attitude towards inclusion is not enough, except when coupled with proper training in inclusionary teaching practices within strong IE legislation. Thus, it is recommended to train teachers in inclusive classrooms and prepare them to work with all students because positive attitudes alone will not result in improved or efficient instruction.

Universities in Lebanon providing teacher education programs are classified into different categories based on the higher education system they follow: The American system, the French system, and the Lebanese system designed and implemented by the Lebanese University. Usually, the education program lasts from

three to four years. Student teachers in almost all higher education institutions in Lebanon are required to do at least one year of classroom observation and teaching practicum in host schools where they observe and practice teaching to get their certification; and thus, they take part in an induction program when joining a school. Some teachers pursue graduate programs to end up with a Master's Degree. Still, some others may begin teaching without a Teaching Diploma and sometimes not even with a university degree. Nevertheless, now that teachers are expected to take on much broader roles, – such as childhood development, psychology, differentiated instruction, the management of learning processes in the classroom, and the development of the entire school as a learning community, the higher education system needs restructuring. Indeed, supportive peer teaching and coaching, as well as informal collaborative review within communities of practice, networks, and partnerships, has been proposed as one of the most potent strategies for fostering inclusive cultures in schools (Ainscow & Miles 2009).

While it has been documented that better teacher preparation is vital to improving teachers' ability to teach inclusive classrooms, higher education continues to struggle with this issue (Hamman et al., 2013). Still, teacher preparation programs have not kept pace with the growing demands. Therefore, it is up to the school to provide teachers with professional development activities that enhance their abilities to carry out inclusion practices (Hamman et al., 2013). Nevertheless, an essential element of professional development is to be ongoing. Providing teachers with a one-time professional learning course is not sufficient (Blank, 2013). Though one-shot professional development courses give some valuable benefits, they are often inadequate to lead to any significant changes (Patton, Parker, & Tannehill, 2015). According to Blank (2013), past adequate professional learning opportunities have

included follow-up, assistance, and coaching. Patton et al. (2015) stated, "Long-term professional development is accompanied by a chance to practice the change with on-site follow-up, subsequently bringing experiences back to the group for discussion" (p.32). Therefore, continuing professional development is essential if changes are going to be sustained.

Teacher's self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as an individual's judgment of his/her competencies to consolidate and execute courses of action for accomplishing the targeted performance. One's self-esteem represented by his/her abilities is the backbone of self-efficacy. Once the anticipated outcome is achieved through one's efforts, satisfaction is attained, which in turn will act as an incentive for further accomplishments. While encouragement boosts self-efficacy, discouragement decreases it. An important factor affecting self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1997), is experience through which people can: (1) judge their performance; and (2) compare the level of their performance.

Literature has shown that teachers' experiences and education influence the efficacy of inclusive teaching. The first-hand experience with SEN students improves teacher efficacy for inclusive teaching (Hemmings; & Kay, 2012; Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin, 2013; Sharma, Shaukat, & Furlough, 2015; Sharma and Sokal, 2016; Specht et al., 2016; Woodcock). For instance, Sharma and Sokal (2016) found that taking a course in IE resulted in higher efficacy for inclusion in Australian and Canadian pre-service teachers. Other studies concentrating on levels of teacher efficacy towards IE showed that the nature of training they had influenced teachers' self-perceptions on proficiency, the level of knowledge related to legislation and policies on inclusion, teaching experience and personal contact with SEN individuals (Hamman et al. 2013; Loreman, Sharma & Forlin, 2013; Sharma et al., 2012).

Teachers' beliefs that what they do will be effective is likely influenced by their efficacy expectations (Palmer, 2006). Self- efficacy is a significant variable concerning teaching SEN learners. Teaching efficacy relates to a teacher's beliefs about his/her competence to successfully facilitate learning (Brady & Woolfson, 2008, cited in Subramanian & Manickaraj, 2017). Other factors that might contribute to the lower self-efficacy toward IE include insufficient working conditions inside the classroom, lack of concrete equipment, class size, teachers' burnout because of workload and lack of motivation, deficiency of professional and qualified personnel in GE settings.

Various studies have indicated that the significance of teachers' self-efficacy about IE. Song (2016) studied teachers' self- efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive classrooms in Japan and Korea. One hundred and ninety-one Japanese and 102 Korean teachers completed the survey. Findings showed that the Japanese GE teachers' self-efficacy was lower than the Korean GE teachers. However, no significant differences were found between Japanese and Korean SE teachers. The general teachers within the Korean group had higher self-efficacy but less positive attitudes towards IE than SE teachers. While Japanese SE teachers were the most confident in collaboration, Korean SE teachers were the least confident. Both Japanese and Korean teachers expressed a strong need for training. Using a sample of 359 in-service teachers, Yada, and Savolainen (2017) examined Japanese teachers' attitudes toward IE and their self-efficacy for inclusive practices. The overall level of self-efficacy was relatively low, particularly about managing problematic student behavior. Forlin, Sharma, and Loreman (2014) indicated that as teachers' concerns declined, their efficacy increased, revealing a significant correlation between concerns and teacher efficacy for inclusive practice were correlated. In addition,

Sharma and Jacobs (2016) found that teachers' positive attitudes toward IE as well as their intention to teach in inclusive classrooms are correlated with their high level of self-efficacy. This concurs with Sharma and colleagues' (2012) findings that confirm the correlation between teacher efficacy to accommodate students with different abilities and attitudes towards IE.

The following section presents a synthesis of the reviewed literature on IE conceptions and challenges held by teachers.

IE Conceptions Held by Teachers

Conceptions and educational theories assist teachers in determining what choices they will make when faced daily with decisions in their classrooms. Those decisions are then translated on the ground of their classrooms. Conceptions are one of the foundations upon which educators base their style and method of teaching practices. The composition of teachers' conceptions is inconsistent. Beliefs are the values linked to psychological objects or phenomena and are naturally probable through which reason is made of events, people, and interactions (Ekeblad & Bond, 1994; Pratt, 1992). Shared values render collaboration doable. However, in the absence of common conceptions and values, change is difficult to attain (UNESCO, 2005), and misconceptions become the barrier to achieve sound goals. Therefore, a considerable body of literature exists within the fields of IE conceptions within the SEN's foci of students, teacher's role, school practices, and teacher's comfort and self-efficacy.

The universal move toward inclusion has resulted in changes to the roles and responsibilities of teachers. From the IE lens, teachers are accountable for the teaching of SEN students (Forlin, 2004; Gajewski, 2014; Jordan et al., 2009; Rouse, 2009; UNESCO, 2009). Jordan et al. (2009) confirmed that teachers' conceptions

about disability and the role they assume in supporting SEN students determine the success of full inclusion. Evidence from reviewed research has indicated that teachers with positive views tend to adopt inclusive practices more than teachers with negative attitudes (Ahsan et al. 2013; Sharma, Forlin & Loreman, 2008).

The roles of GE and SE teachers have changed in response to IE; both GE and SE teachers are expected to be skilled in inclusion and collaboration to meet accountability criteria for SEN students (Turnbull, Turnbull & Wehmeyer, 2007). While the idea of inclusion aims at ensuring a place for SEN students in the general curriculum, collaboration develops inclusion and enhances its success potentials (Ainscow, 2005).

Based on the vast reviewed literature (Ainscow, 2003, 2005; Florian & Rouse, 2010; Forlin, 2004, 2010; Gajewski, 2014; Hamman et al. 2013; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Hodkinson, 2005, 2006; Hodkinson & Devarconda, 2009; Jordan et al., 2009; Opertti & Brady, 2011; Robinson, 2017; Rouse, 2009; Sharma et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2007; Smith & Tyler, 2011; Stanovich & Jordan, 2002; Subramanian & Manickaraj, 2017; UNESCO, 2009; Yada & Savolainen, 2017; etc.), the researcher identified four primary variables considered as prerequisites to IE, three of which are teacher-related while the fourth one has to do with the school: (a) Teacher's beliefs about the inclusion of SEN students; (b) teacher's beliefs about his/her role; (c) teacher's beliefs about school practices; and (d) teacher's comfort and self-efficacy (See Figure 2.8). That said, if teachers' views are positive toward SEN, their role, school practices, and their self-efficacy, they are IE advocates; conversely, teachers

are exclusionary if their negative views are revealed.

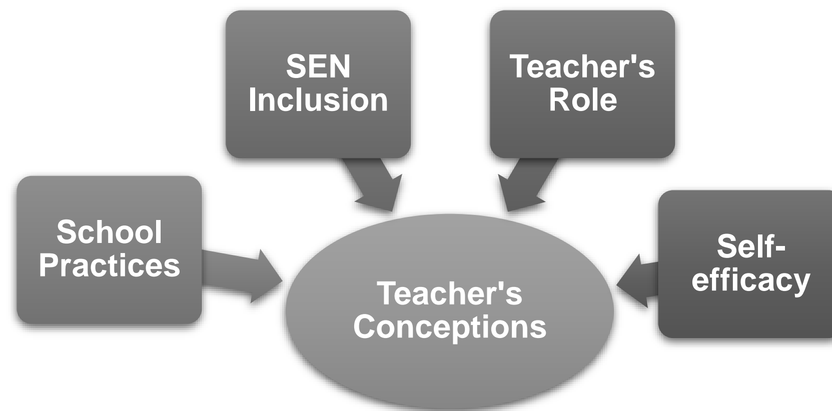

Figure 2.8. Visual Representation of Teachers' IE Conceptions

The literature on teachers' conceptions as explored by other researchers in various developing and developed countries was reviewed to have a more accurate view of the researched topic.

Avramidis and Norwich's (2002) review of literature uncovers elementary and secondary teachers' focus upon inclusion and integration as this pertains to students with SEal needs. Bossaert, Colpin, Jan Pijl, and Petry, (2013) and de Boer, Jan Pijl, and Minnaert's (2011), literature reviews emphasize students with SEN needs. De Vroey, Struyf, and Petry's (2016) literature review (2000–2012) shows how the focus on SEN students infuses research into secondary schooling. More specifically, such attention to SEN students appears to reinforce the perspectives on novice teachers during their initial teacher education and the early phases of continuing professional development. The literature on teachers' conceptions as explored by other researchers in various developing and developed countries was reviewed to have a more accurate view of the researched topic.

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In Canada, Horne and Timmons (2009) explored teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and concerns about inclusion in Prince Edward Island schools. Teachers agreed that the regular classroom is the best place for all students. For inclusion to work well, all teachers agreed that the leadership of the principal is needed to provide supports, such as teacher assistant time, planning time, leadership at meetings, smaller class sizes, and SE teacher support. In Canada, as well, a series of studies were conducted during a16-year research program examining the factors contributing to effective teaching in inclusive elementary regular (GE) classrooms by Jordan and colleagues (2009) and Jordan, Glenn, and McGhie-Richmond (2010). The researchers explored the connection between effective teacher practice, teacher beliefs about 'disability' and teacher responsibility to teach SEN students, and the influence of school culture in shaping inclusive practice. The results indicated that: (a) Effective inclusion is effective for all students; (b) teachers who believed SEN students are their responsibility were generally more efficient with all their students; and (c) teacher beliefs about 'disability' and their responsibilities for their students with special needs were rather part of broader sets of assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs about ability and the nature of knowledge and knowing. The researchers concluded that inclusionary practices exhibited by teachers who adhered to inclusive philosophies

and epistemologies were regarded as adequate to all pupils in the classroom (Jordan et al., 2009, 2010).

In India, a study investigated the knowledge and attitude of school teachers in urban and rural Pune about IE (Belapurkar & Phatak, 2013). Three hundred (300) school teachers answered the attitude scale for inclusion and knowledge test on Inclusion. Findings revealed that even though the overall attitude of school teachers towards IE was positive, their knowledge level about IE is significantly low and unclear. They are not familiar with Government policies and planning, cannot identify different abilities in children, nor can they tell what remedial treatment can be given to them. Another study conducted by Tiwari, Das, Sharma (2015) examined the perceptions and beliefs of GE teachers in Delhi, India, about the inclusion of SEN students in regular education classrooms. The 15 semi-structured interviews of public school teachers revealed that the teachers' sociocultural ideologies on disability affected the education of these students, and the systematic institutional barriers led teachers to accept inclusion only in theory. In India as well, Subramanian and Manickaraj (2017) explored the relationship between regular teachers' knowledge, attitudes, competency skills, and concerns regarding SEN children and IE. Similar to studies conducted previously (Kuyini & Desai, 2007; Sharma et al., 2008, 2012; Srivasatava et al., 2015), results revealed significant correlations between (a) Knowledge about children with SE needs and attitudes towards disability and teacher efficacy for inclusive practices, (b)Attitudes towards disability and attitudes towards IE; and (c) attitudes towards IE and concerns about IE and teacher efficacy for inclusive practices. However, no correlations existed between knowledge about children with SE needs and attitudes towards 'disability' and teacher efficacy for inclusive practices; attitudes towards 'disability' and attitudes

towards inclusive practices and attitudes towards IE and concerns about IE and teacher efficacy for inclusive practices.

In Japan, Lai, Lee, Nor Lisa, Mimi Mohaffyza, and Kahirol, (2017) studied the readiness of 128 mainstream primary school teachers who engaged in an IE program. Readiness was measured in three different aspects: (i) field knowledge, (ii) pedagogical skill, and (iii) attitude. Even though the readiness level in terms of pedagogical skill was high, the readiness for field knowledge and attitude were at a medium level. Assuming that teachers trained in SE are usually expected to be more accepting of IE, another study investigated trained kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong on three factors: their knowledge about policies regarding IE, efficacy in teaching in inclusive settings, and government initiatives that might influence two outcomes of advocacy (Lee, Tracey, Barker, Fan, & Yeung, 2014). The findings imply that increasing teachers' knowledge through training or providing teachers with more resources may not be sufficient to increase teachers' advocacy of IE. Instead, to better promote IE, teacher education and governmental support should give more attention to more on building teachers' efficacy in inclusive settings.

In Hong Kong, Yan and Sin (2014) surveyed 841 teachers to study their intentions and practices regarding IE. Teachers' attitudes, feeling of social pressure from significant others, and confidence in professional training for involved staff were strong predictors of teachers' intentions to implement IE. Their intention and confidence in the professional training of involved staff predicted their conveyed inclusive practices.

In Botswana, Adedoyin, and Okere (2017) attempted to explore teachers' perceptions of the significance of the inclusion concept in the educational system. Results showed that: (a) Teachers were aware of the inclusion concepts and had a

positive perception towards inclusion; (b) teachers' perceptions of the significance of IE as a way of collaborating with other teachers, to gain experience of teaching diverse learners, and to have teachers employ different teaching strategies.

In Africa, Gwala (2006) revealed that teachers' lack of knowledge, little or no experience, uncertainty about roles, inadequate training in teaching SEN learners reflected their negative attitudes towards IE. Based on the views of the teachers, the researcher concluded that they were influenced by the tradition of referring SEN learners to outside specialists who assessed, wrote evaluative reports, gave counseling to both learners and their parents, prepared and implemented educational plans and provided preventative programs. The study indicated that teachers needed quality, comprehensive preservice, and in-service training.

In Bangladesh, Ahmmed, Sharma, and Deppeler (2012) studied variables influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of SEN students in regular classrooms. Findings from the surveys of 738 teachers working in 293 government primary schools indicated that teachers' perceptions of the support for inclusive teaching practices, demographic variables, previous success in teaching SEN students, and contact with an SEN student were linked with more positive attitudes towards the IE.

In Germany, Scheer, Scholz, Rank, and Donie (2015) investigated the beliefs and self-efficacy of preservice teachers concerning IE. Four hundred and nighty one (491) teachers participated in the study by responding to a questionnaire using case descriptions of pupils with different SENs to assess attitudes toward inclusion and self-efficacy in inclusive classroom settings. Results showed a general effect of the intended type of school on inclusive beliefs and self-efficacy with significant differences between teachers. Teachers for SE had the highest inclusive beliefs and

self-efficacy concerning inclusion. Secondary school teachers and academic high school teachers had the lowest scores. However, teachers reported that children with intellectual disabilities and complex special needs should be educated in special needs schools.

In Turkey, Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010) investigated the views of 194 GE teachers working in public elementary schools about the inclusion of SEN students into their classrooms and their willingness to include students with more severe learning disabilities. Data indicated that the sample held slightly negative attitudes towards the inclusion of SEN students into regular education classrooms. While 35% of the teachers reported their willingness to include students with severe learning difficulties in their classrooms, most of them were interested to learn new skills that enable them to serve SEN children better.

In Thailand, Agbenyega and Klibthong (2014) investigated preschool teachers' knowledge of inclusive early childhood education. Teacher interviews supplemented quantitative data obtained through a questionnaire. The findings revealed: (a) The majority of teachers had little knowledge on inclusive practice in the early years; (b) teachers rated their knowledge on collaboration with families, other professionals and how to establish positive relationships with children as good to excellent; (c) teachers gave their knowledge on how to modify curriculum, develop individualized education plans (IEP), develop active learning environments and engage all children in learning activities poor ratings; and (d) though teachers were positive about their ability to provide the general welfare of all children, they were generally cynical about their ability to teach children with sensory disabilities such as those with autism. Similar findings were indicated by another study conducted in Thailand (Dapudong, 2014) that used a descriptive survey method to

investigate the knowledge and attitudes of fifty-two male and female GE and S teachers in an international school. While the respondents had moderate knowledge on IE, they displayed Eneutral attitude towards inclusion.

In Malaysia, Sukumaran, Loveridge, and Green, (2015) investigated the level and nature of inclusion in preschools and teacher's perceptions and beliefs about inclusion in Malaysian integrated preschools. There was little evidence of practices of inclusion taking place. Though both regular and special educators agreed that SEN students should be educated alongside their peers in a school, they were less supportive of having them in the same classroom. Factors identified as influencing inclusion included school culture, skills and competency, guidance and information, workload, and students' disabilities. More guidelines and support are required for successful inclusion in Malaysian integrated preschools. Another research by Bailey, Nomanbhoy, and Tubpun (2015) studied the views of IE expressed by nearly 300 Malaysian primary school teachers involved in remedial literacy and numeracy education under the country's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. Teachers' views were positive towards the principle of inclusion. However, although they had joint professional development on SENs, these teachers needed a common consensus about the benefits of inclusion since they expressed concern about the lack of teacher competency in this field; and they revealed a negative view of SEN children and their families. Mohd Ali, Mustapha, and, Mohd Jelas (2006) examined teachers' attitudes and perceived knowledge towards IE. Findings of the conducted survey revealed that mainstream and SE teachers in the public primary and secondary schools: (a) Had positive attitudes towards IE; (b) agreed that IE enhances social interaction and reduces negative stereotypes on SEN students; and (c) collaboration

between the GE and the SE teachers is essential and that there should be a clear guideline on the implementation of IE.

In Tanzania, Geraldina (2015) employed a phenomenological design study with a semi-structured interview to investigate teachers' knowledge and perceived challenges of teaching autistic children in regular primary schools. The interviews of a sample of 16 teachers revealed that most of the teachers had in-depth knowledge about children with autism and lacked in-service training. The researcher concluded that efficient IE in Tanzania is still facing many challenges to be realized.

In Croatia, Bukvić (2014) conducted a study to explore teachers' perceptions of their competency for teaching SEN students utilizing a survey answered by 100 teachers in early and compulsory regular education. Results showed that about 70% of the examined teachers have none or very little knowledge about teaching SEN students, and their attitudes are mostly negative, unlike younger teachers who had higher competency scores. Further, some teachers with positive attitudes about IE would rather not accept SEN students if given a choice. Besides, the researcher reported that competencies of examined teachers in the regular school were not well developed partly due to the inadequate teacher training program. Likewise, in Romania, teachers were reported to lack the knowledge and training to be able to implement IE (Unianu Ecaterina, 2013).

In Poland, Starczewska, Hodkinson, and Adams (2012) sought to identify teachers' conceptions of IE. The results from the study revealed that the concept of inclusion was not well recognized and that integrative education still dominated educational thinking. The study provides data to suggest integration in Poland worked well in the early stages of education, but that it struggled to cater for older children into the mainstream educational settings. The findings further implied that

children with mild and moderate SENs had the best chance to be educated in mainstream Polish schools, unlike those with severe intellectual and physical SENs who were regularly excluded.

In Cyprus, Symeonidou and Phtiaka (2009) investigated primary school teachers' prior knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about inclusion and the nature of an ideal training course for inclusion. Findings in this research showed that the teachers' initial education and in-service training related to inclusion were insufficient to prepare them with inclusive concepts, a fact that requires the need for more in-service training. Besides, teachers' beliefs about SEN students rather reflected the medical and charity models of SEN, for they strongly believed some SEN categories should be educated in special schools with fund-raising initiatives for SEN children. They also believed that the main purpose of educating these children in mainstream classes is socialization.

In Ghana, Boakye-Akomeah (2015) investigated teachers' views on IE. Utilizing a descriptive survey design, the study revealed that almost all the respondents had the necessary knowledge and skills to handle SEN pupils in inclusive settings. In addition, the teachers were able to implement the curriculum while adapting instruction and assessment strategies suitable for SEN learners. The researcher also noted that teachers at the primary level were ready to collaborate with other specialists to improve IE in their schools.

In an attempt to explain how limits can be imposed on students' learning by teachers who hold deterministic beliefs associated with bell-curve thinking about ability, Hart, Drummond, and McIntyre (2007) point out the SEN students are vulnerable to these adverse effects. The reason behind this vulnerability is attributed to teachers who believe SEN students need specialist teaching and that they have not

been taught nor trained to do, as many researchers indicated (Campbell et al., 2003; Hart et al., 2007; Lambert et al., 2005; Marshall et al., 2002; Sharma et al., 2008;).

In Lebanon, Kustantini (1999) investigated the attitudes of teachers, parents, and administrators towards the inclusion of children with SEN. A survey was administered including 228 teachers, among other participants, of public, private, and special schools in Beirut. Though the findings showed somewhat positive attitudes towards the inclusion of SEN children into the regular school system, Kustantini argued that IE in Lebanon remains in its early stages and educators lack adequate knowledge and understanding of SEN leading to the ignoring of the academic needs of youngsters with disabilities. This condition has changed considerably but remains unchanged in most schools where IE has not yet seen the light.

Having synthesized relevant literature to teachers' IE conceptions, the following section emphasizes teachers' IE challenges.

IE Challenges Perceived by Teachers

The emblem of IE is the teachers' willingness to accept SEN students. Regular school teachers' in principle are in favor of IE; nevertheless, their commitment to implementing it is inadequate due to significant concerns. Many teachers are conflicted in their opinions too. Implementing IE is not an easy task and necessitates significant changes to facilitate improvements in the way teachers work in their classrooms. Not only does literature indicate that teachers' conceptions of IE are correlated to its success, but also that teachers' concerns need to be thoroughly addressed prior to the foundation of a successful inclusion program as illustrated in this section. Most teachers tend to hold undecided or negative mindsets regarding IE (De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011) often due to their practical concerns about how it

can be implemented (Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, &Malinen, 2012).

While inclusion is about the prevention of barriers to learning and participation for all children (Booth, 2003), once SEN students are included in GE classrooms, a significant concern that emerges is the potential impact of the conceptions of regular classroom teachers toward these students. Any student's learning and development opportunities are either enabled or hindered as a result of educators' conceptions and behaviors. For instance, when anticipated learning does not happen, the convention is to look for reasons for the failure in the child. All school members in a school community can experience such barriers, and sticking to labeling SENs can hinder the teachers' ability to understand the properties of their institution, the selection of teaching materials, and teaching strategies, which can be real barriers to a learning community for students or staff. Hence, an inclusive school should target, identify, and remove such barriers to give optimal circumstances for all.

The lack of specialized knowledge, training, resources, and support, collaborating with other teachers, individualizing lessons, differentiated instruction, huge class sizes, and lack of paraprofessionals have been of the most frequently articulated concerns with regards to educating SEN students in inclusion context (Glazzard, 2011; Horne & Timmons, 2009; Kuyini & Mangope, 2011; Round et al., 2016; Sharma et al., 2008; Sharma et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2009; Yadav et al., 2015; Yan & Sin, 2014; Watkins & Ebersold, 2016). Having done an extensive review of literature on teachers' concerns, the researcher tracked four major variables as IE concerns: (a) Concerns about resources, (b) concerns about acceptance, (c) concerns about academic standards, and (d) concerns about

workloads (see Figure 2.9). These concerns have turned out to be the primary factors behind teachers' rejection of IE.

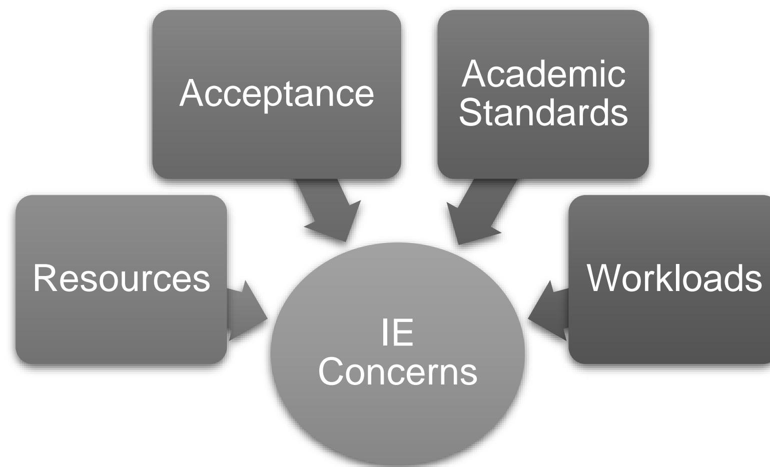

Figure 2.9. Visual representations of teachers' IE concerns

A program of inclusion will most likely put teachers under considerable pressure even though inclusive schooling is beneficial to develop the capabilities and skills of both students and teachers alike. One of the challenges that all teachers face in the inclusive classroom is the concern for workloads, according to the literature, not only because few teachers are certified in this area but also because of the emotional, mental and organizational stress which is associated with this type of role (Sharma, 2002; Shea, 2010). Shea (2010) explains that teachers who perceive that their classroom work is stressful are less likely to reach out to those around them are less likely to remain on the job. Teachers may still experience job dissatisfaction and burnout even when they are certified in SE, which points to the need to reconsider the teacher education and classroom preparation process regularly at the beginning of a teacher's career (Shea, 2010). This challenge can negatively affect the teachers' self-efficacy and their ability to collaborate with colleagues.

Other challenges of the job itself may be because some teachers view teaching in an inclusive school as a higher stress-environment (Williams & Gersch, 2004). While teachers in mainstream schools are often challenged by lack of time

and lack of commitment on behalf of their students, scarcity of resources stressed teachers in schools that welcome SEN students. This was rather shocking since it might have been expected that such schools would have been resourced. However, according to Williams and Gersch (2004), the teachers felt that they lacked the necessary facilities to teach the diversity of needs in their classrooms.

In England, Glazzard (2011) examined the barriers to IE as perceived by the teachers and teaching assistants of a primary school. Results from qualitative data indicated that the school practices ranged from highly inclusive to highly exclusive. While some teachers were committed to developing effective IE practices, others displayed negative attitudes towards SEN children. Critical barriers to IE were reported to include deficiency of funding, resources, and training, in addition to parental resistance to inclusion. However, the standards agenda, where schools and teachers are held accountable for their results, emerged as the critical barrier to SEN pupils' inclusion (Glazzard, 2011).

Teachers' concerns about IE can differ between countries. There have been several attempts to explore teacher concerns about IE in several published studies. Further, an extensive review of the literature was conducted to locate similar research on teacher concerns that have been done using CIES or a modified version of it. The literature review yielded several research articles that investigated teacher concerns about IE.

Park, Dimitrov, and Park (2018) employed Sharma and Desai's CIES (2002) scale to examine concerns of 679 early childhood teachers about IE in the United States and the associated role of teachers' background variables. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency reliability was found to be satisfactory for all 21 items (0.77). Findings indicated four correlated latent factors of concerns related to

difficulties about IE, work load with IE teaching, appropriateness of IE, and school resources for IE. In addition, the effects of teachers' training on teaching SEN children, teaching experience, and contact with SEN individuals on their concerns about IE are mediated by their confidence in teaching SEN children. The researchers suggested that enhancing early childhood teachers' confidence for effective IE is linked to teacher training.

An international study was conducted by Sharma, Forlin, and Loreman (2007) to examine concerns of 603 pre-service teachers in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, and Singapore regarding the inclusion of SEN students into regular schools. Results showed that participants from Hong Kong and Singapore were significantly more concerned than participants from Australia and Canada. Confidence in teaching SEN students, knowledge of local disability legislation, and contact with persons with disabilities were the variables found to be related significantly to their general concern levels.

In Ireland, Lambe and Bones (2006), who surveyed 125, and held focus group sessions with 41, student teachers, noted that one of the most concerns reported by teachers about inclusion was classroom congestion. The teachers felt that for inclusion to take place, class sizes need to be reduced and that both classroom teachers and assistants need to be trained on how to work collaboratively. Jordan and colleagues (2009) explained that one of the most persistent concerns towards successful IE is that those without SEN take up the time offered for students without SEN. This supports Lambe and Bones' (2006) claim that providing adequate attention and managing time are critical challenges faced by teachers. O'Toole and Burke (2013) surveyed Irish pre-service teachers' attitudes and concerns about IE. Part of the survey was the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES)

developed by Sharma and Desai (2002), which the researcher used in this study. Results indicated that the student-teachers were mostly positive about inclusion but were a little concerned about the implementation of inclusive practices in their classrooms.

In Ghana, Agbenyega (2007) explored the attitudes and concerns of 100 teachers regarding teaching in inclusive classrooms. He found that teachers' main concerns were about their lack of skills to effectively teach SEN students and lack of resources to accommodate individual differences. The researcher concluded that teachers' acceptance and commitment to implementing inclusion are likely to be affected by their attitudes and concerns. In another study, Kuyini and Mangope (2011) examined student teachers' attitudes and concerns about IE in Ghana and Bostwana. Two hundred and two (202) pre-service teachers from training institutions in both countries completed a three-part questionnaire on background variables, attitudes, and concerns. CIES (Sharma & Desai, 2002), which is employed in the current study, investigated teachers' concerns. While results indicated faintly positive attitudes held by teachers, high concerns about Welfare and Workload (Factor 2) and Resources (Factor1) were identified. The lowest concern factors were Academic (Factor 3) and Acceptance (Factor 4).

In Ethiopia, Mitiku, Alemu, and Mengsitu (2014) investigated the challenges and opportunities for the provision of IE in primary schools. Findings from questionnaires, structured interviews and observations indicated that though IE a little support opportunity it had many challenges that prevented its implementation such as the negative attitude to SEN children, the lack of awareness, commitment, and collaboration.

In Bostwana, Chhabra et al. (2010) found that teachers had concerns about inadequate equipment and the availability of paraprofessionals and funding to support SEN students in schools in GE classrooms. Another study by Mukhopadhyay, Nenty, and Abosi (2012) indicated that teachers expressed their concern about the big class sizes, lack of resources, and support services. Since the majority of teachers did not receive any SE training in their university studies, they felt they are not ready to implement the inclusion processes.

In Hong Kong, Forlin and Chambers (2011) reported that pre-service teachers indicated the least level of concerns about non-acceptance of SEN students by their peers without SEN in GE classrooms followed by their lack of knowledge of instructional techniques in meeting the needs these students. The teachers were most concerned about inadequate resources and a lack of staff to support inclusion.

In Canada, Beres (2001) explored the challenges for IE as perceived by school teachers in Alberta, Canada. The results showed that though 82.93% of the teachers believed the regular classroom was the correct place for the SEN students to learn, 80.48% felt that they were unable to meet the needs of these students. In order to enhance the quality IE, respondents reported the need for more planning and collaboration time, an increase in knowledge about curriculum adjustments for SEN students, smaller class sizes and other professional development activities to serve them better. To improve the quality of inclusive programming, the respondents felt they required more planning and collaboration time. Another study by Horne and Timmons (2009) explored teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and concerns about inclusion in Prince Edward Island schools in Canada. Findings revealed that some of the teachers' significant concerns were planning time, meeting the needs of all students, and ongoing professional development to respond effectively to the increasingly diverse

needs of students in the classroom. A third study in Canada by Sharma and Sokal (2016) indicated that teachers who were extremely inclusive in their classroom rather had significantly lower levels of concerns and positive attitudes to IE.

In India, there have been considerable attempts to identify teacher concerns about IE. The literature review yielded seven research projects that systematically investigated teacher concerns about IE in India. In the earliest study, Sharma (2001) examined the concerns of 310 primary school principals and 484 teachers working in government schools in Delhi and found that both principals and teachers were concerned about the lack of resources, the lack of funding and the lack of training to implement IE. Another study conducted by Shah (2005) surveyed 560 school teachers working in government schools in Ahmedabad and revealed a relative level of concern among these teachers about a lack of infrastructural resources, and the least concerns were about lack of social acceptance of students with disabilities in IE classrooms. Significant differences existed in teacher concerns based on the following background variables: gender, qualifications in SE, teaching experience, and the number of students with disabilities in class. Also, in Delhi, Bhatnagar and Das (2013) surveyed a sample of 470 regular school teachers drawn from private schools. The researcher reported a moderate level of concern among the teachers for the implementation of IE. The teachers reported several concerns including poor infrastructure, financial limitations, and large class sizes, lack of trained teachers, and negative attitudes of teachers, among others. A fourth study was conducted by Sharma et al. (2009) with 478 pre-service teachers enrolled at Pune University in the state of Maharashtra. Respondents in this study also indicated a moderate level of concern about including SEN students in their classrooms. The authors reported that teachers were most concerned about the lack of resources such as lack of funds, lack

of paraprofessional staff, and inappropriate infrastructure. Likewise, Vashishtha and Priya (2013) found that school teachers' concerns about the inclusion of SEN students had a CIES score between the range of 21-35. The teachers did not express any additional stress and anxiety for adjusting such students with typical students. They even did not show any interest in any particular incentives. However, some of them were concerned about the availability of adequate paraprofessional staff and infrastructural difficulties of the school. A sixth study conducted by Yadav and colleagues (2015) sought to identify the concerns of elementary regular school teachers in an urban area in India regarding the inclusion of SEN students into their classrooms and to determine whether significant relationships exist between the teachers' concerns and selected factors in their personal and professional backgrounds. The study employed a two-part questionnaire, one of which was the Concerns about Inclusive Education scale (CIES), adapted and revised (CIES-R), to examine the perceived concerns of 175 general elementary teachers about including SEN students in classrooms in an urban area in India. The data indicated that the teachers were a little concerned about implementing IE in their schools. The highest level of concern was for the factor "academic achievement" related concerns simply because teachers in private schools in India are under increased pressure and inspection to prepare students for hard competitive exams leading to careers in engineering or science-related domains. A significant difference existed in teacher concerns whether they taught in government versus privately managed schools. The seventh study was done by Shah, Das, Desai, and Tiwari (2016) aimed at determining the concerns of primary government school teachers about the inclusion of SEN students in Ahmedabad, India. A total of 560 teachers completed a two - part questionnaire relating to the personal and professional characteristics of the teachers

as well as their concerns about IE. Findings indicated that the teachers were mostly concerned about the lack of infrastructural resources and least concerned about the lack of social acceptance of SEN students in IE classrooms. In addition, teachers' concerns about inclusion varied by their duration of teaching experience with SEN students since teachers who had not taught SEN children showed greater concerns about including them in their classrooms. Significant differences existed in teacher concerns based on gender, qualifications in SE, teaching experience, and the number of SEN students in the class.

In Australia, Subban and Sharma (2006) explored the perceptions of 122 primary school teachers toward the inclusion of students with disabilities into GE classrooms in Victoria. The relationship between specific demographic factors and teachers' attitudes toward and concerns about IE were explored as well. Inclusive Education Scale (Sharma & Desai, 2002) was utilized to determine participants' level of concern on the inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream settings. The findings revealed that teachers who had training in SE held more positive attitudes and exhibited lower levels of concern about implementing IE. In addition, teachers with a disabled family member, and those who were familiar with the legislation showed more positive attitudes toward including students with disabilities, while participants with a close friend with a disability and those who felt more confident about their roles as inclusive educators, experienced fewer concerns about implementing IE. Another study by Forlin et al. (2008) identified the concerns of 228 regular class teachers in Western Australia who include a child with an intellectual disability in their mainstream classroom. The first concern was related to the child's behavior, whereas the second concern had to do with teachers' perceived professional competency, which increased with age and experience. In a recent study, Round and

colleagues (2016) explored the factors perceived by 158 secondary school teachers as concerns to IE in Victoria. The researchers used a two-part scale to collect data from the participants: (1) Participants' demographic variables (e.g. gender, age, contact with persons with disabilities, and highest educational level), and (2) teachers' concerns regarding the inclusion of SEN students into secondary school settings utilizing the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES) (Sharma, & Desai, 2002). The results of the study revealed that Victorian teachers sensed that inclusive practices were an added burden to the heavy workload they had and that the school would not have enough resources needed to implement inclusive practices. Levels of concern were reported to drop when the degree of confidence increased.

In Turkey, Gökdere (2012) examined the concerns, elementary teachers. Findings revealed that teachers' concern levels decreased when they had more confidence levels in dealing with SEN students. Though the contact levels with the SEN children were high, teachers' confidence levels and knowledge were low. The researcher concluded that the awareness levels of the teachers about SE and its importance were low.

The following section tackles the second change agent, school principal, and sheds light on the critical role they represent in terms of IE.

School Principals

Though principals are not the only leaders in the milieu of IE, they do have institutional authority and act as focal interpreters and executors of the national education system policies as well those of the school. Due to their overlapping positions, principals function in the exosystem (in liaison with the school board and decision-makers), in the mesosystem (in liaison with teachers and staff), and in the child's microsystem (in liaison with the child and parents) (Bronfenbrenner &

Morris, 1998). School principals are required to address the needs of SEN students while meeting the challenges of improving student achievement and consequently, school performance. That said, school principals should be well informed regarding the provision of services to SEN students, particularly concerning navigating the mandates of school reform legislation.

The principal's role in IE is very critical in maintaining school culture and climate (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). The role of the principal is to build a shared vision within an inclusive school, and this is one of the critical factors in successfully implementing IE (Ainscow, 2005; Ainscow et al., 2006; DiPaola et al., 2004; Jones, 2006; Praisner, 2003). To lead an inclusive school necessitates the principals' belief that all children can learn to result in providing all children equal access to an accessible curriculum and quality education. Similarly, principals and administrators are expected to exhibit a solid understanding of the legislation and procedures related to IE through the proper and efficient supervision of the educational program for SEN students (Power, 2007). However, most school administrators lack the knowledge, conceptions, and awareness needed to implement IE, especially in the areas of legal issues, IEPs, and academic achievement for SEN students (Burdette, 2010; Frost & Kersten, 2011).

An increasing body of research examines the role of the school principal in building inclusive or exclusive school environments. School administrators with SE knowledge can support IE at the school site and provide a positive impact on the programs (Frost & Kersten, 2011; Wakeman, Browder, Flowers, and Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2006). Many studies support the notion that principals have a vital role in the success or otherwise of inclusive schools (Bateman & Bateman, 2015; Beyer & Johnson, 2005; Guzman, 1997; McLaughlin, 2009; Praisner, 2003; Riehl, 2000).

While constructing inclusive schools often involves significant change for school communities, principals are in a unique position to bring about this change.

Guzman (1997) emphasized eight critical tasks for school administrators in being effective instructional leaders for SE. These are establishing useful communication systems with staff, attending and monitoring Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings, building and maintaining relationships with parents, establishing and modeling a shared philosophy about the delivery of services, supporting data collection, and demonstrating and supporting problem-solving practices. Beyer and Johnson (2005) confirmed the need for proper accessibility, instructional materials, administrative participation in IEP conventions, knowledge of legislation, establishing a supportive environment, supervising services, and building positive staff relationships. Likewise, McLaughlin (2009) indicated three related characteristics for success as being the knowledge of policies and laws of SEN education, maintaining a positive culture, and the facilitation of participation in assessment and GE activities.

Due to accountability directives, school administrators must follow the laws governing SE and provision of services to students identified as exceptional (Bateman & Bateman, 2015). Principals are also in a unique position to model inclusive attitudes, beliefs, and practices, and the modeling of such behavior has been shown to advance the inclusion and acceptance of diverse students (Praisner, 2003). In addition, principals are in a commanding position to create a shared vision towards an inclusive school (Ainscow, 2005). Similarly, principals are in a strong position to encourage the training and professional development paths of teachers (MacArthur et al., 2005). As stated previously, active professional development has

been strongly linked to inclusive schools (Ainscow, 2003; UNESCO, 2009; Sharma et al., 2007; Dixon et al. 2007).

While sponsoring inclusionary practices in mainstream schools, principals must communicate a clear rationale to enable staff members better to recognize how inclusive pedagogy is implemented and why it is a valued goal (Valeo 2008). Principals who hold an adequate understanding of the needs of SEN students and the daily challenges that classroom teachers encounter to educate those students support both the students and teachers in their everyday functioning (DiPaola, Tschannen-Moran, & Walther-Thomas 2004; Jones, 2006). Though administrators do not have to be experts in SE, they must show a basic level of knowledge of the SE leadership skills critical to dealing with the "learning and behavioral challenges" of students with disabilities (DiPaola et al., 2004: 11).

In an active inclusive school, principals are expected to provide sufficient time for teachers to build relevant collaborative skills of mutual trust and commitment to work together, self-reliance, differentiated instruction, curriculum development, problem solving, assistive technology, confidence, and self-efficacy in teaching diverse students of different abilities (Philpott, Furey, & Penney, 2010). More importantly, in-service training for both administrators as well as teachers is a priority for the understanding of essential IE concepts. Waldron, McLeskey, and Redd (2011) reviewed the practices of a school principal of a highly effective inclusive school. The principal was found to be resilient and positive on the focus of success for all students. She ensured the success by collaborating with teachers to set the direction for the school; restructuring the organization; providing high-quality teaching in all settings; improving working conditions; checking student progress using data generated by teachers.

Principals' knowledge and belief regarding IE are very critical in determining its effective implementation. Accordingly, exploring the conceptions and challenges of school principals towards IE helps identify the inclusion or exclusion of SEN students. Regretfully, despite its significance, there is a lack of literature on the roles of principal governance on Lebanese schools' IE reforms.

IE Conceptions Held by Principals

A wealth of reviewed research reveals that the efficiency of educating a diversity of students in the classroom can be directly related to the individual and collective attitudes of teachers and administrators toward IE (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Forlin, Earle, Loremann, & Sharma, 2011; Sharma et al., 2012; Urton, Wilbert, & Henneman, 2014). A person's attitude can be influenced by factors that include the individual's perceived level of competence, the collective group's level of self-efficacy, mindsets regarding new school reform movements such as inclusion school models (Urton et al., 2014). Former research findings indicated that administrators are still "in charge of the program," (Valeo, 2008, p. 13) whose beliefs, attitudes, a hands-off and overseer has historically characterized school practices.

Unlike teachers, principals and IE are less studied. The literature on principals' conceptions as explored by other researchers in various developing and developed countries was reviewed for having a more transparent view of the researched topic.

In Hong Kong, Yan and Sin (2014) surveyed 209 principals to assess the five components of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB): attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavior control, intention, and behavior. The results revealed that principals' attitudes and perceived subjective norms were substantial and significant

predictors of their intention to implement IE. However, the predictive power of perceived behavior control on intention was not significant.

In Canada, Valeo (2008) examined how principals and teachers understood the role of the school administrator in supporting regular classroom teachers in including SEN students. Findings revealed divergent perceptions between principals and teachers regarding the availability of SEN supports. While teachers expressed the lack of support by their principals, principals reported that they took care of support by handling administrative issues of inclusion. Another study by Jahnukainen (2015) explored the perceptions of school principals in terms of organizing inclusive and SE in two well-performing, western school systems in Finland and Alberta. Results showed that most of the principals were still describing their current practices using the language of integration rather than inclusion though the inclusive rhetoric is well maintained within education policy documents and that the traditional idea of the least restrictive environment was prevalent in most educational decisions. The principals' views were surprisingly similar in both Finland and Alberta, even though the contextual and historical trends were different. A more recent study by Lyons, Thompson, and Timmons (2016) attempted to investigate values, knowledge, and perspectives on those actively involved in four successful inclusive elementary schools identified as being successful in the implementation of an inclusive approach in a Canadian province. Analysis showed the following fundamental values and practices from the perspectives on respondents: (a) highly valued learning and relationships related to school experience; (b) a strong commitment to inclusion; (c) dominance of teacher responsibility for all students; (d) teachers' teamwork approach to support all students and each other; and (e)

intentional individual and collective efforts for the sake of realizing and reinforcing commitment to effective inclusion education practices.

In the USA, Praisner (2003) emphasized that preparation programs provided principals with little knowledge relevant to the implementation of inclusion. Despite the indication for school principals to be trained in SE systems and legislation issues, many have received a little training related to SE in their preparation program. Praisner (2003) found that a school principal's attitude was affected by past positive or negative experiences with disabled students. Hence, she noted that principals with positive attitudes towards IE are more likely to place disabled students in inclusive settings, whereas principals with negative attitudes towards IE are more likely to include disabled students in more restricted environments. Another study by Wakeman et al. (2006) investigated principals' knowledge of SE and the variables that were associated with that knowledge. Findings from the survey indicated that though the principals were generally well informed of SE issues, they reported limited understanding about current issues such as self-determination practices, functional behavioral assessments, and universally designed lessons. When checking if principals were well prepared for their work with SEN students, Wakeman et al., (2006) reported that the most significant result of their study was the relationship between knowledge and practice. Principals who had more knowledge about SE contributed more to SEN within their schools.

Therefore, administrators who know more, accomplish more. The concern that emerges here is that principals lacking in knowledge can do little to IE and, thus, are not able to maintain the needed support and guidance for staff and students. Along the same line, Power (2007) aimed at exploring areas critical to school principals' knowledge and understanding of the policies and measures concerning SE

in Virginia. A sample of 462 school principals responded to survey questions about SE procedural safeguards and educational services. The researcher explained that 64% indicated what she referred to as an area of concern about the administrators' level of knowledge regarding SEs laws. Power (2007) recommended further research on this issue as a means of enhancing pre-service education programs and professional development for both teachers and school administrators. In a fourth study, Collins (2008) in New Orleans, Louisiana, attempted to determine the level of knowledge principals had about SE laws, policies, and procedures. An analysis of the study's data revealed a substantial difference in the knowledge levels of school principals in the various school types, and between their practices. However, training, personal experiences, and demographics, when looked at as indicators or predictors, did not show any significance in the levels of knowledge of the school principals, there was no significance (Collins, 2008). Going further, Ball and Green (2014) examined the attitudes and perceptions of school principals of public schools about the inclusion of SEN students in GE classrooms. The survey variables included demographic factors, training and experience, attitudes toward inclusion, and perceptions of the most appropriate placement for students with disabilities. The findings of 138 administrators revealed they had slightly negative attitudes toward inclusion and inadequate training and experience relative to inclusive practices. Although school leaders encouraged including students with moderate disabilities, they did not find IE appropriate for with severe disabilities. The researchers noticed a negative correlation between the administrators' attitudes, training and experience and a fact that necessitated quality training and experience for school leaders. A recent study in Louisiana, conducted by Burton-Becnel (2017) investigated the knowledge of school principals regarding SE laws and policies, and best practices. A

survey was used to study public school principals' knowledge, beliefs, and practices related to their daily SE administrative duties. Results showed that only 10% of the administrators held SE certification, and 89.4% completed less than three SE content courses in their pre-service leadership programs. The researcher reported that there were no apparent statistically significant differences in levels of knowledge regarding SE content, beliefs, and practices when comparing administrators whose schools met their Adequate Yearly Progress goal and those leading schools where the goal was not met. Besides, there was no statistically significant relationship between training, levels of knowledge, and school success.

In Trinidad, Tobago, Conrad, and Brown (2011) explored the perceptions of 18 elementary school principals about IE. Even though respondents reported an ethical readiness to endorse the inclusive practice, they revealed resistance to accept such students in the classrooms.

In Australia, Graham and Spandagou (2011) explored the views of primary school principals on IE. Results indicated that the principals' conception of what 'inclusion' means and the characteristics of the school community had a strong influence on their attitudes towards IE and on their success in inclusive practices. IE is conceptualized at both macro and micro levels: at a whole school/community level, and/or at the level of specific individuals.

In Africa, Mthethwa (2008) surveyed 212 principals to investigate their knowledge and attitudes towards IE. The findings revealed that: (a) The majority of principals (65.1%) had a high level of knowledge about IE and an SEN child; (b) principals' teaching experience had a positive influence on their IE knowledge; (c) a considerable percentage (60.8%) of principals revealed positive attitude towards IE; (d) gender and teaching experience had no effect on principals' attitudes towards IE;

and (e) a positive relationship existed between principals' knowledge and attitudes towards IE. Another study conducted in South Africa by Gous, Elof, and Moen (2014) sought to determine how principals of private GE schools understood the concept of IE. Results indicated that IE, as perceived by the participating principals, was extremely personal, pragmatic, and emotional. The general philosophy of the principals aimed at establishing a sense of belonging and respect for all the children they served.

In Germany, Urton et al. (2014) conducted a study to investigate the how sense of efficacy and experience influenced the attitudes principals and teachers had towards IE. Results revealed that individuals with considerable self-efficacy or observed proficiency could positively lead their staff to provide successful SEN provisions and, thus, were able to nurture a school culture that endorses IE. The researchers concluded that adequate supervision of inclusive schooling depends on the mutual framework of its principal, teachers, and work team.

In Ghana, Kuyini and Desai (2007) attempted to determine whether principals' and teachers' attitudes towards and knowledge of IE, as well as principals' expectations of teachers in implementing inclusion, were predictors of effective teaching practices in their classrooms. One hundred twenty-eight educators (20 principals and 108 teachers) from 20 primary schools in two districts in Ghana, responded to Attitude Towards Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES), Knowledge of Inclusive Education Scale (KIES) and Principals' Expectations Scale (PES). Thirty-seven of the responding teachers were observed during instructional delivery in their classrooms. The results indicated that though attitudes towards inclusion and knowledge of inclusion predicted effective teaching practices, principals' expectations did not. Thus, it was found that attitudes and knowledge were

prognostic of useful IE, yet, the principals' expectations, which were found not to affect teaching practices were undoubtedly critical to improving teacher submission with policy requirements. Accordingly, changes in principals' expectations are more likely to positively influence classroom participation, access to curriculum, and learning outcomes of SEN students (Kuyini & Desai, 2007).

In Lebanon, there is a problem of convincing school managers of the feasibility and value of inclusion (Khochen & Radford, 2012). GE policies run counter to inclusion in their emphasis on competition between schools and selection by them. They adopt an approach to the raising of standards, which stresses simple, measurable attainments and so concentrates on outcomes rather than the conditions, including the social conditions, for learning.

In light of the reviewed literature, as agents of change in inclusive schools, principals are required to have some essential competencies. First, principals should have knowledge and skills of efficient instruction, assessment, and management to contribute to teacher support while developing the appropriate contexts for educating students with diversified needs and potentials. Under the knowledge element comes the knowledge of relevant legislation, instructional practices, and curriculum modification. Second, principals need to form and support teams by providing them with adequate time to meet and get feedback for their work. Third, principals are expected to support collaboration among teachers and staff by facilitating their interactions comfortably and effectively. Finally, principals in inclusive schools need to have a clear vision that holds a commitment from the school and community to endorse education for all.

IE Challenges Perceived by Principals

An inclusive school culture arises with the committed governance of principals. Focusing on competition between schools, adopting an approach to the raising of standards, stressing simple, measurable achievements and outcomes more than the conditions, GE policies run against inclusion (Booth, 2003). According to Patterson et al. (2000), school principals continue to face challenges in the domain of SE. The first challenge is that of accountability in reauthorization, demanding SE students to participate in official testing and accountability programs. The second challenge lies in the vague and different definitions of the least restrictive environment (LRE) and inclusion. Another challenge comprises disagreements from external groups such as support groups about the value of inclusive practices. Besides, there is the necessity for collaboration between general and SE teachers and paraprofessionals to modify their curriculum and teaching methods. Finally, principals encounter the difficult task of coordinating the administrative challenges with SE challenges involving buildings and facilities, funding for education, and fear of grievances.

The literature on principals' challenges as explored by other researchers in various developing and developed countries was reviewed for having a stronger view of the researched topic.

In Hong Kong, Kim Fong Poon-McBrayer (2017) investigated the dilemmas and measures confronting principals' when they led changes to activate IE. Findings from interviews with ten principals of recognized for their effective IE practices identified two dilemmas: (a) principals' struggles between benefits and issues of implementing IE and (b) arbitrary primary decisions while the need for crucial staff contribution was required. It was because of the traditional organizational culture and

inadequate personnel capacities that impeded the effective implementation of IE. The participating principals reported that building a shared vision helped increase teacher commitment to reforms. In another study, Poon-McBrayer and Wong (2013) investigated the reasons for school leaders' decision to participate in and what they did to support IE in their schools as well as challenges encountered. While the partnership with teachers and a shared vision were the key to successful implementation, a competitive education system, lack of resources, and teacher training were reported as the main challenges.

In Bangladesh, Mullick, Deppeler and Sharma (2012) interviewed school principals in ten regular primary schools and reported the following challenges: (1) Concerns related to SEN student acceptance; (2) lack of collaboration with parents and community; (3) teachers' resistance due to limited professional development prospects; (4) paucity of necessary resources; and (5) inaccessible physical infrastructure.

In Bostwana, Mukhopadhyay et al. (2012) found that school-heads expressed concerns such as lack of training in SE, deficiency of resources, and high student-teacher ratio as barriers to the successful implementation of IE.

In Trinidad and Tobago, principals of elementary schools reported several barriers to IE: Lack of teacher training, negative teacher attitudes, lack of information and support from the ministry of education, inadequate space and physical resources, and lack of time and the unsympathetic or hostile parents and students (Conrad & Brown, 2011).

In Georgia, Kavelashvili (2017) attempted to uncover the challenges that hinder the implementation of IE. Findings showed the indifferent attitudes of teachers and parents towards inclusion, absence of self-awareness to the issue

amongst educators, slightest involvement of parents, and need for infrastructural development.

In the Solomon Islands, Sharma, Loreman, and Simi (2017) researched the perceived barriers and facilitators of disability-IE and the outcomes of an effective system of IE. Interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with a variety of stakeholders and individual key informants, such as parents of SEN children and government representatives. The respondents identified four barriers to IE: (1) Fear of discrimination; (2) personal traits of SEN children; (3) geography; (4) lack of government support.

In the United States of America, Iowa, the researchers Brotherson, Sheriff, Milburn, and Schertz (2001) studied the difficulties and obstacles perceived by school administrators. Findings obtained from individual interviews and focus groups revealed the following challenges: (a) The growing number of SEN students, as well as an increase in the severity and diversity of disorders; (b) the feeling of uncertainty experienced in providing provisions to different students; (c) the lack of qualified staff to teach SEN students; (d) the lack of previous training and experience of these teachers, (e) the feeling that the success of inclusion is external and not within their control; (f) the lack of time, money, and space to develop inclusive programs; and (g) the wide gap between the mandate they were given, the realities of classrooms, and the lack of support for research. In addition, the interviewed school administrators did not consider themselves as part of IE and did not tend to express their intentions to become successful inclusive leaders freely.

Doyle's research (2002) conducted using individual interviews with 18 school administrators showed that few of them believed in inclusive schooling and tended to emphasize the restrictions rather than the benefits. Instead, they seemed to be

inclined to school integration for which the inclusion of SEN students was merely a method of placement without full inclusion. Furthermore, many administrators indicated that collaboration between teachers remained their greatest challenge. Even though plans assumed to meet this challenge had to do with intentions to restructure the school and adapt schedules to facilitate teamwork and support to include students in the classroom, these actions were not accompanied with strategies to change the school's culture, and thus, failed to establish an inclusive school.

In Turkey, Cetinkaya, and Inci (2013) examined primary school administrators' attitudes (head and deputy head) towards IE. Results received from the surveys of 380 school principals indicated that principals who had in-service training in SE showed more positive attitudes than those who did not and that the attitudes of the principals towards IE vary significantly in relevance to the age variable. Another study by Ira (2015) assessed the knowledge levels of school principals about IE at primary schools. Surveys received from 47 school principals using IE indicated that they did not have enough information about IE, they did not get any information before IE, they did not have enough preparations for IE practices, they did not receive any aid and support in inclusion functions, there were not any SE teachers in inclusive primary schools, inclusive students did not get sufficient supportive educational services, teachers did not sufficiently apply IEPs and, thus, they faced a lack of education materials.

The following section deals with the IE conceptions and challenges of decision-makers as reviewed in the relevant literature.

Decision-makers

Decision-makers in the education sector are accountable to both parliament and the public. Situated at the exosystem, decision-makers by virtue of their position

are expected to endorse IE, issue, mandate, and implement IE legislation (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). They are in charge of maintaining or improving the quality of education and overlooking expenditure. Through legislation regulations, funding, and inspection, they influence school practice. Pijl and Frissen (2009) stated that these steps are essential and necessary conditions for IE. However, though useful, alone, these steps do not automatically result in less segregation within a reasonable period.

Policies set by the state are vital to supporting principals in developing inclusive schools for all students (Goddard & Hart, 2007). Decision-makers are responsible for monitoring inclusive school practices, providing a flexible and accessible curriculum. The reviewed literature reveals that the development of IE mainly depends on policymakers' declaration and commitment to IE and on schools' readiness to include diversity matters in their policies (Loreman, Forlin, & Sharma, 2014; Watkins, & Ebersold, 2016).

Decision-makers need to declare their goals at all levels for the sake of a consistent policy and strategies of its implementation aiming at eliminating barriers that tend to exclude some groups of children from inclusive schooling (Loreman et al., 2014). Loreman et al. (2014) pointed to some characteristics of good IE policy that is: (a) articulated at the state level in consistence with international benchmarks, and mirrored at the school level; (b) developed and/or customized in collaboration with all stakeholders and members of the school; (c) based on eliminating barriers to IE; and (d) directed at supporting IE with the necessary resources and procedures to identify SEN pupils.

IE Conceptions Held by Decision-makers

It is understood that it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to accommodate student-centered accessible schools and curricula that are continuously implemented, elaborated, and assessed. The result of such schools and the output of their evaluation will pave the way to innovative teaching and efficient learning. According to the 2005 UNESCO manual on IE, a number of misconceptions bordering inclusion at the policy level hinder accepting an inclusive approach, for inclusion is looked at as (a) expensive; (b) demanding social, attitudinal change; (c) a positive theoretical notion but which is difficult to realize; (d) requiring specialized proficiencies and abilities that are hard to acquire; (e) the responsibility of the Social Ministry and not of the Ministry of Education; and (f) a disability-specific issue. Hence, "Policymakers, parents, teachers and other stakeholders in the school need to realize that inclusion is a process which requires changes at both the level of the education system as well as the school level" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 23). In other words, change is correlated to rectifying their wrong conceptions.

IE Challenges Perceived by Decision-makers

There is a dearth of research studies on IE conceptions and challenges as perceived by decision-makers. Pijl and Frissen (2009) stated that policymakers need to know that schools and classrooms are complicated settings where educators need to have some flexibility in the development of their inclusive teaching. They also stress the need to provide access to support from governing bodies, administration, colleagues, and other professionals in this process. To support the shift towards inclusion, "the only feasible and desirable option is to train, motivate, and influence teachers in schools" (Pijl & Frissen, 2009, p. 374). Booth and Ainscow (2011) stated that if an IE system is our goal, our processes to getting there must be inclusive as

well. Along the same line, to promote inclusion, the Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (UNESCO 2009) is clear about the significance of active collaboration between all change agents:

> Active collaboration between policymakers, education personnel, other stakeholders, reduce barriers to inclusion through the active involvement of members of the local community, such as political and religious leaders, local education officials and the media. (p. 14)

The UNESCO policies encourage engagement between policymakers, educators in schools, families, and communities in order to foster IE. However, to Sharma, Loreman, and Macanawai (2016), the inclusive practice should precede policy. Built on the views of 39 stakeholders from four countries (Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu) about IE five themes emerged, with that of culture being the strongest. Other themes included context-driven policies, the role of families, school reform, and effective employment of resources. The researchers concluded that homegrown culture and milieu need to be considered if successful IE implementation is sought (Sharma et al., 2016).

According to UNESCO (2009), one of the main concerns and substantial areas that need to be addressed in order to develop IE in a complete policy cycle are: (a) Attitudinal changes and policy development; (b) early childhood care and education in terms of inclusion; (c) inclusive curricula; and (e) resources and legislation.

The attitudinal changes and policy development elements that the report (UNESCO, 2009) mentioned are: (a) The term IE needs further clarification by educators, governmental and non-governmental organizations, policymakers and social actors; (b) misconceptions, awareness and support in society about IE needs to

be tackled through advocacy and dialogue at regional and national levels; (c) long-term sustainable policies of economic and social development need to consider IE; (d) the right to education as primary and shared approach is to be guaranteed; (e) regional and national dialogues should ensure public understanding, awareness, and support of policies; and (f) Ensuring inclusion via early childhood interventions need to be looked at as a workable way to undertaking the right to education for all children.

The 2009 UNESCO report also revealed decision-makers' concerns about securing early childhood inclusion and educational curricula. The first concern is the initial interventions needed for inclusive schooling to sustain education for all. Another concern is a clearly stated curriculum designed by multiple stakeholders with a smooth transition from early childhood to secondary levels in order to retain students and prevent dropouts. In addition, flexible learning and assessment necessitate some curricular modifications with some space for formal and non-formal education, for a highly academic overloaded curriculum is ineffective for inclusion.

The last challenge faced by decision-makers as presented by the UNESCO report (2009) is related to resources and legislation. There is the concern of reviewing and modifying the national law to include conceptions of IE. Moreover, the compulsory national law that should be promoted and implemented has to reflect the signed and ratified international conventions. On top of the challenges is the proper, effective, transparent, and equitable allocation of budget for IE. Developing countries struggle to get a suitable funding arrangement to upgrade the education system or support special needs programs. It was estimated that educational services for SEN children could cost 2.3 times more than the education for children without SEN (Chaikind, Danielson & Brauen as cited in Eleweke & Rodda, 2002).

Consequently, IE is not a priority among the government's budget within many developing countries. For instance, Ajodhia-Andrews and Frankel (2010) examined IE within Guyana from the perspectives on policymakers, teachers, and parents. Framed within a social-constructivist perspective, the researchers used grounded theory for the data collection and analysis. Findings revealed four potential barriers to implementing IE in Guyana: (a) Negative attitudes and perceptions toward SEN children primarily due to stigma issues; (b) lack of knowledgeable and experienced IE advocates; and (c) inadequate resources including teacher training, paraprofessionals, funds, equipment, and materials. In another study, Thompson and colleagues (2015) conducted a study to explore Canadian teacher association leadership personnel's awareness of IE. 14 participants were interviewed, representing 12 Canadian jurisdictions. Findings showed that leadership participants reported that their teachers were well aware of the IE policy, which they mostly endorsed, a fact the availability of resources conditions that.

According to Watkins and Ebersold (2016), challenges at a policy level are related to: the lack of a comprehensive policy to improve IE and initiate early childhood intervention; the lack of non-discrimination legislation; unawareness of the rights of people with disabilities; scarce funding; absence of teacher training systems; and physical accessibility issues within and outside of the school setting in addition to the lack of monitoring the provisions and effectiveness of IE. Monitoring IE policies is quite essential to identify the extent to which the education system considers providing SEN learners with the equitable opportunities, qualifications, and competencies required by the labor market to be included in society.

In the case of Lebanon, the challenges faced by the Lebanese educational system are numerous: (a) A perceived deficiency of high-quality teaching in public

schools, especially at the primary level; (b) low achievement levels of students in Lebanon in comparison to their international peers; (c) lack of teachers in specific subject areas and in certain districts of the country; (d) lack of technology integration in the national curriculum; and (e) poor infrastructure necessary for technology and Internet connectivity (MEHE, 2012a).

The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017 - 2020 produced by the Government of Lebanon and the United Nations in January 2017 stated:

> Despite several efforts by the current Minister of Education, there are insufficient and inefficiently implemented policy frameworks to adequately address barriers to strengthened delivery of education services due to interminable delays of Lebanese political processes. There is a need to develop policy frameworks to support decentralization of school governance, a sound teacher professional development strategy, alternate pathways to formal education safeguards against violence in schools, the inclusion of children with special needs. (p. 4)

While IE as a theoretical and empirical movement currently underlies the educational policy informing educational practices for students with a disability in Australia, the USA, and the UK that represent developed countries, some developing countries have followed suit. The following section presents how IE is practiced overseas in Europe, the USA, as well as in Saudi Arabia.

Inclusive Education Overseas

The Salamanca statement has stimulated educational change and is even supported by the USA, Canada, Europe, as well as in some Arab states. The result was the foundation of the most open environment for SEN students.

United States of America

In the USA, in the 1800s, the educational programs for SEN students were limited to special schools on specific disabilities due to inadequate funding and public indifference towards SEN learners (Alexander & Alexander, 2012). Although many school systems have made the shift towards inclusion, full inclusion has not been met comprehensively anywhere (Richardson & Powell, 2011). Since the 1980s, integration and mainstreaming have been interchangeably used in spite of the ideological emergence of the inclusion movement. Meanwhile, integration was somewhat based on the idea that the child needs to be ready for being placed in a regular classroom, inclusion puts pressure on schools to be ready to serve and educate all the children with and without SENs among their peers (Jahnukainen, 2015).

Laws and policies are decreed in some states where SEN students are not different from any other student and where the GE classroom was meant for almost all students. However, other states kept both systems of special and GE (Ferguson, 2008). Although more and more SEN pupils are studying in regular classrooms, Jahnukainen (2015) confirms that they are mostly those with mild/moderate learning difficulties/disabilities and pupils with more severe SENs tend to remain excluded in more separate classrooms.

Inclusion as a term is not in the USA law; however, inclusive practice comes from the federal law governing SE (IDEA, 2004). The provisions for IE are in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) provision of this law, which demands that all students with 'disabilities' have the legal right to be placed in the LRE (IDEA, 2004).

Before the LRE requirement of IDEA, SEN students received SE services in a pull-out model. While inclusion streamlines the way provisions are provided to

SEN students, so they are educated in the mainstream classroom. Causton-Theoharis and Theoharis (2014) explain that the LRE clarifies that the GE classroom is the first place to be considered for placing an SEN student before more restrictive choices are considered. In addition, an SEN child cannot be excluded from a GE classroom only to meet the requirements of the school (IDEA, 2004). Instead, supplementary aids and services to support placement in the GE classroom need to be provided.

Thus, specific measures are to be taken such as modifications to the GE curriculum, assistance of a teacher with SE training, special seating, large print materials, peer tutors, graphic organizers, use of computers, use of computer-assisted devices, taped lectures, minimized seat time, training for the GE teacher, and other possible accommodations. The law necessitates that educators utilize all of the available supplementary aids and services before deciding on relocating the SEN child in a particular classroom (Causton & Theoharis, 2014).

Ferguson (2008) explained that according to the 2004 Annual Report to Congress, 51% of SEN students (ages 6–21) spent not less than 80% of their time in the GE settings. Other states, like North Dakota, Oregon, and Colorado had a higher percentage (<70%) of SEN students in GE classrooms. However, despite the improved outcomes of SEN students, across states, there is a significant discrepancy in the feasibility of access to GE schools, with 23 states that do not reach the national average (Ferguson, 2008).

Canada

Canada has ten provinces and three territories, each of which is responsible for education. With a reasonable adult literacy rate (99%), the 13 education systems maintain a publicly funded obligatory schooling to all Canadian citizens from

kindergarten to grade 12. Schooling in Canada is rather standard and has an excellent international rank (Greg & Timmons, 2009).

IE is served in all provinces and territories, and children with sensory, physical, and learning disabilities are included in classes with their peers in neighborhood schools. Nevertheless, due to the structure of the educational system and the focus on curriculum rather than a child in junior high and secondary classes at this level, children with intellectual disabilities are still segregated. While IE is defined differently in each province and territory whose department or ministry of education has its act or directives addressing the need for advances in inclusive schooling. Because of the diversity of Canada's population and the unique learning needs of children are entering the conventional school system, policies have been changed. For instance, Alberta welcomes immigrants who have particular English as a second language and learning needs, and consequently, Alberta's Commission on Learning 2003 report (cited in Gerg & Timmons, 2009) recommends adaptation to meet the needs of society:

> Schools will continue to meet their students' diverse needs, especially as the number of children with special needs increases and expectations continues for children to be integrated to the extent possible in the regular classroom. On the positive side, a growing awareness of the need to address the diverse needs of children hopefully will mean better integration of services and the development of schools as centers of a wide range of services for children. (p.254)

According to Gerg and Timmons (2009), Canada might surface as a leader in IE for the many positive examples of inclusive practice from inclusive preschools to university curricula designed to include adults with intellectual disabilities.

Europe IE Practices

Since Europe is a part of this world where countries are considered as developed, this means that they do not struggle with social and financial issues. Hence, most European countries are capable of funding programs and projects to support Education and make it more inclusive. To promote IE, the European Commission has continuous cooperation with two non-governmental organizations: UNESCO and the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (Drabble, 2013).

Though most European countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons (CRDP), support for full inclusion is still controversial (Mittler, 2012 cited in Kavelashvili, 2017). Not all the European countries were successful in developing efficient IE except for those who have followed the international and European legislation (Kavelashvili, 2017), having at the same time the required socio- economic conditions and the necessary services to underpin such a movement towards 'inclusion.' The context of IE in Austria, the United Kingdom, and Turkey are briefly presented below.

Germany. Having ratified the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Germany became a legally binding the country to create an inclusive school system (Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission, 2009, cited in Scheer et al., 2015). While the term inclusion is global, in Germany, the main focus is on the "inclusion" of pupils with special needs into the regular school system. The term integration was traditionally used to refer to coeducation of children with and without special needs, but now, inclusion is seen to be "full inclusion" with the presence, participation, and achievement of all students; and "integration" to be mainstreaming or partial inclusion. Teacher education at the university level

encompasses two stages, theoretical (4–5 years), and practical teaching (1.5–2 years) organized by the state's teacher education centers.

A great variety of schools and organizational forms exist in Germany where every federal state has the legislative power to organize its own school system. In every state, children attend either a general school or a special needs school. SEN students are integrated into primary schools, secondary schools, or comprehensive schools. Thus, the school system in Germany as a whole is not inclusive, but the country and state are on their way toward developing an inclusive school system.

Austria. Austria is well-known for its education quality around the world. Culturally rich, the high-income country offers affordable education for all. According to UNESCO-IBE (2008), more than 50% of all SEN students attended integrative classes during the school year 2006-07. SEN learners may be educated either in special schools customized to their respective impairments or in integrative classes at primary and secondary schools. Parents are given the choice between these two forms of education. Thus, students are taught according to special school curricula or adapted primary school/lower secondary school curricula (UNESCO-IBE, 2008).

In an attempt to desegregate SEN students, Austria initiated a campaign for their integration in basic education. Rutte (2005) explains that the government experimented in pilot schools two models of integration prior to passing the legislation. The first of those two models were having small special classes for any SEN students, inside the mainstream schools. After realizing that SEN students were still learning and acting separately from the rest of the students in addition to being marginalized, a different model of integration was considered. As such, the new project designed a structure of classrooms with one regular teacher and at least one

SE teacher in every classroom. It was conditioned that each class should not include more than four SEN children within a total amount of twenty students (Rutte, 2005). The results of this second model revealed that the integration of children with SEN into the regular classrooms benefited both the students, disabled and nondisabled and the teachers, who turned out to be eager to transform and improve their teaching methods and practices.

The United Kingdom. Similar to Austria, many years of research and activities have been made for the promotion of IE for disabled children within its Education System. Each of the four countries of the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) has its different educational systems. The 1981 Education Act stated that students should be educated in the mainstream wherever possible (HMSO, 1981). However, the educational policies for SEN students have been focused on the identification of SENs and the provision of support to meet these needs; meanwhile, special schools remained an option for those whose needs could not be met in the mainstream (Vlachou 1997).

The Warnock Report (DES, 1978) was a significant development in the legislative context regarding inclusion in the UK. In 1981, the Education Act was released based on Warnock Report and was a remarkable shift towards the inclusion of special needs rather than children with disabilities. The 1981 Act marked the initiation of the idea of having a special educator where possible, available in mainstream schools. In the UK setting, 'integration' is linked with the publication of the Warnock Report (1978) where the term was considered as part of a broader movement of 'normalization' in Western countries (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Warnock (2005) argued that inclusion is not necessarily educating all children 'under

the same roof,' for ensuring that all children are engaged in learning and developing to the best of their ability is more important than their placement.

The Code of Practice, first published in 1994 revised in 2001 and 2014 (DfE, cited in Lauchlan & Greig, 2015) is a fundamentally important practice document regarding inclusion policy in England. The most noteworthy recent changes in the Code include the extension of the age range to be covered from 0 to 25 years through which they are provided with proper education and successful transition to adulthood. Yet, there is still obvious support for the use of individual schools and parents to have the right to choose:

Special schools, special post-16 institutions and specialist colleges all have an important role in providing for children and young people with SEN . . . Alongside the general presumption of mainstream education, parents of children with an Education, Health and Care plan and young people with such a plan have the right to seek a place at a special school, special post-16 institution or specialist college (DfE, 2014, p. 28).

Whilst Warnock (1978, 2005) and DfE (2014) support the provisions of special schools, the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) published An Index for Inclusion (Booth, & Ainscow, 2011) with indicators of success for inclusive schooling, to be utilized as a guide for everyday practices inside and outside the classroom. Three broad areas of interest along with their indicators are covered in this index: (a) Inclusive policies; (b) inclusive cultures; and (c) inclusive practices. As an example, some of the indicators reported by CSIE are:

Everyone in a school needs to feel welcome, to be treated equally, to get help from his/her classmates and teacher and to participate in the assessment process and, furthermore, has the right to participate actively in all the subjects and achieve a

satisfying level of knowledge. From the teacher perspective, the lessons are planned for every student's skills and talents, with the teaching techniques and strategies to follow the same philosophy (Booth, & Ainscow, 2011, p.23).

Hence, it is clear that, in the UK, there are two ideological views to SEN's debate. Advocates of IE argue that inclusion is a civil rights issue and that any exclusion damages not only the potentials of the SEN individual but also the unity of society (Booth, & Ainscow, 2011). Others (DfE, 2014; Warnock, 2005), however, approach the issue from an educational effectiveness position, arguing that the individual has a right to receive an effective education that caters to their disabilities and needs. However, to Lauchlan and Greig (2015), albeit these arguments, it is essential to consider whether there is any research evidence either way since it is an undeniable fact that individual schools do exist in England.

Turkey. Acting as a bond between the continents of Europe and Asia, Turkey is one of the most fast-growing countries in the Middle East and a member of the European Union (EU). The history of SE went back to the time of the Ottoman Empire in 1455 and initiated in Istanbul by Fatih Sultan Mehmet, who was ruler of the Ottoman Empire at that time (Senel, 1998 cited in Melekoglu, Cakirioglu & Malmgren 2009).

The idea of IE has gained attention in Turkey since1983 with the passage of the legislation mandating the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classes. This legislation was followed in 1997 by a decree to include SEN students in regular education classrooms (Rakap & Kaczmarek, 2010; Melekoglu, Cakirioglu, and Malmgren 2009). Donmez (2000, cited in Melekoglu, Cakirioglu, and Malmgren 2009) highlights the basic principles of the 1997 SE decree which emphasizes the importance of including students with special needs in regular education classrooms:

(1) SE is considered an indispensable branch of general public education; (2) all children with SE needs should be provided with SE services irrespective of the severity of their disabilities; (3) early intervention is a crucial step for SE provision; (4) children with special needs should receive individualized educational programs addressing their unique needs; (5) children with special needs should be educated in the least restrictive environments with their nondisabled peers; (6) vocational education and rehabilitation services should be provided without interruption for children with special needs; and (7) for all levels, the relevant institutions SE Regulation should plan education services for children with special needs (No. 573).

Turkey also signed the Education for All Initiative (EFA) alongside the passing of the Turkish Disability Act in 2005, renewed its Education Regulations for Disabled Students document and introduced IE as a solution to the problems experienced by students with disabilities (Ciyer, 2010; Meral, 2014). In 2009, the government signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Meral, 2014).

The SE Services Regulation of Turkey refers to inclusion as the education of SEN with their peers without SEN in a regular education setting where these students can participate in full-time or part-time inclusion as directed by their Individualized Education Program (Eurydice, 2016; Cakiroglu & Melekoglu, 2014). Ninty three regional Guidance and Research Centers with 440 teachers, supervised by the General Directorate of SE, Guidance, and Counseling Services, are responsible for the diagnosis and placement of SEN students in the appropriate school environment where they receive the necessary SE services (Meral, 2014; Melekoglu, Cakirioglu & Malmgren 2009). Three options for the placement of SEN students exist in Turkish public schools; from most to least restrictive, they are: (a) special boarding or day

schools where there are no opportunities to contact and interact with typically developing peers; (b) special classrooms in mainstream schools where SEN children are educated separately but may interact with other children during teacher planned activities, arrival, recess and departure times; and (c) inclusive classrooms where children with and without SEN are being educated in the same classrooms (Rakap & Kaczmarek, 2010). However, according to Ciyer (2010), schools and classroom teachers have the choice to accept or reject an SEN child, a fact that violates the child's human rights into education if not accepted. Research shows that in Turkey, unlike students with 'intellectual disabilities,' students with physical disabilities are more likely to be educated in regular classrooms with typically developing peers (Rakap & Kaczmarek, 2010; Ciyer, 2010).

As is the case in other developing countries, Turkey faces major obstacles to IE settings, such as inadequate educational infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, lack of educational professionals, lack of collaboration among professionals, insufficient pre-service and in-service training, as well as negative attitudes towards inclusion (Ciyer, 2010). In comparison to other European countries, 65.4% of SEN students in inclusive classrooms in Turkish schools is higher, which according to Cakiroglu & Melekoglu (2014) is an implication that the Ministry of National Education of Turkey supports the idea of inclusion and is at, or above, the inclusion level of many developed countries; yet the government needs to focus on improving the quality and variety of SE services within IE. Ceyar (2010) contends that much work is to be done, notwithstanding that Turkey has exerted considerable efforts towards making IE a possibility.

Arab Countries IE Practices

Like many developing countries, the majority of Arab countries have recently joined the international movement toward IE for SEN children and have passed relevant legislation (Alkhateeb, Hadidi, & Alkhateeb, 2016; Gaad, 2011). The accurate translation of this policy and cliché slogan into actual inclusive implementation in schools is to come. In the late 90s, a broader understanding of IE began to surface in the region (Alkhateeb, Hadidi, & Alkhateeb, 2016; Gaad, 2011; Weber, 2012). Influenced by the UNESCO World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in 1990, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education in 1994, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) adopted in 2006, ministries of education in most Arab countries began endorsing policies and guidelines for implementing IE.

IE in the Arab countries remains at a developmental stage. There exists a paucity of data on this topic, although there is an urgent need to undertake a rather systematic approach among Arab societies. Regardless of the efforts to educate SEN children in recent years, most Arab countries are still facing challenges in restructuring their educational systems into inclusive systems (World Health Organization, 2011; Gaad, 2011; Alkhateeb, Hadidi, & Alkhateeb, 2016; Weber, 2012). The result is in having many SEN marginalized children excluded from proper schooling. The research revealed the different causes behind their exclusion as based on disability stigma; widespread negative perception and beliefs; poverty; and lack of access to education, particularly in rural regions (Coleridge, 1993; Peters, 2009, Nagata, 2008). The majority of public schools in Arab countries remain unwilling and poorly prepared to provide educational services to children with disabilities.

Not only there is an IE definition related to the confusion the developed countries but also in the developing countries as well. Across Arab countries, definitions used are relatively broad or unpredictable since policymakers, educators, and the whole community have not yet reached an agreement on the definition, and context of IE; and hence, the terms' disability', 'normalization', 'integration', 'mainstreaming', 'least restrictive environment', and 'inclusion' are still used interchangeably in the Arab region. Whereas some Arab policymakers and educators view IE as an approach to provide education for all, still some others consider IE as a strategy to teach all or some types of SEN in regular classrooms (Alkhateeb, Hadidi, & Alkhateeb, 2016; Weber, 2012). Therefore, regardless of the fact that Arab special educators opt to use the IE jargon, a lot of reviewed literature claim that SEN children in Arab countries are suffering from segregation, and educate a progressively increasing number of children with mild disabilities in a "less restrictive" rather than a "least restrictive" learning environment.

Having clarified the topic of IE within the general contexts of the United States of America, Australia, Europe, and the Arab countries, the remainder of this chapter describes the Lebanese context of IE.

The Lebanese Context

According to the international movement towards inclusion, as of the past century, pioneer efforts calling for inclusion and rejecting marginalization started in the 1980s in Lebanon. SEN has gained the interest of a lot of NGOs and activists in the civil society in an attempt to promote inclusion. The researcher refers to a few investigations on the current topic to sketch the Lebanese context of IE.

Lebanon is not an exception since the above challenges are enrooted in the long history of the country. The prevailing condition in Lebanon has been the

provision of care rather than the provision of adequate education provided to SEN children. The reason behind this goes back to the fact that SEN children are referred to the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) to handle their needs, including education as per the Lebanese law 220. Instead, it sounds more logical if the Ministry of Education (MEHE) takes responsibility for the education of SEN children.

Following the civil war, in the early 1980s, activists of the civil society, NGOs, and parents of SEN children collaboratively and shyly attempted to implement IE (Brousse- Chamichian, Murphy, Makarem & Marji, 2000; McBride, Dirani, & Mukalled, 1999; Rizic, 2007). The actual function of NGOs is because the MEHE had no IE strategy that caters for SEN students.

Having attended a seminar on The Status of Inclusive Education held at Haigazian University in January 2018, some historical data on IE in Lebanon attracted the attention of the researcher who thought, if inserted, might add more insight on how IE developed locally. Dirani (2018) explained that the first program for the ‘integration’ of SEN children – that’s how they referred to it back then – was launched in 1990 in compliance with the Child Rights Convention and on the belief that social inclusion starts with school inclusion and that students without SEN will learn respect and nondiscrimination attitude from their SEN peers. Networks of welcoming schools and advocacy lobby groups of parents and professionals attempted to raise funds and to convince the government and MEHE to get involved. Therefore, new SEN related professions emerged like speech and psychomotor therapists, and SE was reinforced. In 1992-1993, the program catered for a total of 97 mild SEN students in preschools and elementary schools, and professional support was provided at home and school if convenient. The pitfalls of the program were due to (a) Competitive schools, (b) untrained/not equipped teachers; (c) lack of

professionals; and (d) conflicts of interest and confusion in leadership between NGOs and school administration (Dirani, 2018).

Then, in 1993 – 1994, a group of professionals, parents, NGOs, and schools who consolidated the network and aimed at constructing a solid strategy formed a committee for the school integration of SEN children. The results were two seminars and the formation of groups that worked on training, research, and the legal framework (Dirani, 2018).

Following the reform of the Education system in 1994, McBride, Dirani, and Mukalid (1999) were assigned by the MEHE and UNESCO to conduct a needs assessment of the Lebanese educational system in the field of SE. The results indicated approximately 310,118 children who needed from SE services in Lebanon. The researchers reported that the MEHE should be the body in charge of the education of all children, including SEN students. The two- year work resulted in an implementation strategy designed to cover all SEN related aspects: Legal, training, pilot experience, and curricula modification. Accordingly, an educational system promoting IE mechanisms and policies was recommended to lessen the problem of marginalization.

The unyielding lobbying of NGOs and civil society activists resulted in passing the Law 220 in May 2000. Act 220, presented earlier in chapter one, provides a legislative framework, one of the most advanced in the Middle East region, for the basic rights of people with disabilities. In addition to rehabilitation services, employment, medical services, sports and access to public transport and other facilities, Law 220 addresses the privileges of people with disabilities to proper education and inclusion, with articles in this respect.

Dirani (2018) clarified that during 1999 and 2000, the MEHE, UNICEF, and UNESCO held two national conferences on the education of SEN students under the framework of educational system reform. There were 80 volunteer professionals, and eight studies on the implementation of the strategy were delivered like (a) the administrative framework; (b) accommodations and adjustments of the curricula of elementary school; (c) the design of the needed training for teachers and professionals; (d) the gap analysis of the existing laws; the pilot experiences; (e) the information and communication strategy; (f) the early intervention program to enhance the child readiness; and (g) theories and a glossary to align the terminologies. Then, "... the silence, yes, the silence. We do not know what happened; everything disappeared…" (Dirani, 2018).

Alongside, some private schools took over as the field was somehow ready, the schools were ready, and the parents were more aware than before. Hence some private schools, all around Lebanon, developed several models of inclusion, and this has been a very active sector.

Another study by LPHU (Lakkis & Thomas, 2003), presented at a conference in the UK investigated educational and vocational achievement, showed that almost half of 200 graduates of specialized care institutions were not promoted from the primary school in comparison to those in regular education whose national promotion rate 87.7% (CERD, 1999). The illiteracy rates for those between the ages of 15-23 were alarming.

In May 2000, Parliament passed Act 220 concerning the rights of persons with disabilities to safeguard all aspects of their rights. The Act was based on two principles: the shift from welfare and charity to rights and the shift from

marginalization and isolation to integration (Details are presented in Chapter one under the section: Inclusive Education-Related Lebanese Policy: Law 220/2000).

In 2006, The Council of Ministers issued Decree 16417, defining the circumstances in which SEN students in grade nine could be exempted from the BREVET official examinations (CERD, 2012). Grade 12 SEN students were provided with the necessary accommodations for the BAC II exam without exemptions.

Going further, Lebanon witnessed some collaborative efforts to spread public awareness on disability issues as well as to lobby and develop IE programs. This has been translated through a number of inclusion projects such as the National Inclusion Project (NIP, 2007), through which a group of four NGOs (Youth Association of the Blind, Lebanese Down Syndrome Association, LPHU and Save the Children – Sweden) collaborated and aimed at integrating 100 SEN students into 10 private schools. Technical and professional development was provided to teachers and staff, and an SE teacher was assigned to assist SEN students. Besides, community members were informed of the steps being taken to include the SEN students in the school activities (Consortium Associations, 2007). According to a survey conducted by Khochen and Radford (2012), the 40 mainstream teachers and headteachers who had been trained about SEN matters revealed positive attitudes about inclusion. Nevertheless, the same teachers were doubtful about including students with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges in mainstream classes. The National Inclusion Project has been successful (NIP, 2007), yet its validity and reliability are dubious since the evaluation was reported by the NIP itself (Khochen, 2017).

Later, between 2008 and 2010, the National Inclusion Project Lebanon (NIPL) followed. The MOSA, MEHE, Italian Embassy, and Saint-Joseph University

(USJ) pulled their efforts to launch another two-year project. Aiming at the quality of education for all, a pilot project was planned to promote the inclusion of SEN children in ten public schools and ensure the Right to Education for ALL in the Lebanese educational system via a national inclusion policy (Mansour, 2011). Even though the NIPL was terminated in November 2010 without reaching the intended goals, it signaled the first involvement of the MEHE in the education of SEN students in public schools (Khochen, 2017).

The Lebanese government's undertakings went on with the MEHE's five-year plan 'Quality Education for Growth (2010-2015)', which aimed to develop the educational sector with a focus on social integration (MEHE, 2011). Working towards the inclusion of SEN students, several laws were passed on renewing the functions of educational support by recruiting personnel, social educators, and special educators to help teachers in public schools. The National Educational Plan for Persons with Disabilities developed by the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) (2012) clarified all the required steps, procedures, training, and resources to carry on with the strategy and to support SEN students in the course of official exams. Because of the shortage of funds, the strategy had not been put into implementation in all public schools.

In 2013, a Memorandum of Understanding was established between the MEHE, CERD, Smart Kids with Individual Learning Differences (SKILD) and the British Council (BC) of Lebanon, aiming to help in the implementation of inclusion in mainstream education in the public schools (British Council, 2014). In 2014, The National Day for Students with Learning Difficulties was announced to be celebrated on April 22 of every year. In addition, aiming at helping parents and educators to identify an inclusive school, a Directory of Inclusive Schools was produced with

5000 copies distributed among schools across Lebanon (British Council, 2014). Nonetheless, similar to the NIP, the evaluation of the project success leaves room for suspicion about its validity since the British Council conducted it (Khochen, 2017). The issue of validity and the scarcity of evidence-based scientific assessment IE projects in Lebanon as well as the Middle East Region is evident in the literature (Coleridge, 1993; Hadidi & Al Khateeb, 2015; Nagata, 2008; Peters, 2007). Therefore, to enhance the effective implementation of IE projects, Khochen (2017) calls for conducting evidence-based scientific research to identify the gaps and improve future endeavors.

Currently, there is more IE awareness and better acceptance of SEN individuals. Several initiatives are in progress through a collaboration between the MEHE, CERD, and different NGOs. Personnel was recruited, teachers and professionals are in the process of receiving training sessions in preparation for piloting 30 public schools across the Lebanese territory (S. Ahmadieh, personal communication on January 18, 2018). Concerning the official national exam provisions, support accommodations and exemptions for SEN students are more organized. There is even a 24/7 hotline.

While the aforementioned relates to data indicating IE progress in the Lebanese context supported by international efforts, currently, the leading provider of IE in its varying models is a number of schools from the private sector. Admittedly, when some Lebanese private schools consider IE, they run it in various ways representing different organizational arrangements: (a) Provision of in-class support with the co-teaching model applied by SE teachers, (b) integrated classes within mainstream schooling, and (c) full placement in a mainstream classroom without additional support. The most common provision operating in schools is the

model of 'integration classes' which are much closer to what the British describe as part-time withdrawal in a learning support base or to the US pull-out programs. In this respect, the term 'SEN support room/class' could be seen as a more accurate description of such provision in Lebanon. Figure 2.10 illustrates the models of SEN schooling in private schools in Lebanon.

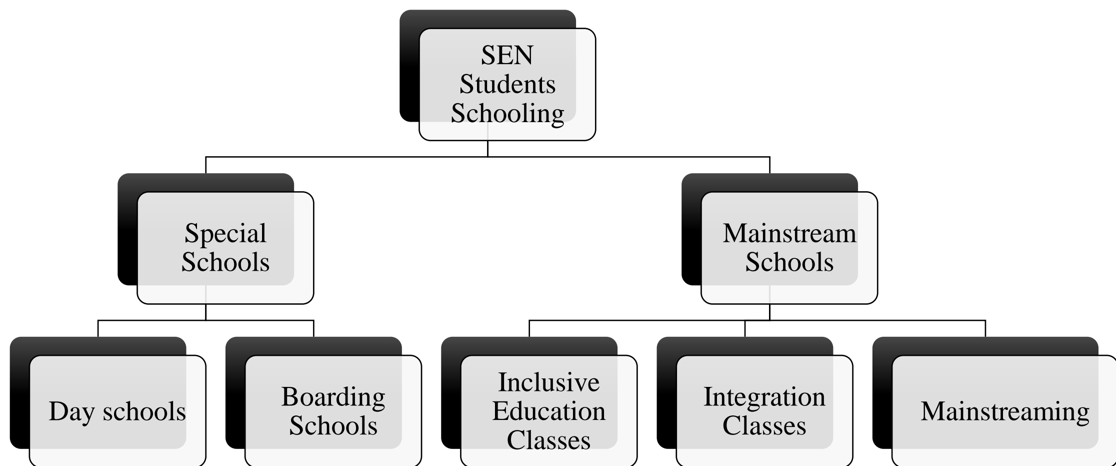

Figure 2.10. Visual representation of models of Lebanese SEN schooling

Conclusion

Understanding the conceptions and challenges of IE has been the focus of this study. At the beginning of this chapter, the criteria of the included literature were presented, followed by the theoretical and conceptual framework. In the subsequent section, an overview of the history of IE was outlined, and a global understanding of the concept of IE was emphasized. The third section highlighted the variables of the study, conceptions and challenges of IE as perceived by change agents, and supplemented by synthesized background evidence from the reviewed literature. In other words, it examined what literature says about the conceptions of and the challenges of implementing IE in the eyes of teachers, principals, and decision-

makers. The last section presented the contexts of IE systems in the United States of America, Australia, Europe, the Arab countries, and Lebanon.

The reviewed literature has demonstrated that in order to achieve highly successful inclusive schools, change agents (schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers) need to promote change through practices that are collaborative, intentional, and supportive. In other words, agents of change need to work together to overcome the organizational and cultural barriers in the face of effective IE (Pantić & Florian, 2015).

Schoolteachers, being primary change agents, have a key role in IE reinforcement. Held in the middle, in the micro and mesosystem, teachers are the mediators between the state, various stakeholders in education, the parents and the students, since they are responsible for implementing the inclusive settings, sharing and promoting the principles of inclusion in the classroom. Thus, teachers are expected to "change the way they work in their own classrooms, even within the constraints of national curricula and systems of assessment" (Florian, 2008). Expressly, the development of inclusive classrooms necessitates that teachers modify or differentiate instruction to cater to diverse student learning needs. Rouse (2009) has suggested that inclusion is dependent upon teachers' knowing, believing, and doing. Firstly, they are, expected to know about theoretical and legislative issues in relevance to SENs and suitable and customized education provisions. Secondly, they should believe in their competence to educate all children. Thirdly, they are to turn their knowledge into action by doing. Besides, several teacher variables are known to influence their mindsets about IE, such as gender, age, education and training, years of teaching experience, and contact with SEN students are essential constructs to consider when studying IE. In relevance to gender and contact with SEN students,

the verification shows inconsistency in a significant relationship with teachers' IE conceptions. Teachers' age and length of teaching experience, on the other hand, were statistically significant in predicting teachers' understanding of IE and intentions to get involved in inclusion practices. Younger teachers were more open to inclusion than older colleagues, whereas those with more years of experience were more willing than teachers with fewer years of experience. Insufficiently trained teachers face many challenges in teaching SEN students. Research indicated that teachers are more likely to accept the idea of inclusion if they feel they are adequately provided with appropriate education and training (Ashby, 2012; Ainscow, 2005; Florian & Rouse, 2010; Sharma & Desai, 2002; UNESCO IBE, 2008). Sharma et al. (2007) state that even when teachers are specially trained to teach SEN children, they lack the confidence to do so and that they need relevant, ongoing professional development focused on IE. Inclusion is more successful in countries where levels of training are high, and the culture is positive and supportive (Hodkinson & Devarakonda (2009). Likewise, inclusion is more effective in countries where strong IE legislation is emphasized and yield lower levels of concern than in countries with weaker law about inclusion (Sharma et al., 2008).

Students' learning and development opportunities are either enabled or hindered as a result of educators' conceptions. The reviewed literature has indicated that if teachers' views are positive toward SEN, their role, school practices, and their self-efficacy, they are IE advocates; conversely, teachers are exclusionary if their negative views are revealed (e.g., Ahsan et al. 2013; Sharma, Forlin & Loreman, 2008). Research further implied that teachers were more welcoming to include children with mild and moderate SENs than those with severe intellectual and physical SENs (Poland et al., 2012). Moreover, research implied that increasing

teachers' knowledge through training or providing teachers with more resources may not be sufficient to increase teachers' advocacy of IE. Instead, to better promote IE, teacher education and governmental support should give more attention to building teachers' efficacy in inclusive settings (Lai et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2014).

Most teachers tend to hold undecided or negative mindsets regarding IE (De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011) often due to their practical concerns about how it can be implemented (Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, &Malinen, 2012). Not only does literature indicate that teachers' conceptions of IE are correlated to its success, but also that teachers' concerns need to be thoroughly addressed prior to the foundation of a successful inclusion program.

Findings from previous researches suggest that many teachers admit to having feelings of anxiety and incompetence deal with SEN students placed in their classrooms (Agbenyega, 2007; Avramidis et al, 2000; Beres' 2001; Bhatnagar & Das, 2013; Changpinit et al., 2007; Chhabra et al., 2010; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Forlin et al., 2008; Glazzard, 2011; Gökdere, 2012; Horne & Timmons, 2009; Jordan et al., 2009; Lambe & Bones, 2006; Kuyini & Mangope, 2011; Mitiku et al., 2014; Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012; O'Toole & Burke, 2013; Round et al., 2016; Shah et al, 2016; Sharma, 2002; Sharma & Sokal, 2016; Sharma et al., 2007; Sharma et al., 2009; Shea, 2010; Subban & Sharma, 2006; Vashishtha & Priya, 2013; Williams & Gersch, 2004; Yadav et al., 2015). Of the common concerns recurrently expressed by educators regarding IE are concerns about: lack of training in SE, negative attitudes of teachers and parents of students without SEN, physical accessibility, additional workloads and responsibility, behavior problems, class size, inadequate teaching resources, meeting the educational needs of students with and without SEN, designing and implementing IEPs, lack of time, financial support, lack of specialized

personnel, and lack of support from school administrator/school principal. These concerns have turned out to be the major factors behind teachers' rejection of IE.

Though principals are not the only change agents in the milieu of IE, they do have institutional authority and act as focal interpreters and executors of most of the relevant policies and decisions, mainly when IE is addressed. Assuming overlapping positions, principals function in the exosystem (in liaison with the school board and decision-makers), in the mesosystem (in liaison with teachers and staff), and in the child's microsystem (in liaison with the child and parents) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). School principals are required to address the needs of SEN students while meeting the challenges of improving student achievement and consequently, school performance. The role of the principal is to build a shared vision within an inclusive school, and this is one of the critical factors in successfully implementing IE (Ainscow, 2005; Ainscow et al., 2006; DiPaola et al., 2004; Jones, 2006; Praisner, 2003). An inclusive school mandates the principals' belief that all children can learn when provided equal access to an accessible curriculum and quality education (Howell, 2016). Similarly, principals and administrators are expected to exhibit a solid understanding of the legislation and procedures related to IE through the proper and efficient supervision of the educational program for SEN students (Power, 2007).

Many studies support the notion that principals have a vital role in the success or otherwise of inclusive schools (Bateman & Bateman, 2015; Beyer & Johnson, 2005; Fullan, 2011; McLaughlin, 2009; Praisner, 2003; Riehl, 2000). This literature review implied that there are a few principals who succeed to develop and maintain a highly effective inclusive school. Principals in these settings realize that "effective inclusive school organizations can be and are crafted by individuals who activate what is known about change processes that steward a larger vision" (Villa &

Thousand, 2005, p.79). Due to accountability directives, school administrators must demonstrate knowledge of and abidance by IE legislation, provision of services to SEN students, participation in IEP conventions, establishing a supportive environment, supervising services, and building positive staff relationships. (Bateman & Bateman, 2015; Beyer & Johnson, 2005; McLaughlin, 2009).

Being accountable to parliament and the public, decision-makers in the education sector are situated in the exosystem. By virtue of their position, decision-makers are expected to endorse IE, issue, mandate, and implement IE legislation. They are in charge of maintaining or improving the quality of education and o expenditure. The reviewed literature revealed that the development of IE mainly depends on decision-makers' declaration and commitment and on schools' readiness to include diversity matters in their policies (Loreman, Forlin, & Sharma, 2014; Watkins, & Ebersold, 2016).

The body of literature reviewed thus far provides a vigorous rationale for a study investigating the underlying conceptions and challenges of change agents to facilitate successful IE programs in Lebanon. Through the reviewed literature, the researcher noticed that studies that investigated IE conceptions and challenges of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers in the Middle East and Lebanon are almost non-existent. Hence, framing the research questions to run a systematic exploration of the factors that may influence the implementation of IE in Lebanon is warranted.

In the next chapter, the researcher gives a detailed description of the research design, the methodology used, sampling, data collection, and data analysis procedures.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

As established in the preceding chapters of this dissertation, the research is concerned with the conceptions of IE in mainstream schools by schoolteachers, principals, and, decision-makers. It also addresses their perceptions of the challenges they encounter when implementing IE. It further examines the extent to which the educational background, experience, and professional development contribute to more positive conceptions and fewer IE challenges. Ultimately, it aims to contribute to improving the understanding of IE of SEN students and to rule out the misconceptions around this issue. Thus, the research aims at answering the following questions:

1. What are the schoolteachers' conceptions of inclusive education?
2. What are the schoolteachers' perspectives on the challenges they face when implementing inclusive education?
3. Is there a relationship between teachers' conceptions and concerns about inclusive education?
4. To what extent do teachers' school category, job category, educational background, training, experience, age, SEN contact, and knowledge of Law 220 contribute to their conceptions of and concerns to inclusive education?
5. What are the school principals' conceptions of inclusive education?
6. What are the school principals' perspectives on the challenges they face when implementing inclusive education?
7. What are decision-makers' conceptions of inclusive education?

8. What are the decision-makers' perspectives on the challenges they face when implementing inclusive education?

This chapter illustrates the principles of the research and outlines the methodology used. Following the introduction, the chapter is organized into (1) theoretical framework; (2) research design and methodology; (3) triangulation, (4) population and sample; (5) description of schoolteachers; (6) description of principals; (7) description of decision-makers; (8) data collection tools including the rationale for using them, (9) pilot study; (10) data collection protocols followed and the details of each of the instruments used; (11) the procedures of data analysis; (12) reliability, validity, and ethical considerations; and (13) the limitations and challenges the researcher faced in the course of conducting the study.

Theoretical Framework

The reviewed literature, as justified in the previous chapter, revealed that researchers studied the factors that lead to the successful implementation of IE policies and programs. Many educator-related variables have been involved in the success and failure of inclusion. Likewise, change agents' conceptions, beliefs, perceptions, or attitudes towards including SEN students comprise other variables.

To understand the framework within which this study was developed, the researcher considered three separate frames of reference: (1) Human Rights-based Approach, (2) the Ecological System (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and (3) the theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). As elaborately clarified in Chapter II, the researcher worked from an understanding that IE results from reciprocal interactions between SEN children and the multiple layers of environment where their human-rights to accessible quality education is safeguarded in mainstream schools. The interactions that affect SEN children's development are aligned within change agents' IE

conceptions and challenges based on the relationship between their background variables and their intended behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

The variables selected for the study (change agents' conceptions of IE and change agents' perspectives on the challenges of IE) when seen in the context of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, and Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, collectively represented the relationship between IE conceptions and concerns. The Ecosystem Model (Bronfenbrenner's, 1979) described the development of the person as happening within a series of nested systems, each of which is surrounded by more extensive settings. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), asserts that behavioral intention is determined by three factors – attitude towards a target behavior, subjective norm (expectations of peers), and perceived behavioral control (in this case, knowledge). The theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen 1991) incorporates Bandura's (1977) construct of self-efficacy, referring to it as perceived behavioral control, within a broader framework highlighting the relationship between attitudes, beliefs, intentions, and behavior.

Research Design

Research design is a plan to explore research questions and determine conclusions, which result in a model or report (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). While there is no one correct method for data collection in educational research (Creswell, 2012), employing more than one method is often more beneficial. Rather than sticking to either qualitative or quantitative research design, the researcher opted to employ the mixed-method approach to utilize both texts and figures; and thus, reaping their combined benefits. A primary assumption of this study is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches "provides a better understanding of the

research questions of this study than either approach alone" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Mixed Methods Research (MMR) entails incorporating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to best address the purpose of a research study (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). The aim is to adopt the strengths and lessen the weaknesses of both in single research rather than having one replacing the other (Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Burke Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) describe MMR as, "... the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches … for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (p. 123). Likewise, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) contend that a higher degree of understanding could be achieved through this approach than if only one approach was adopted to specific studies. Going further, they emphasize fundamental elements of the two methods through which researchers rigorously collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data in sequential and/or simultaneous mode to incorporate the two forms of data. The way of integrating this data depends on the nature of the study and the researcher's philosophical viewpoint.

Though time, effort, and resources consuming on the part of the researcher as Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) describe it, the MMR (QUAN + QUAL) was used to conduct this research. As a methodology, this research involves philosophical assumptions based on the Human Rights-based Approach, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System (1979), and Ajzen's Planned Behavior (1991) that lead the direction of the collection and analysis of data as well as the mixing of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases of the research process (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this regard, this study addresses the research design.

In so doing, this study is composed of interviews with open-ended questions (qualitative), focus group discussions (FGDs) (quantitative + qualitative), anecdotal evidence (qualitative), artifacts (qualitative), and a survey that contains Likert scale questions (quantitative). There is also a description of the population and the sample selected to participate.

This study employed an MMR (see Figure 3.1), which is an approach for collecting, analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative (QUAN + QUAL) data at a particular phase of the research process to make the most of the strengths of each method. Creswell (2014) and Taskakkori & Teddlie (2010) argued that using a mixed-methods research design helps to comprehend a research problem further and provide more comprehensive answers to the research questions of the study. They also confirmed that integrating different methods in a research design yields better results in terms of quality and scope.

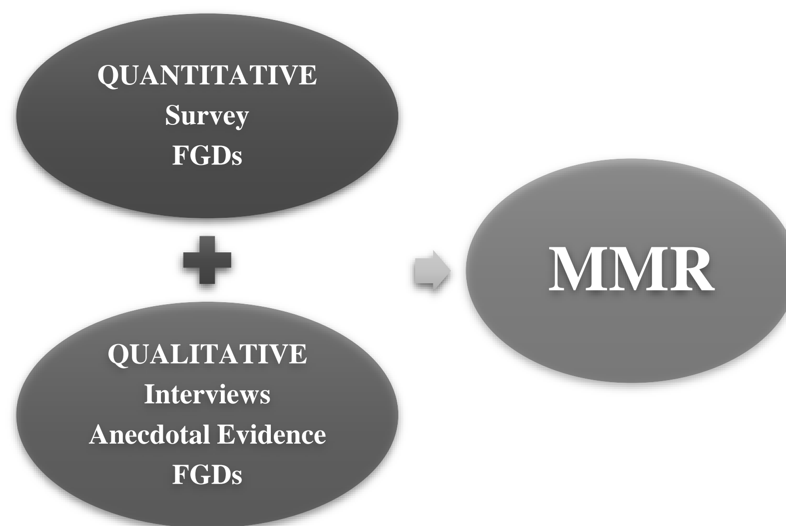

Figure 3.1. MMR Research Design

Much debate has been tracked in the literature about the benefits of mixing quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a single study. The debate between the two approaches is often perceived as a competition between innovative and socially responsible against conservative methods and sophisticated techniques against plain

common sense (Stewart & Shields, 2001). Even though many researchers remain fixated between quantitative and qualitative research methods, advocates affirm that, when combined, quantitative and qualitative methods allow for a thorough analysis since they complement each other (Johnson & Turner, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Thomas, 2003) and go beyond the limitations of a single approach (Gay & Airasian, 2003).

The reason behind mixing is that solely using either quantitative or qualitative methods is insufficient to apprehend the trends and specifics of the situation, such as a complex issue of teachers, principals, and decision-makers' conceptions of and challenges to IE. Moreover, the researcher's disposition, audience, time, limitations, the research problem, and the purpose of the intended study were the factors for selecting qualitative and quantitative methods for constructing knowledge. On top of that, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods contributes to the trustworthiness of the data. One cannot deny the effectiveness of a study based only on one method but to indicate that the more sources recruited for understanding, the more convincing the findings. Hence, the researcher believes that educational research activities can be based on empirical grounds or evidence (quantitative research) supplemented by researchers' reflection, interpretation, logic, and social interaction (qualitative research).

That said, the research methods selected for the study had to be coherent with the objectives of qualitative and quantitative research. Accordingly, the QUAN + QUAL approach was utilized in this study. The researcher felt that the survey and individual semi-structured interviews would be the most efficient strategy for collecting data.

There were written responses (anecdotes), analysis of artifacts, and focus group discussions. A quantitative analysis was conducted where teachers from Beirut City were asked to complete a survey that assessed their conceptions of and challenges to IE within their schools. Descriptive statistics were run to analyze the collected data in an attempt to summarize the overall nature of the resulting information (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The qualitative data of the study consisted of the information collected through semi-structured interviews with selected school principals and decision-makers, focus group discussions conducted with the selected teachers, as well as through written anecdotal evidence submitted by teachers.

Therefore, this MMR study addresses conceptions and challenges to IE as perceived by schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers in mainstream schools in Lebanon. A convergent parallel mixed-methods design is used, and it is a type of design in which QUAN + QUAL data are collected in parallel, analyzed separately, and then merged. In this study, a survey was used to test Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) that predicts that background variables will positively influence the conceptions and concerns of the participating teachers in mainstream schools of Beirut. The anecdotal evidence and focus group discussions (FGDs) were employed to detect more in-depth data relevant to teachers' conceptions and concerns about IE. The artifacts analysis allowed the researcher to study how IE is dealt with in official documents as compared to data collected from other instruments. The individual interviews explored the conceptions and challenges to IE of policymakers/stakeholders and principals of the selected schools. The rationale for obtaining both quantitative and qualitative data is to ensure capturing the 'breadth and depth' of such a complex topic as IE.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods provide a detailed and holistic description that reveals the dynamic complexities of the social settings of the investigated phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Primarily phenomenological, qualitative methods examine human lived experience and provide a deeper understanding of a particular way of life as encountered by those being studied (Creswell, 2012; van Manen, 2017). Hence, the qualitative approach was necessary for this study because the researcher sought to understand the conceptions and challenges that were investigated. The researcher was exploring the totality and complexity, which is the merging nature of the settings. While the aim was to understand the phenomena as respondents feel it or live it as far as possible, he researcher did not attempt to alter or manipulate the research setting in any way, nor did she attempt to determine any prearranged sequence. As well, the qualitative approach was particularly useful because the intervention was new and tested on a new population group. The use of qualitative methodology added to the researcher's understanding of the conditions under which the intervention was perceived and therefore was effective with the targeted population.

Therefore, the researcher used the qualitative methods to answer the following research questions: (1) What are policymakers' conceptions of IE and their perspectives on the challenges they face while implementing IE? (2) What are the school principals' conceptions of IE and their perspectives on the challenges while implementing IE? (3) What are schoolteachers' conceptions of IE? (4) What are schoolteachers' perspectives on the challenges while implementing IE?

However, studying phenomenological lived experience should not be treated as empirical (van Manen, 2017). Though the phenomenological qualitative method

has been recommended for this study, the investigator was aware of possible mistakes of employing only qualitative research methods; and thus, for the research validity, its weaknesses were not overlooked. To overcome the potential pitfalls of the qualitative approach, precautions were engaged by utilizing quantitative methods, as well.

Quantitative Methods

Quantitative research is a methodology designed for social science studies that explore human behavior and organization performance (Creswell, 2012). The researcher employed a quantitative method because she wanted to be objective and independent of her personal bias, principles, and individual assumptions. In other words, she wanted to keep herself from manipulating the collection of data (Cohen et al., 2007). Consequently, the findings of the investigation were further subject to the theoretically based quantitative research that focused on testing the effectiveness of the selected phenomena mathematically or statistically.

Furthermore, when a quantitative method is utilized, a higher number of responses is maintained, more desirable reliability is ensured, and hence, representativeness of the findings follow (Cohen et al., 2007). Not only reliability and representativeness are maintained, but also a lop-sided conclusion is avoided as in the case of depending on one method of data collection. This gave the researcher more confidence that the collected data is valid and reliable. Therefore, the study is aimed at contributing the limited knowledge and understanding of IE and the perceived challenges of putting it into action.

The quantitative approach was used to give numbers and statistics describing the participants while addressing the research questions: (1) What are the teachers' conceptions of IE? (2) What are the teachers' perspectives on the challenges while

implementing IE? (3) To what extent do the age, school and job categories, educational background, experience, training, contact with SEN, and knowledge of Law 220 contribute to their IE conceptions and perceived challenges?

Triangulation

Having stated the lens that will be used to look at and interpret the phenomenon being studied as well as how the study will be conducted, the section below describes the research study's design. This study aims to explore the conceptions of IE and perceptions of the challenges encountered when implementing IE by schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers. It further investigates the extent to which the educational background, experience, and professional development contribute to higher conceptions and lower IE challenges. Eventually, it aims to add to improving the understanding of IE of SEN students and to prevent the misconceptions around this issue. To do so, the MMR design employed utilized triangulation.

The issue of trustworthiness is a certain challenge to this form of exploratory research. We claim to know about specific phenomena, and we assert our research is useful to practitioners. Such concerns are dealt with by making use of three forms of triangulation: seeking evidence to compare and contrast from different people within a particular context (e.g. policymakers, principals and teachers); examining events from different directions by employing a variety of methods for collecting data (e.g., questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, artifacts); and using perspectives as a means of testing interpretations (e.g. public schools, private, schools, and inclusive schools). Burns (2000) confirmed that triangular methods in social sciences are of use since the complex attitude of humans can best be captured and understood when considered from different points of view, or when a variety of both qualitative

and quantitative methods are used. Yin (2003) and Cohen and colleagues (2007) advised researchers to utilize semi-structured interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and narrative documents as data collection instruments.

According to Creswell and Plato Clark (2011), triangulation is one of the four types of MMR design. Patton (2015) encouraged the use of triangulation by confirming that it strengthens a study by combining both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. When employing this method, Mertler and Charles (2008) explained that both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and given equal emphasis, which enables the researcher to capitalize on the strengths of each form of data.

While biases can lead to false conclusions by the researcher, triangulation reduced the danger of prejudice sneaking into an interview or the probable twist of responses. Likewise, triangulation helped reveal the richness, diversity, and accuracy of the collected data and analysis.

Because the study used quantitative and qualitative methods, triangulation was useful to examine shared realities and meanings and to develop interpretations. Also, triangulation was used to verify data. Triangulation between the two methods is used to seek joint validation and employ two or more approaches to a single problem to select the appropriate method that in combination will result in complementary data and thereby reduce the possibility of substantial findings (Patton, 2015).

The rationale for implementing this design is that the researcher equally values the two forms of data and handles them accordingly. Data was, therefore, merged, and the results of analyses were used simultaneously to comprehend the research questions through the comparison of findings from the quantitative and qualitative

analysis. Figure 3.2 shows the Triangulation Design used in this study.

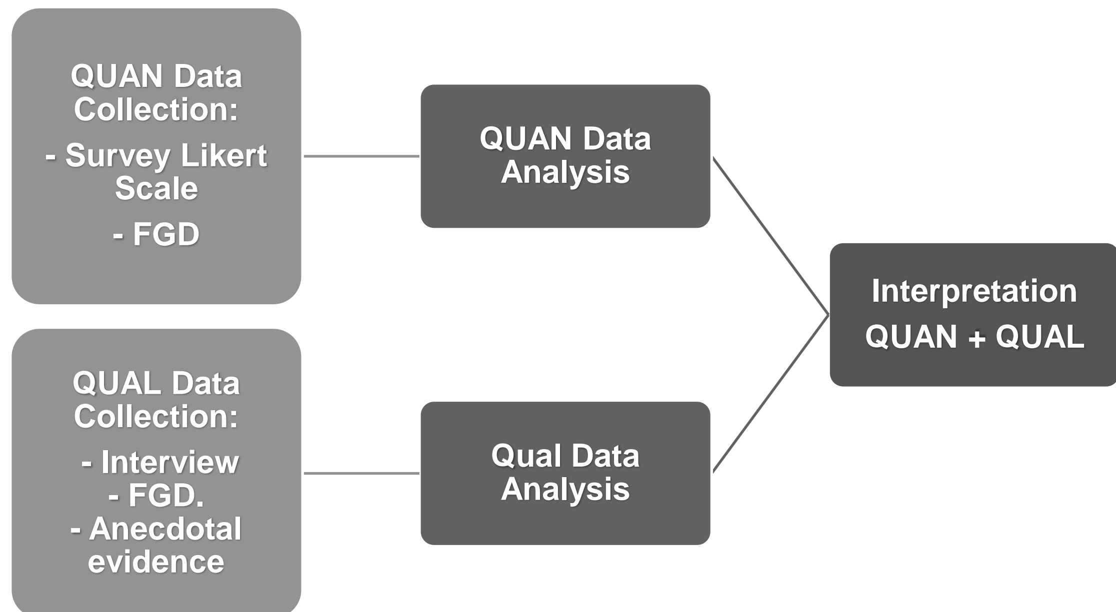

Figure 3.2. Triangulation design

Cresswell & Plano Clark (2007) indicated at the analysis stage, this design helps the researcher to "directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings" (p. 62) in order to develop valid and well- supported conclusions about the problem under investigation. Accordingly, for the sake of triangulation and comparison of data sets, the researcher collected, analyzed separately, and then combined the data at the point of interpretation, checking for agreement or disagreement between findings that examine the same phenomena (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Yin, 2006). Going further, data transformation in which qualitative data transformed into quantitative data was employed. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), mixing the data during the interpretation stage facilitates the comparison, interrelation, and additional interpretation of the two sets of data.

Therefore, triangulation design was adopted where both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques helped compile data and answer the research questions. A survey, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, artifacts, and anecdotal evidence were utilized as data collection tools. These facilitated presenting different views of IE and its perceived challenges.

Population and Sample

The purpose of the current research is to capture and describe the conceptions and challenges of change agents in Lebanon concerning IE in mainstream schools. The investigator planned to examine the research questions through three population categories that existed in Lebanon: (1) All teachers of public and private mainstream schools that have Cycles I, II, and III, (2) all school principals, and (3) decision-makers involved with IE. The sample population was obtained from both purposeful sampling and cluster sampling.

Purposeful sampling, in this regard, allows the researcher to come to a stronger understanding about the results from this study by focusing in-depth on understanding the perspectives on some participants who have specific characteristics to meet the purpose of this study i.e., decision-makers in the MOSA and MEHE in addition to activists. Gall, Gall, and Borge (2010) and Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) explain that purposive sampling is used when certain prior information is tracked since it allows researchers to select participants using their judgment for the criteria of the study (Leedy & Omrod, 2013). According to Burns (2000), it is suitable to examine a particular phenomenon. Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam (2003) recommended purposeful sampling because of its "particular features or characteristics, which enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central theme or puzzles the researcher wishes to study" (p. 78). Thus, the purposive

population is appropriate for this study since it allows examining the particular phenomenon chosen by the researcher. The chosen phenomenon in the current research is represented by the conceptions and challenges to IE of decision-makers in Lebanon.

On the other hand, while it is not feasible to access the whole population, a sample of 70 public and 102 private non-subsidized schools in the City of Beirut, which is a subset of the population, was chosen. Cluster sampling was used to select private and public (N=18) schools that have cycles I, II, and III of Basic Education. Participants from schools included principals and teachers. The list of private and public schools in Beirut district was obtained from the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) web page. A table of random numbers assigned to schools was prepared where the researcher used the clustered sampling technique to select the schools. A list of inclusive schools (N=21) in the Greater Beirut was obtained from the Directory of Inclusive Schools, ‘Daleel Al Madares Al Damija’, issued by CERD. Since some of these schools have more than one campus that shares the same education system, the number of inclusive schools the researcher contacted was reduced (N=15).

Accordingly, the sample consisted of public schools (N=9), such that three schools from each of the three districts of Beirut Capital – Beirut First, Second and Third– were selected. Private schools (N=9) were included as well, such that three schools from each of the three areas of Beirut Capital were selected. The representative sample of inclusive schools (N=15) in the Greater Beirut was also included in the study. Thus, as illustrated in Figure 3.3, a total of 33 school principals and 660 teachers (20 teachers per school) were targeted for this study. Decision-makers that were convenient were included as well.

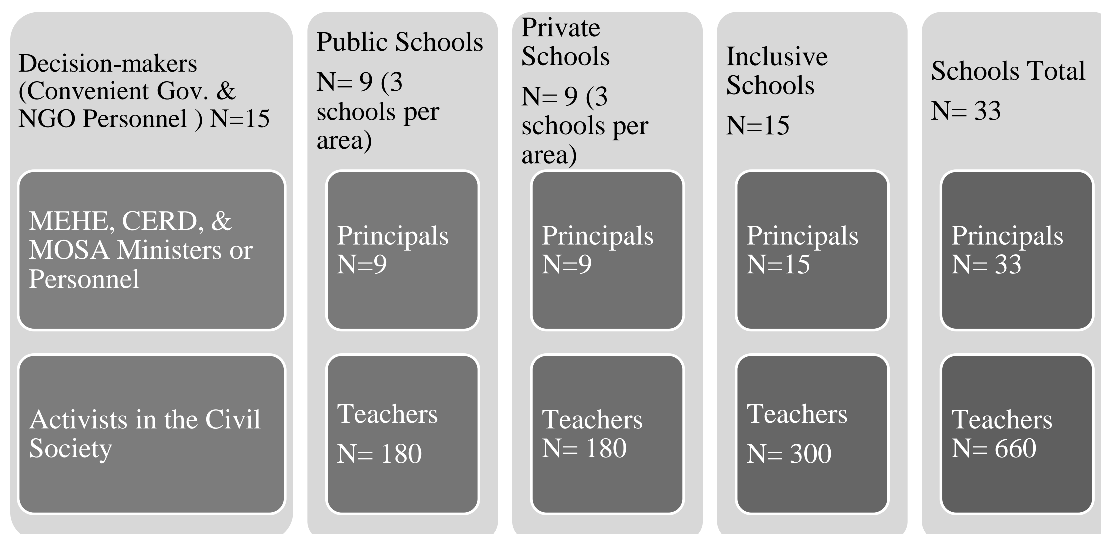

Figure 3.3. Research Sample

As displayed in Table 3.1, the total number of teachers who provided usable questionnaires was 600/660.

Table 3.1

Sample of Teachers Surveyed, Response, and Selection Rates (N = 600)

Number of Teachers Surveyed			Number of Teachers responded			Final number of teachers selected		
Pub	Pr	Incl	Pub	Pr	Incl	Pub	Pr	Incl
60	60	300	50	53	300	48	50	292
60	60		55	60		51	56	
60	60		52	56		49	54	
180	180	300	157	161	300	148	160	292
N= 660			N= 618			N= 600		

Table 3.2

Teachers' Job Category

	GE Teachers N= 502			SE Teachers N= 98		
Cycle	Cycle I 304	Cycle II 270	Cycle III 174	Cycle I 76	Cycle II 56	Cycle III 21
Proportion	50.7%	45%	29%	12.7%	9.6%	3.5%

Description of Schoolteachers' Sample

As clarified in the previous chapter, a total of 660 teachers in public, private, and inclusive schools having Cycles I, II, and III of basic education and located in the three areas of Beirut Capital were targeted for this study. Six hundred out of 660 teachers provided usable surveys, which yielded a considerable response rate of 91%. The demographic information solicited from the respondents was obtained from their responses to the eight questions contained in part one of the survey about gender, age, the level of education, years of teaching experience, having taught SEN students in their classrooms, SEN related training, and knowledge of IE relevant Law 220. Table 3.3 provides information on the teachers' background variables.

Table 3.3

Teachers' Demographic Information

Demographic Parameter	Type	Public Schools	Private Schools	Private Inclusive Schools	Total	%
Gender	Male	35	16	14	65	11%
	Female	103	160	272	535	89%
	No answer	0	21	5	26	4%
Age Group in number of years	Below 25	6	12	49	67	11%
	26 to 35	41	37	140	218	36%
	36 to 45	46	48	55	149	25%
	45+	55	42	43	140	23%

Demographic Parameter	Type	Public Schools	Private Schools	Private Inclusive Schools	Total	%
Teaching Experience Total Years	No answer	0	11	2	13	2%
	0 to 5	30	59	87	176	30%
	6 to 10	10	9	91	110	18%
	11 to 15	43	8	45	96	16%
	16 to 20	21	25	21	67	11%
	21+ Yrs	44	48	46	138	23%
Highest level of education completed	No answer		11	2	13	2%
	Bachelor	30	76	141	247	41%
	Diploma in Special ED	0	12	23	35	6%
	Diploma Other	40	40	49	129	22%
	Master in Special ED	0	1	15	16	3%
	Master Other	20	0	34	54	9%
	Bac II	11	20	16	47	8%
	Other	47	0	12	59	10%
Training Sessions in Special Education in the last 5 years	No answer	0	4	2	6	1%
	Yes	43	39	226	308	51%
	No	105	117	64	286	48%
Taught students with learning difficulties	Yes	71	83	241	395	66%
	No	77	77	51	205	34%
Taught students with Behavior, Emotional & Social Development Needs	Yes	82	0	202	284	47%
	No	66	160	90	316	53%
Taught students with Communication & Interaction Needs	Yes	37	48	128	213	36%
	No	111	112	164	387	64%
Taught students with Sensory and/or Physical Needs	Yes	30	29	102	161	27%
	No	118	131	190	439	73%
Knows the Law 2000_220	Yes	11	39	68	118	20%
	No	137	121	224	482	80%

Of the total number of respondents (N=600), it is clear from the demographic descriptions that the majority were females (89%), in comparison to 65 males (11%)

and 26 teachers (4%) who chose not to indicate gender. Participants below 25 years of age completed eleven percent (11%) of the surveys, and 36% were between the ages of 26 and 35 years. Twenty-five percent (25%) were aged 36 to 45, while 23% were 45 years old and above.

Regarding the participants' level of education, 247 (41%) teachers said they had a Bachelor's degree in teaching, 35 teachers (6%) had a diploma in special education, and 129 teachers (22%) had a diploma in another specialty. Only 16 teachers (3%) had an academic Master's degree in special education, while 54 teachers (9%) had a Master's degree in other fields. Forty-seven teachers (8%) had a Bac II certificate, 59 teachers indicated other certificates like Dar Mou'allimeen, whereas 13 refrained from answering this question (see Figure 3.4).

One hundred and seventy-six teachers (30%) reported a teaching experience between zero and five years, 110 teachers (18%) had six to 10 years of teaching experience, 96 teachers (16%) had 11 to 15, and 67 (11%) had 16 to 20 years of experience. While 138 (23%) teachers said they had 21 years of experience and above, 13 teachers did not answer this question.

As for having received formal training related to special education, about half the responding teachers (51%) indicated that they did, 286 teachers (41%) said they did not, while six teachers did not answer this question (see Figure 3.5).

With regards to having SEN students of different categories in their classroom, the highest percentage (66%) was that of the 'Learning Difficulty' category, followed by the 'Behavior, Emotional and Social Development Needs' (47%), 'Communication and Interaction Needs' (36%), and the lowest percentage (27%) was that of 'Sensory and/or Physical Needs' category (see Table 3.4 and Figure 3.6). Teachers' knowledge of the IE related policy, Law 220, was very low

with only 118 teachers (20%) indicating their awareness; while the majority (80%) of the sample did not have adequate knowledge (see Figure 3.7).

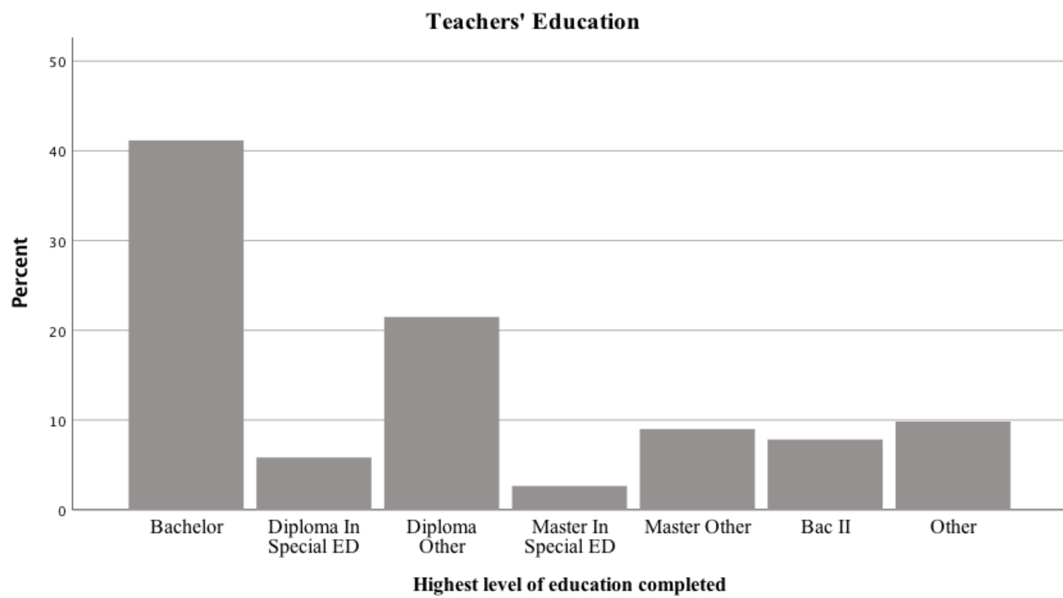

Figure 3.4. Teachers' education

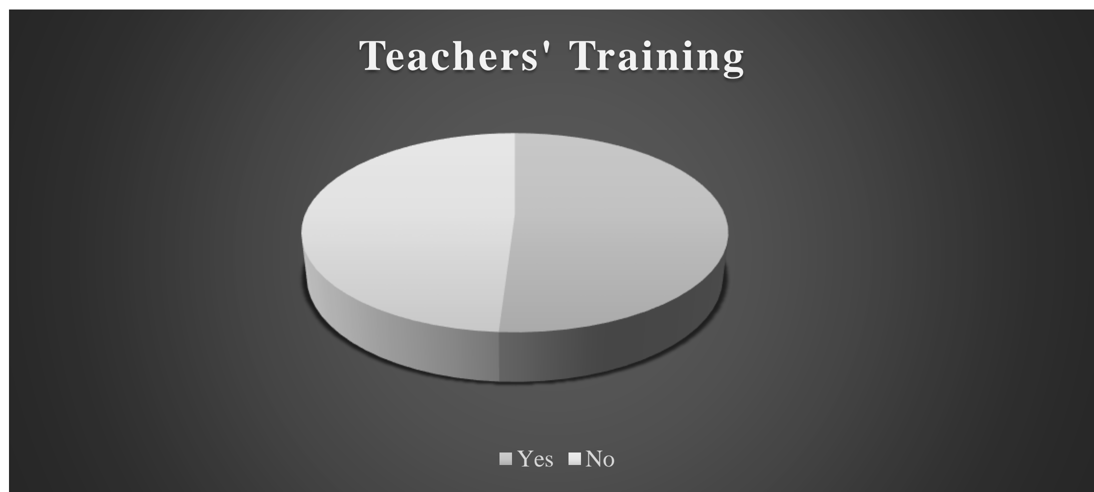

Figure 3.5. Teachers training in the last five years

Table 3.4

Teachers Who Mentioned Having SEN Students in their Classrooms (N= 600)

SEN Categories	*N*	%
Learning Difficulties	395	66%
Behavior, Emotional & Social Development Needs	284	47%
Communication & Interaction Needs	213	36%
Sensory and/or Physical Needs	161	27%

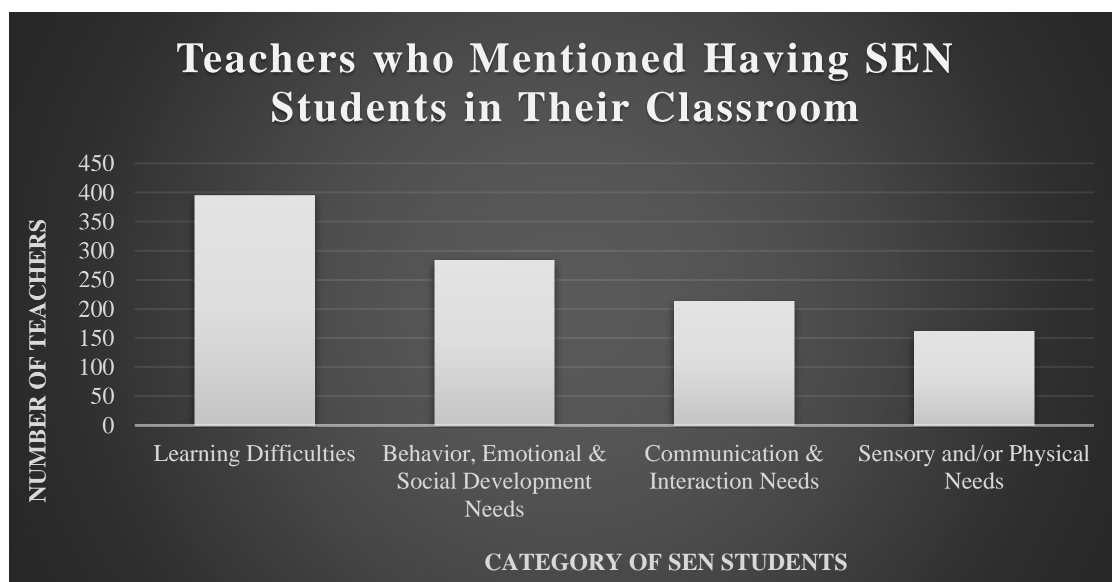

Figure 3.6. Number of teachers who mentioned having SEN students in their classrooms

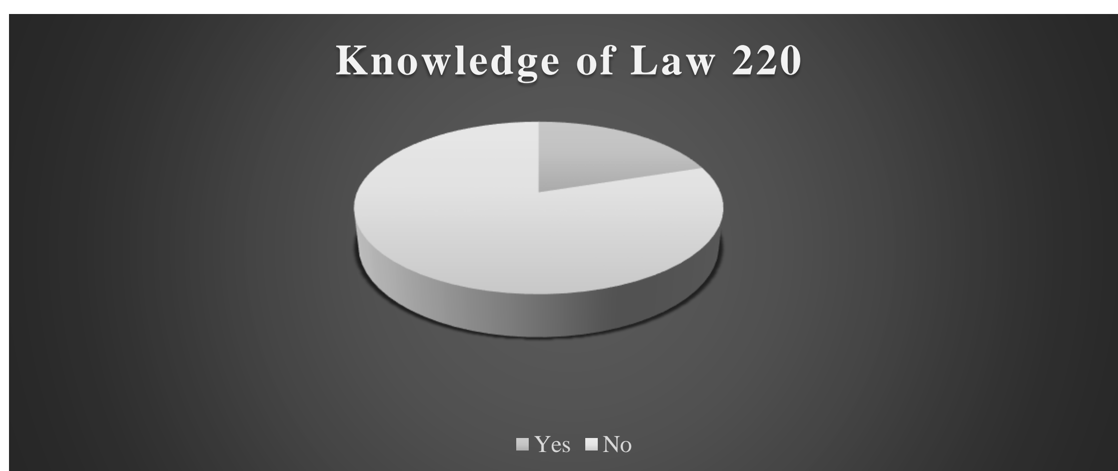

Figure 3.7. Percentage of teachers aware of Law 220

Thus, a composite profile of the 600 respondents would present the ‘typical Lebanese teacher’ as a relatively young female teacher below the age of 35 years holding a basic academic qualification. In addition, she would have acquired at least an initial teaching qualification in general education. Since completing her formal study program in education, she would probably have taught for over 10 years. This would have included having SEN students in her classroom. In general, though she would have received some formal training relevant to SEN students, she is not aware of the local IE related Law 220.

Description of Principals' Sample

A total of 30 out 33 principals of public, private, and inclusive schools having Cycles I, II, and III of basic education and located in the three areas of Beirut Capital were targeted for this study. The demographic information solicited from the respondents was obtained from their responses to the seven questions contained in a form about school type, gender, the highest level of education, experience, contact with SEN students, SEN related training, and knowledge of Law 220 (see Table 3.5).

Thirteen Pr-INCL, nine Pub, and eight Pr principals were interviewed, the majority of whom were females (24/30), with either a BA/BS (15/30) or an MA/MS (15/30) as the highest level of education. Most principals reported an experience between zero to five years (20/30) and had contact with SEN students (28/30). About having received formal training related to SE, 13 out of 30 (10 INCL, 1 Pr, & 2 Pub) indicated that they did, while 17 out of 30 (3 INCL, 7 Pr, & 7 Pub) said they did not. While most principals were not aware (12/30) or not fully aware (9/30) of Law 220, only eight INCL principals reported they were. However, it is surprising to find out that though almost all principals had contact with SEN students, a considerable number did not receive any formal training and had no idea about the law. Figures 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, and 3.14 illustrate principals' demographic data.

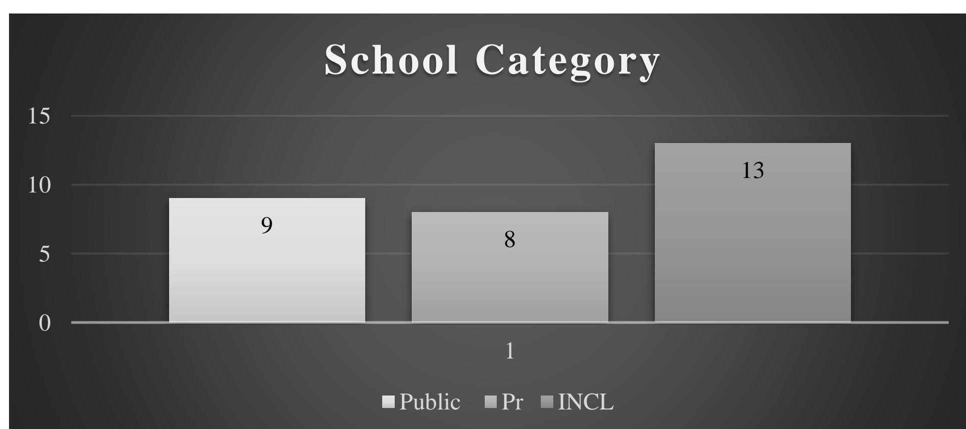

Figure 3.8. School category of participating principals (N=30)

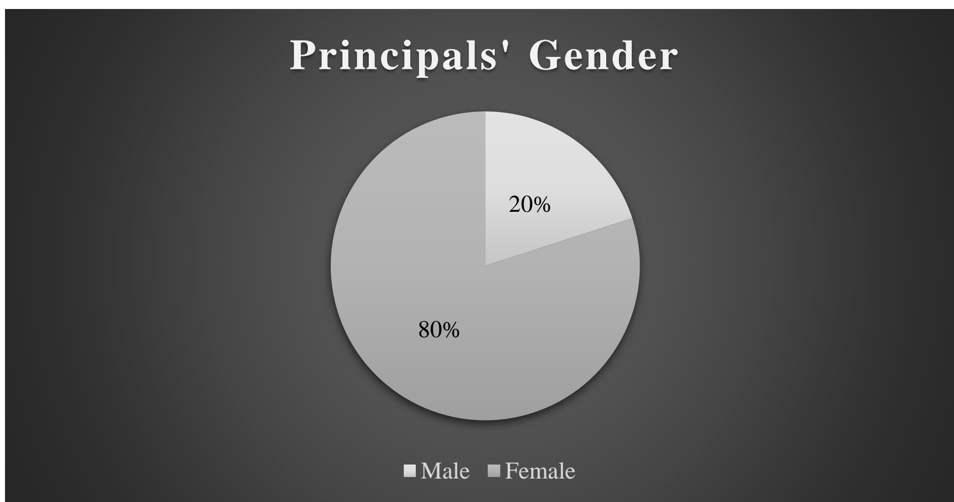

Figure 3.9. Gender of participating principals (N=30)

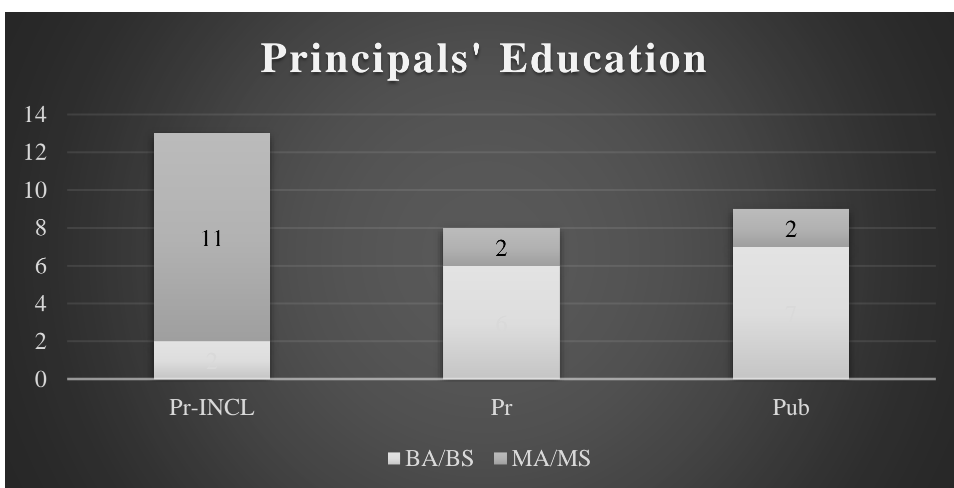

Figure 3.10. Principals' highest level of education

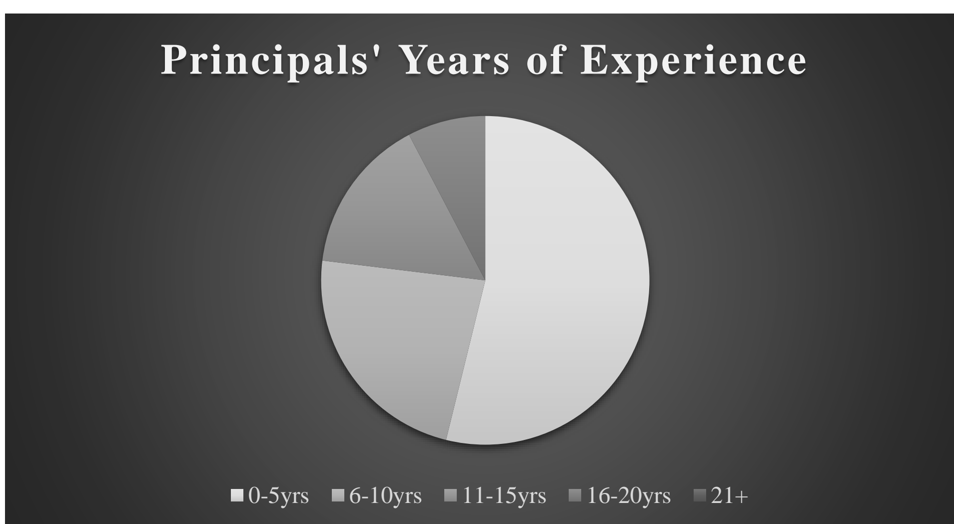

Figure 3.11. Principals' years of experience (N=30)

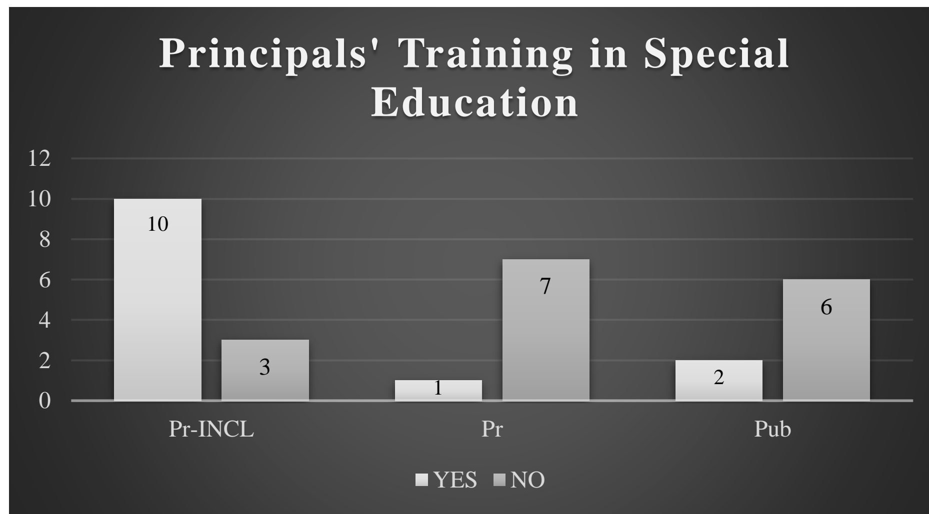

Figure 3.12. Principals’ training in SE (N=30)

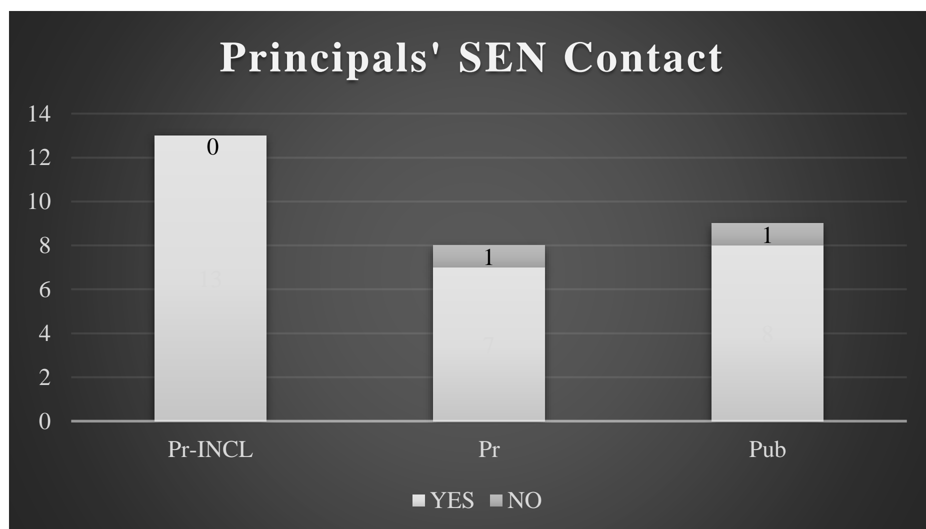

Figure 3.13. Principals’ contact with SEN students (N=30)

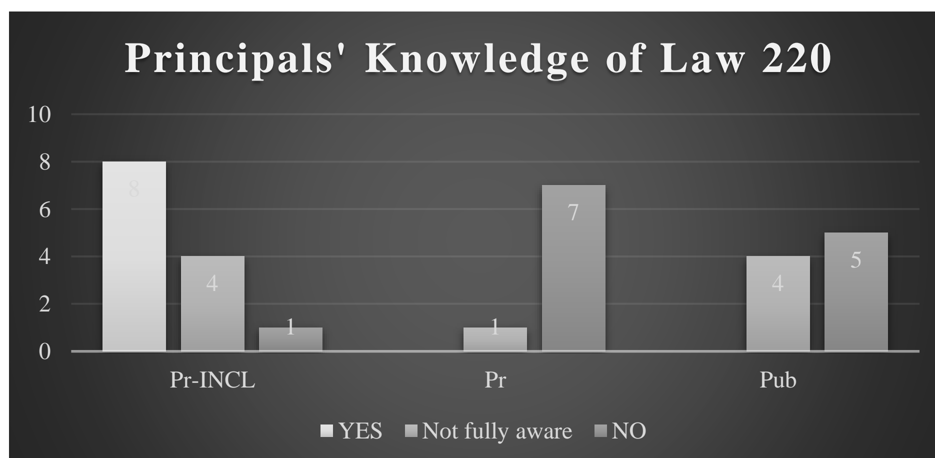

Figure 3.14. Principals' knowledge of Law 220 (N=30)

Table 3.5

Principals' Demographic Information

ID	School Category			Gender		Education		Experience (in numbers of years)					Contact with SEN		Training		Knowledge of 220 Policy		
	P ub	Pr	Pr- INCL	Male	Femal e	BA/ BS	MA/M S	0-5yrs	6- 10yrs	11- 15yrs	16- 20yrs	21 +	YES	NO	YE S	NO	YES	Not fully aware	N O
P1			✓		✓		✓			✓			✓			✓	✓		
P2			✓		✓	✓		✓					✓		✓			✓	
P3			✓		✓		✓	✓					✓		✓		✓		
P4			✓		✓		✓	✓					✓		✓		✓		
P5		✓		✓		✓		✓					✓			✓			✓
P6			✓	✓			✓	✓					✓		✓		✓		
P7			✓		✓		✓		✓				✓		✓			✓	
P8			✓		✓		✓	✓					✓		✓				✓
P9			✓		✓	✓			✓				✓		✓			✓	
P10	✓				✓	✓		✓					✓			✓		✓	
P11	✓				✓		✓							✓		✓			✓
P12	✓				✓	✓		✓					✓			✓			✓
P13			✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓		
P14	✓				✓		✓			✓			✓		✓		✓		
P15	✓				✓	✓		✓					✓			✓			✓
P16		✓		✓		✓		✓					✓			✓			✓
P17			✓	✓			✓	✓					✓			✓		✓	
P18			✓		✓		✓				✓		✓		✓		✓		
P19		✓			✓	✓					✓		✓		✓			✓	

ID	School Category			Gender		Education		Experience (in numbers of years)					Contact with SEN		Training		Knowledge of 220 Policy		
P20	✓				✓	✓		✓					✓			✓		✓	
	P ub	Pr	Pr-INCL	Male	Femal e	BA/ BS	MA/M S	0-5yrs	6-10yrs	11-15yrs	16-20yrs	21 +	YES	NO	YE S	NO	YES	Not fully aware	N O
P21	✓				✓	✓		✓					✓		✓			✓	
P22			✓		✓		✓		✓				✓		✓		✓		
P23			✓		✓		✓			✓			✓		✓		✓		
P24		✓			✓	✓			✓				✓			✓			✓
P25		✓			✓	✓		✓					✓			✓			✓
P26		✓		✓			✓	✓					✓			✓			✓
P27	✓				✓	✓		✓					✓			✓		✓	
P28	✓				✓	✓		✓					✓			✓			✓
P29		✓			✓	✓		✓					✓			✓			✓
P30		✓		✓		✓		✓						✓		✓			✓
Total	9	8	13	6	24	16	14	14	4	3	2	1	28	2	13	17	9	10	11

Description of Decision-makers' Sample

The decision-makers who participated in this study are 15 representatives from MEHE (N=2), CERD (N=2), MOSA (N=3), and NGOs (N=8). For the sake of confidentiality, the author did not share further descriptions of the respondents.

Data Collection Tools

The methodology is exploratory and aims to describe the conceptions of and challenges to IE in Lebanon from several agents. The researcher relied on mixed methods of (a) survey answered by teachers; (b) semi-structured interviews with the convenient decision-makers from the MEHE, MOSA, and activists, and with the selected principals; (c) focus group discussions with teachers; and (d) anecdotal evidence written by the schoolteachers. The benefit and use of each method will be discussed separately. Though all the employed tools have informed the research, this study primarily relies on the survey and interview data.

Survey

Within a focus on the research questions, backed up by the reviewed literature, the researcher compiled a questionnaire to collect data from school teachers in mainstream schools. As the study sought to determine teachers' conceptions of and challenges to IE, the researcher chose survey instruments that examined beliefs and concerns, consistent with Azjen's (1991) theory of planned behavior and aligned to all three of Azjen's antecedents. The survey scales were selected because the constructs measured by these instruments included background variables, conceptions of IE, self-efficacy for inclusive teaching, and concerns about teaching in inclusive classrooms.

Because the researcher adopted Azjen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, she made sure that the instruments utilized are aligned to all three of Azjen's antecedents. For example: 'I can make instructional, and curriculum accommodations for children with IEPs' alludes to teaching self-efficacy, 'Students who are inattentive should be in regular classes' pertains to the value teachers place on inclusive teaching practices, and 'I am concerned that students with disabilities will not be accepted by the rest of the class' may be reflective of the teacher's beliefs about the social acceptance of SEN children.

Thus, a four-part survey instrument was used to collect the data for this study. This allowed assessing the concluded generalization (Burns, 2000). The survey included four parts:(I) Demographic data; (II) Conceptions of IE (Teachers' beliefs about IE and its manifestations) detected via the Inclusive Education Practices Faculty Survey; (III) Teachers' perspectives on challenges when implementing IE detected via Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale; and IV) Anecdotal evidence.

Creswell (2012) contends that a survey is advantageous since a researcher can easily compare across larger groups, it can be conducted quickly and easily, and it facilitates the collection of data related to the investigator's field of interest. The researcher felt it was beneficial to use the questionnaire method to obtain information about IE rather than observing the participants and to obtain full information from respondents in a non-threatening way smoothly.

Part I. Demographic Information. The first part of the survey elicited professional and demographic background information from the participants. Teachers were asked to provide information for eight independent variables. These were: (a) Current job; (b) gender; (c) age; (d) teaching experience; (e) education; (f) previous training in SE; (g) having taught SEN students (learning difficulties;

behavior, emotional & social developmental needs such as ADHD; communication and interaction needs such as speech problems or autism; sensory &/physical needs); and (h) knowledge of Law 220.

Part II. The Inclusive Education Practices Faculty Survey (IEPFS). The second part was used to explore teachers' conceptions of IE by employing the Inclusive Education Practices Faculty Survey (IEPFS) developed by the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive education in 2000. The survey instrument is inserted in Appendix C (an updated edition is available online at http://www.mcie.org/usermedia/application/6/faculty-survey.pdf). The researcher sent an e-mail to Dr. Carol Quirk to ask for permission to use the scale and got her consent. Participants are expected to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on 25 positively worded items that can be responded to on a four point-Likert-type scale that ranges from: (4) 'Yes I agree,' (3) 'Sometimes,' (2) 'No, I don't agree,' and (1) 'I don't know'. As illustrated in Table 3.6, the first five items (1 to 5) are measures of what the respondent believes about students being included; the next five questions (6 to 10) measure beliefs about teacher roles; questions 11-15 assess beliefs about school practices; and the last 10 questions asses the respondent's comfort and skill about including students with SEN. The IEPFS produces a total score obtained by adding the value of responses on each item. The value of the total score may range from 25 to 100. A score in the upper 25% indicates that the teacher is an advocate of IE, the middle 25% indifferent, and the lowest 25% an opponent.

Table 3.6

Thematic Categories of IEPFS (Maryland Coalition for Inclusive education, 2000)

"I believe that:
SEN STUDENTS
1. Every student, regardless of the special need, should be assigned to and be instructed in GE classes.
2. Students who have special needs can be positive contributors to GE classes.
3. Any student, and all students, can learn in the GE classroom.
4. Students without special needs can benefit when a student with a significant special need is included in the class.
5. A student with multiple special needs can benefit from and successfully achieve IEP objectives in a GE class.
TEACHER'S ROLE
6. Teachers with extensive SE training should NOT be the only ones to deliver SE services.
7. A GE classroom teacher can deliver special instruction to students who have IEPs as a part of the general lesson.
8. If a classroom teacher does not want to teach a particular child with an IEP, the class placement should change to another teacher who is willing to teach the child.
9. When an SE teacher is assigned to deliver services in a GE class, it has a positive impact on the whole class.
10. Special educators are equipped to teach GE students.
11. I am aware of my school's philosophy about including students with special needs.
SCHOOL PRACTICES
12. Our school's administration would support teachers working together to include students with special needs.
13. The staff in our school feel positively about including students with special needs.
14. Staff members in our school are encouraged to collaborate and support all students.
15. In our building, students who have special needs feel welcome and participate in all aspects of school life.
TEACHER' COMFORT & SELF-EFFICACY
16. I feel comfortable including students with special needs in the GE classroom.
17. I am adequately prepared to deliver instruction to a wide variety of learners using the GE curriculum as a base for instruction.
18. I am willing to collaborate with other teachers.
19. I feel comfortable and able to supervise and support the staff assigned to my class
20. I am comfortable using technology (computers or adaptive equipment) to support the instruction of a wide variety of learners.
21. I can adequately assess the progress and performance of most students who have IEPs.
22. I can make instructional and curriculum accommodations for children with IEPs.
23. I have the time to collaborate with other teachers when needed.
24. I am willing to change and improve my instructional style to be able to reach more students.
25. I feel that I can make a difference in the life of a student who has a special need."

Part III. Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES). The third part aims at examining teachers' concerns about the implementation of IE in their

schools. Literally, and in the context of this study, “Concern” means “a matter that causes feelings of unease, uncertainty, or apprehension” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, n.d.). Regarding the problem of research, teachers’ concerns towards IE are referred to what Sharma & Desai (2002) have indicated as the impact inclusion would have on the academic performance of students both in the GE and SE settings, the fear of inclusion process, the workload that would be generated and problems accompanying its implementation. For this purpose, the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES) developed by Sharma and Desai (2002) was utilized (see Appendix C). The CIES was initially developed to measure concerns of educators in India relating to the move towards IE (Sharma & Desai 2002). The scale has since been used in research across a number of different locations, including Australia, Singapore, Canada and Hong Kong, India, Kenya, and Turkey (Agbenyega, 2007; Gökdere, 2012; Kuyini & Mangope; 2011; O’Toole & Burke, 2013; Round et al., 2016; Shah, 2005; Shah, Das, Desai, & Tiwari, 2016; Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman 2008; Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2007; Vashishtha & Priya, 2013). This scale was developed to investigate participant’s level of concern across a number of key variables, namely: Concerns for resources, concerns for acceptance, concerns for academic standards, and concerns for the workload. This scale has proved its validity since it was used in many international studies. Sharma and Desai (2002) addressed the validity of the scale through a panel of experts and reported the reliability coefficient for the scale to be 0.91. The consent to use this scale was secured (see Appendix A). The 21 negatively worded items of the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES) measure participants’ degree of concern about implementing IE. Each item can be responded to on a 4-point Likert-type classification with

responses ranging from extremely concerned (4), very concerned (3), a little concerned (2), to not at all concerned (1).

The CIES produces a total score obtained by adding the value of responses on each item. The value of the total score may range from 21 to 84. A teacher's concern score on CIES may range from 21 to 84; with a high score on CIES indicating that the respondent is highly concerned about including SEN students in the classrooms in comparison with those respondents with lower scores. The respondent who marks 'not concerned at all' in all the 21 questions gets a score of 21; while a respondent who marks 'very concerned' in all the 21 items obtains a score of 84. Thus, a lower CIES score indicates that a respondent is less concerned about his or her ability to implement inclusion. The scale also yields scores on four factors whose internal consistency and total CIES has been reported to be adequate (Sharma & Desai, 2002): (a) Concerns for resources (Factor I), (b) Concerns for acceptance (Factor II), (c) Concerns for academic standards (Factor III), and (d) Concerns for workloads (Factor IV) (see Figure 3.15).

Factor I loads six items related to resources or financial concerns. Factor II has five items, two of which relate to accepting/non-accepting SEN students and the remaining three convey concern about lack of time, concern about difficulties in maintaining discipline, and the lack of skills and knowledge to serve SEN students. Factor III includes six items relevant to academic standards: Concern about the declining academic standards of educators; concern about declining academic standards of students without SEN; concern about declining academic standards of the school; concern about integrating students who lack self-help skills; concern about giving equal attention to all students; and concern about inclusion that will lead to stress and anxiety in teachers. Factor IV related to the increased workloads of

educators: Concerns about additional paperwork; concern about lack of incentives; concern about increased workloads; and concern about increased stress levels in other staff.

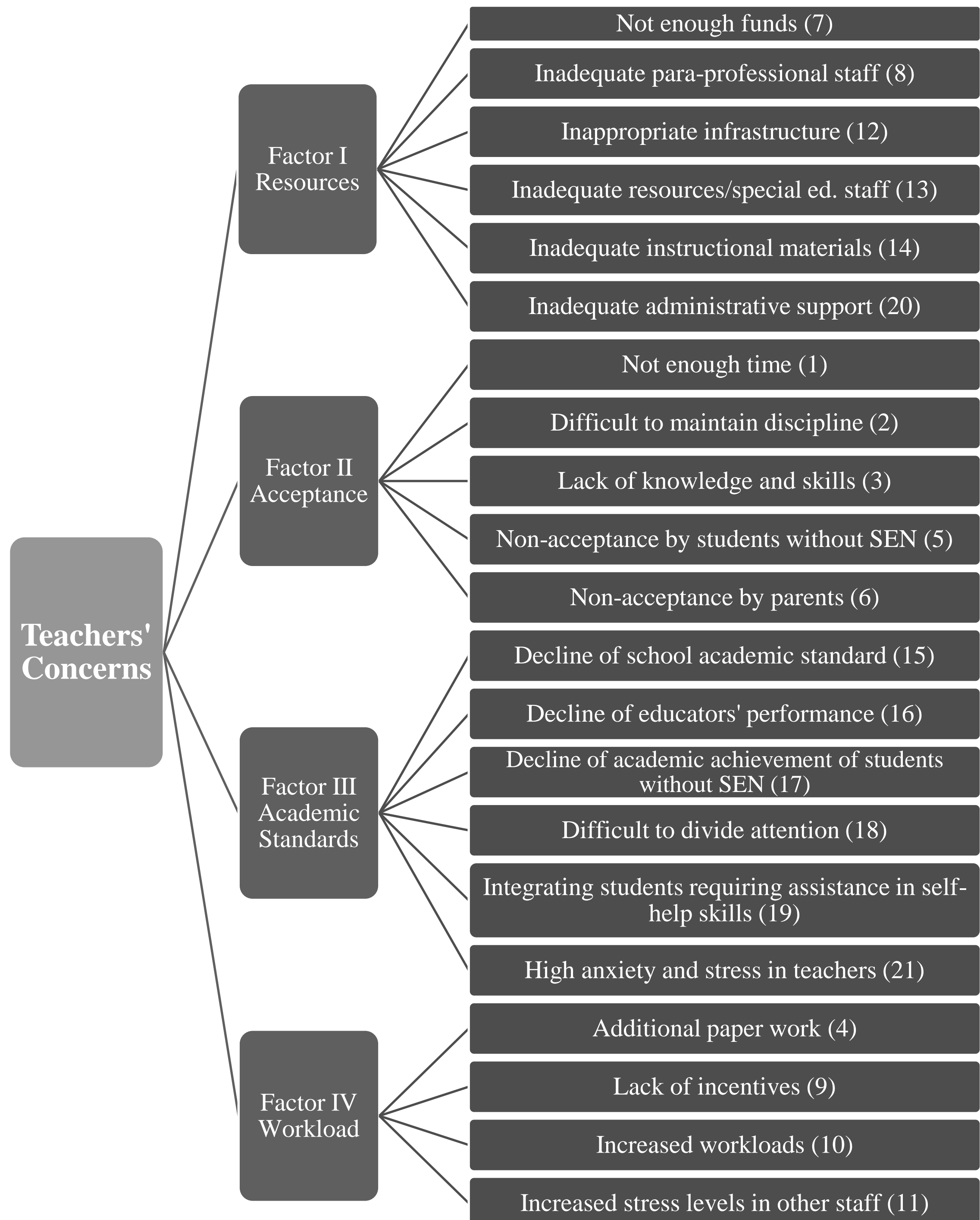

Figure 3.15. CIES (Sharma & Desai, 2002)

Therefore, the dependent variables, conceptions of and concerns to IE, included four subscales each, and the background information had eight independent variables.

The Adaptation Procedure of the Original IEPFS and CIES. The researcher adapted the two scales in four steps: (1) Translation of the IEPFS and CIES from English into Arabic and French, (2) review of the English, Arabic, and French drafts, (3) pilot study, and (4) producing the final scale.

The questionnaire (Part I, II, and III combined) also helps to measure the significant relationships between overall conceptions, concerns, and key demographics. Hence, the current study investigated similar variables: (1) conceptions of IE and key demographics; (2) concerns about IE and key demographics. The investigation of these variables is directly linked to the research questions, and thus it is hoped that the IEPFS and the CIES will provide information on Lebanese teachers' conceptions and concerns regarding IE.

Survey Content Validity. The researcher followed Hinkin and Tracey's (1999) approach to the content validation of the instrument, with content validity defined as the extent to which a measure's items reflect a theoretical content domain (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). This approach involved determining agreement among experts about the applicability of an item to measure a construct. Several experts including university professors and practitioners working in the classroom, such as SE teachers and GE teachers, were asked to comment on the usefulness of each item in measuring concerns of teachers in implementing inclusive practices. The experts suggested a few terminological changes and the rephrasing of a few items on the scale. For example, the term 'disability' was replaced by special Educational Needs (SEN), and the term 'integration' was replaced with 'inclusion.' It was agreed that

the language in the survey was culturally appropriate for Lebanese teachers whose English is their second language. The second draft of the survey, consisting of the Inclusive Education Practices Faculty Survey (IEPFS) and the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES) was rated highly by the experts, and, thus, was produced.

The researcher was, however, concerned about the content validity after translating the instrument from English to Arabic and French. Translation protocols used in cross-cultural research were followed. First, a certified translator carried out the translation-back translation process that allows for multiple checks on functional and cultural validity (Peña, 2007). Second, bi- or multi-lingual translators who were experts in the research domain were consulted, thus ensuring that the translations were not only linguistically accurate but also valid in substance and meaning (Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997); they recommended the use of the term 'Qalaq' as equivalent to the term 'Concern.' Third, translations were conducted by a meaning-based approach in which alterations in sentence structure and wording were permitted in the translated version to reflect differences in thought patterns and syntax differences between the original and translated version of the instrument (Larson, 1998).

Finally, the survey was returned to the experts for final review and confirmation, and the revised scale was translated to Arabic and French, and the participants from 33 schools in Beirut district had the freedom to select. A cover letter was added to the survey (see Appendix A).

Anecdotal Evidence

An anecdote in Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (n.d.) is defined as "a usually short narrative of an interesting, amusing, or biographical incident" and

anecdotal evidence as “evidence in the form of stories that people tell about what has happened to them” (Meriam-Webster, n.d.).

A noteworthy body of literature exists in favor of anecdotal evidence to represent and transmit complex information. One of the causes of this interest is the ability of narrative to deliver the context of complicated knowledge economically and effectively (Denning, 2001). Written accounts, according to Handy and Ross (2005), are of considerable value as a qualitative research technique since they are a “time-efficient means of gathering good-quality, descriptively rich data” (p. 40). In addition, they advise utilizing this method, particularly in cases where participants are well educated and can express their ideas in writing. Letherby and Zdrowsk (as cited by Handy & Ross, 2005) confirm that written accounts may sometimes reveal data that is easier to store and analyze than interviews. This is because most qualitative research requires transcribing oral interviews into written texts, and then extracting key concepts from these texts.

Going further, Michael (2012), describes an anecdote as an “openly ambiguous textual form” (p. 27), which researchers employ in order to access the varied voices under investigation. As a research device, an anecdote is performative, since it represents “The way that research is not a mere reflection of something (e.g., one’s experiences in relation to social or cultural process) out there, but is instrumental in, and a feature of, the ‘making of out theres’” (Michael, 2012, p. 26). This implies that the anecdote is a segment of the historic encounter, and as it moves, it shapes how particular cases are understood. There is another aspect of performativity to consider. The anecdote conveys events that have left an impact on the storyteller (Michael, 2012). According to Vallee (2017), anecdote articulates an understanding of how the narrative of anecdote is manifested into a broader

framework of the narrative, history, and social structure. In that sense, anecdote "crystallizes moments" (Vallee, 2017, p. 718).

On the other hand, Moore and Stilgoe (2009) argue that though anecdotes are subjective for their conveying individual 'modes of thought'; a researcher may refer to them as a guide to further investigation. Despite their skeptical scientific credibility, anecdotes "represented public concerns, and on those pragmatic grounds ought to be acknowledged and addressed through research programs" (Moore & Stilgoe, 2009, p. 671).

It can be concluded from the reviewed literature that anecdotal evidence is a useful technique of reflecting the multifaceted, interconnected, and unpredicted complexity that exists in organizations. It represents brief personal accounts or narrative documents that tell stories relevant to the issue of concern – in the case of the present research, the issue of concern lies in the conceptions and challenges related to the implementation of IE.

Therefore, the researcher chose anecdotal evidence as a narrative-based tool, which encompasses examples, cases, or stories that illustrate the participants' position or reflection. The participating teachers were asked to provide semi-structured written narratives of a significant episode related to inclusion. The narrative inquiry explored a brief incident when the participants had a significant (positive/negative) experience with a student with SEN (e.g., encountering SEN student(s) at school). Four questions to prompt and elicit teachers' reflection on the anecdotal evidence follow: (1) What happened? (2) What significance did the incident have at the time it was occurring? (3) What did it mean to you at that time? (4) What is the significance of the incident now?

The researcher found that it is suitable to attach the anecdotal evidence prompt, the fourth tool of data collection, to the questionnaire for the sake of convenience, feasibility, and time. Thus, it was more convenient to reach the participating teachers in the same research context, through the same medium, and at the same time. This minimized the chance of teachers' reluctance to answer questions related to the same research twice.

Semi-Structured Interviews

According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), qualitative interviews have the following fundamental features that distinguish them from other data gathering forms: (a) Qualitative interviews are variations or extensions of conventional conversations, (b) Qualitative interviews seek the understanding, knowledge, and insights of the interviewees rather than categorizing individuals or events in terms of academic theories, and (c) the interview content, follow-up questions and topic selection may change to match interviewee's knowledge and impressions.

Fraenklen, Wallen, and Hyun (2012) rationalize that the details extracted from interviews add clarity to what is collected by the questionnaires. They are time-consuming, and only a small number of the sample can participate. Moreover, the "standardized open-ended interview" (Franklin et al., p. 483) questions should be relevant to the research questions of the study where the precise wording and order of questions are to be previously set in the form of interview schedule with slight language differences. Hence, the researcher employed this format of the interview whose open-ended questions were pertinent to the research questions, but which at the same time allowed flexibility for the decision-makers and school principals to reflect their differences. Burns (2000) contends that this uniqueness of expression reflects the participant's perception of what is factual and valid. Furthermore, the

standardized open-ended interview format facilitates the comparison of the interviewees' responses free of context constraints and minimizes the interviewer's bias.

Therefore, one semi-structured formal interview was conducted with each principal and department heads of SE departments and decision-makers, as explained in the following section.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The other form of data collection relevant to this study is the FGDs. These consist of group discussions that focus on topics provided by the researcher. Questions are asked of the whole group. FGDs are usually qualitative and the typical size is between 8 and 12 participants. Some advantages of focus group interviews are the possibility group interaction where one person's communication can prompt a variety of useful responses. In other words, it is a convenient way to gather data from more than one participant, and it allows the researcher to see how group members respond to other people's positions and opinions (Bell, 2010; Liamputtong, 2011). Some of the shortcomings of focus group interviews are the likelihood of having one member of the group influence others; the difficulty of attributing particular comments to individuals; and the inconvenience of maintaining anonymity between participants (Bell, 2010; Liamputtong, 2011).

FGDs with teachers were arranged to explore the topic of IE in the form of vignettes. The rationale for using FGDs is supported by the research of Krueger and Casey (2015); they are suitable for this study because they are designed to "find a range of opinions of people across several groups in a more natural environment than that of an individual interview because participants were influencing and influenced by others-just as they were in life" (p. 11). In addition, FGDs should not include

people who have varying levels of power or authority, hence, interviewing the principals and decision-makers individually is considered appropriate (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Each group will contain between 10 to 12 teachers from public, private, and inclusive schools.

Vignettes will be the hub of the FGD employed in this study. Wilks (2004) defined vignettes as simulations of authentic events portraying hypothetical situations used in research as prompts that facilitate an exploration of individuals' feedback to hypothetical situations. Finch (1987) stated that vignettes are appropriate to study attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and norms. These elicitation tools have been used in the form of written accounts (Wilks, 2004). Wilken declared that Vignettes are employed in both qualitative and quantitative research studies. In quantitative designs, the vignette is typically presented with a series of proposed responses. These responses are usually regarded as indicative of a distinct researcher defined appropriate category. The analysis may include comparing answers, or otherwise, a Likert-scale can be used, enabling respondents to evaluate a specific response. Comparisons can then be sketched between choices. For the purpose of this study, the researcher presented participating teachers with five case descriptions of SEN students in the form of vignettes (See Appendix D). The students depicted were characterized as having special needs associated with such factors as physical impairment, or emotional/psychiatric status. The teachers were asked to rate the students portrayed in the vignettes on the level of difficulty they would have in providing an IE for them and to identify what specific characteristics or attributes of the students they would find most challenging. As argued by Avramidis et al. (2000), presenting particular descriptions of the actions and personal traits commonly

associated with types of special needs, as in the form of vignettes, does not allow teachers to have multiple interpretations of the same special need type or category.

The teachers in the study were asked three questions about of the vignettes to explore (a) the extent to which they find the cases challenging, (b) to check their perceptions of their success if in a position of having such SEN student, and (c) to identify their major reason behind their difficulty in having such a student (the one they rated 'the most challenging'). The first question is given a five point Likert-scale from 1 - 'Not Challenging' to 5 - 'Extremely Challenging'. A similar five point Likert-scale is used for the second question, with 1 being 'Very Successful'; and 5 being 'Not Successful'. An open-ended response item is assigned for third question (See appendix E).

Pilot Study

Survey. In order to determine the reliability (internal consistency) of the survey, it was pilot-tested by a sample of 40 school teachers (20 from public school and 220 from private school) that had similar characteristics to the target population to ensure that appropriate questions are being asked and to check any potential ambiguities prior to administering the study. Computing Cronbach's alpha determined the reliability of the scale. An analysis of the data indicated that Cronbach's alpha value (reliability coefficients) for the survey was 0.85.

According to Pallant (2016), it is generally conventional that a Cronbach's alpha value of .7 is desired. To Multon and Coleman (2010), ranges with .90 and above demonstrate high reliability, .80 to .89 demonstrate very good reliability, and .70 to .79 demonstrate good or adequate reliability. Hence, this instrument is suitable since it examines the conceptions and concerns of the majority of the school-based teachers. Not only does it compile information from a large number of

participants, but it also enables contrast to the data derived from the anecdotal evidence and FGDs. Thus, the wide variety of responses obtained helped in maintaining balance and enhanced the validity and reliability of the methods adopted.

Individual interviews. A semi-structured interview protocol was developed from the literature as a guide to talk with principals about their conceptions and challenges related to IE in GE classrooms (see Appendixes C). A pilot of the questions was conducted during April and May 2014. Five pilot principals were initially contacted by phone and then e-mailed a copy of the protocol to determine the clarity, accuracy, and readability of the questions. How they are worded is one of the most critical ways to determine how study participants will respond (Patton, 2015). Two elementary principals agreed to an interview, which was conducted at their school and ranged in length from half an hour to an hour. Three other principals offered the researcher suggestions by phone. Two questions were removed because they asked about the same information, and some changes in the words selected were made as a result of the recommendations that were received. For example, it was suggested that IE be defined to help ensure that the interviewee understood what was being asked. Besides, it was advised that the words "school climate" be used instead of "school culture" and "school or site-based planning team" be substituted for "steering committee" to help ensure consistency of understanding. It was also suggested that a question regarding the extent to which principals facilitate collaboration among teachers to be included.

The FGD protocol developed for teachers by the researcher was also piloted with two GE and two SE teachers (see Appendix B).

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedures were inspired by both the purpose of the study and the procedures used in the literature by studies with similar research purposes. To initiate data collection conventions, consent letters were tailored to suit each group of participants (i.e., decision-makers, principals, and teachers).

Following the protocol of the Doctoral School of Letters, Humanities and Social Sciences at the Lebanese University, a letter of attestation with the title of the research study provided by the university is intended to help the researcher have access to the public and private sectors where need be. Hence, the attestation paper along with a list of school sites to be considered for the study was sent to the general director of the MEHE to acquire permission to conduct the study in the selected public schools (check appendix X). Private schools' principals and/or presidents of the institutions they belonged to were contacted, as well, for permission.

As such, the permission to use public schools as research sites was sought from the Ministry of Education and Higher education (MEHE). Agreement to access the private schools as research sites was taken from the principals or presidents of the institutions to which the schools belong. All the schools selected included Cycles I, II, and III of Basic Education.

Collecting data through individual semi-structured interviews with decision-makers, i.e., governmental personnel from the MEHE and the MOSA and nongovernmental (NGO) personnel was indeed challenging to the researcher due to the difficulty of securing their availability and consent. The researcher was redirected to contact their executive assistants or consultants in the ministries. The researcher left no stone unturned to obtain a meeting with policymakers via the contacts and

their connections; and thus, by any means, she was able to obtain appointments with fifteen decision-makers.

The researcher contacted each school principal by phone or by e-mail introduced herself and communicated her interest to involve them in her study. Some schools welcomed the idea, and a meeting was arranged to proceed with the research procedures. However, some other school principals were reluctant and kept postponing the meeting either because they were occupied with term or final exams, or because they did not want to distract and consume their teachers' work time. To ensure a considerable response rate, the researcher followed up these schools in the subsequent year.

The data collection from schools was carried over two consecutive years and from decision-makers throughout the phase of the research. Figure 3.16 represents the timeline of this research.

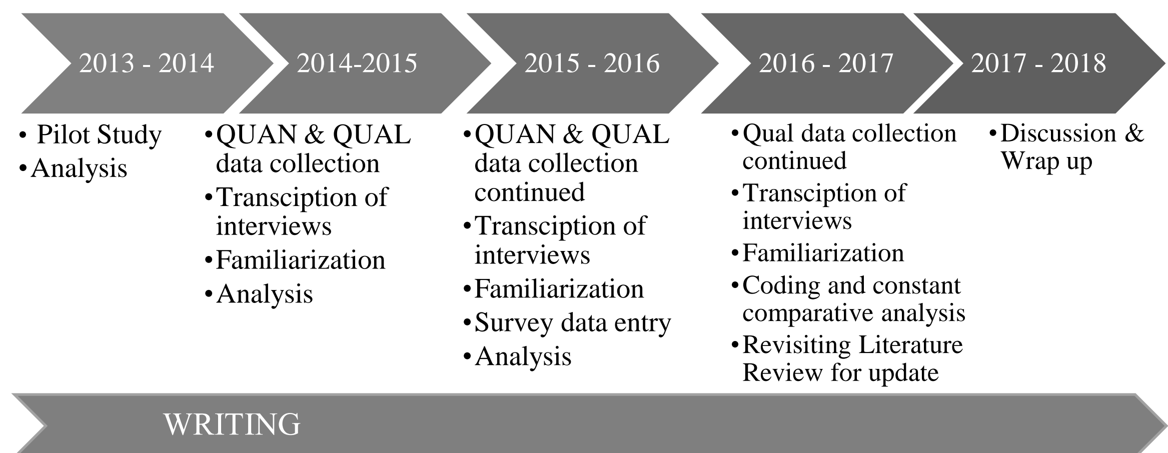

Figure 3.16. Research Timeline

Here it is worthy to remark that the researcher's work schedule as a faculty member in higher education and the reluctance of some selected schools and decision-makers to participate in the study, were significant factors in the delay of data collection.

The Interview Procedures

Firstly, having secured an agreement to participate in the study, the researcher arranged an appointment with the school principals to conduct the interview and distribute the survey to teachers. The researcher took a copy of the MEHE's permission form with her to the meeting and handed them the consent letter before starting the interview. The participants took the chance to review the consent forms and ask for any clarification. Besides, pseudonyms were adopted to ensure confidentiality.

Along the same line, the researcher contacted the principals of private schools by phone and sent e-mails to some schools that had their contact e-mail addresses on their websites; the e-mail included a general description of the study and the data collection procedures. As such, appointments were arranged and confirmed. Individual interviews with school principals were conducted over two consecutive years (2014-2015) during school time.

Over a period of 4 years (2014 – 2017), the researcher succeeded in approaching a small sample of decision-makers (N=15) who accepted to participate and sit for the interview: one former MEHE minister, one former MOSA General Director, three personnel holding positions at the MEHE and CERD, and 10 activists in the civil society.

Secondly, all interviews were carried out by the researcher herself. To establish rapport with the interviewees, the researcher socialized with them before the interview and explained the purpose of the study. Small talk improved the rapport before asking the interview questions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The investigator informed the participants about her professional role in academia and indicated that

she was there to learn from them about how they view IE and the challenges they perceive of implementing IE practices.

In keeping with Leedy and Ormrod (2013) recommendation that the qualitative interviewing design should be flexible, iterative, and continuous, the questioning was redesigned throughout the study rather than rigidly adhered to in order to accommodate the expressed needs of the study participant and to work toward validity and reliability. This flexibility in the instrument allowed the exploration of new topics while keeping the research organized and focused.

Before starting the interview, the researcher took permission to record the talk via a digital recorder to ensure the accuracy of data collection. Participants were encouraged to clarify, support, or add on any of their responses. In addition, theoretical saturation was considered, which allowed for the comparison between the emerged construct and the further empirical findings (Gall et al., 2010). Accordingly, the researcher continued the process of interviewing and probing more until she reached a point where the further data collected did not add anything new to the previously collected data.

Distinct interview protocols were designed for decision-makers and school principals (see Appendix C). Although the researcher came to the interview with a list of questions to ensure coverage of the major topics, adaptations were made as the conversations warranted to be meaningful to the participants. Probing, an interviewing strategy that is used to delve deeper into the interviewee's responses was used when more details, elaboration, or clarity was needed about the issue being discussed. For guidance, some prompts were introduced to keep respondents on track such as 'I am not clear about the...,' 'What do you mean...,' 'Tell me more...,' 'Did I get you correctly?' 'Can you give me another example?' 'How?' 'Why?' and 'Really?'

Some participants, especially decision-makers, preferred to freely talk about the target topic with minimal interference from the side of the researcher. The majority of the interviews were carried out in the local Lebanese language as the participants preferred it. Interviews extended from 40 minutes to an hour and a half.

As suggested by Patton (2015), interview data were collected by note-taking, audiotape recording, and follow- up memos after the interviews. Note-taking was used by the researcher to help formulate new questions during the interview and to aid in locating specific quotations from the tape. The researcher examined her reactions to the interviewee's comments by documenting these mindsets in a journal immediately after each interview.

Finally, 45 interviews with 30/33 school principals and 15 interviews with decision-makers were obtained, transcribed, and translated (see Figure 3.17). For accuracy purposes, the researcher listened to each interview and checked the verbatim simultaneously, making adjustments as necessary. To maintain the confidentiality of the participants, the interview audios and transcripts were kept in a locked file.

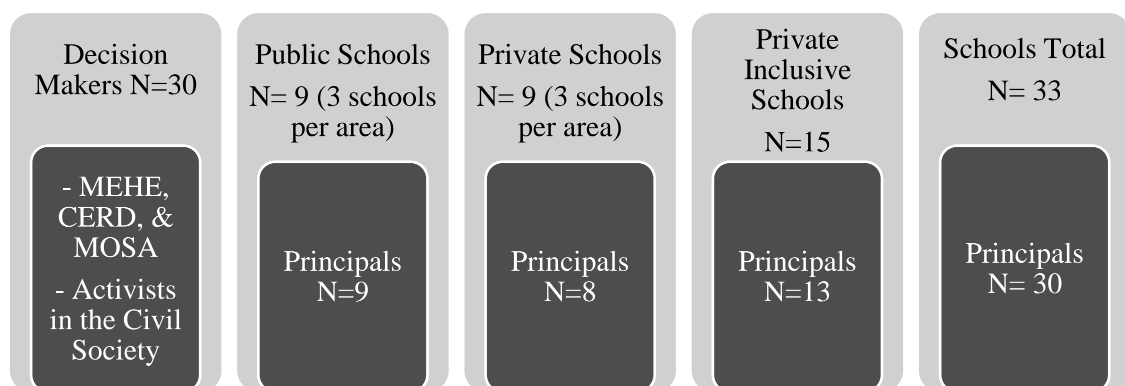

Figure 3.17. Visual representation of the numbers of individual interviews

Survey Procedures

As previously mentioned, the collection of data via survey took the researcher two years to get through. That said, 660 questionnaires were distributed to

the selected schools (20 questionnaires per school). The result was 618 answered questionnaires out 660. To maintain the validity of the instrument, the researcher discarded some of the questionnaires that were not adequately answered. As displayed in Table 3.7, 600/660 usable questionnaires were reached.

Here it is significant to mention that the selected schools have different educational settings; i.e., public, private, and inclusive schools having Cycles I, II, and III of basic education. The 33 schools were chosen primarily because they were academically and socio-economically varied: Fifteen private inclusive schools and 18 GE schools (Public and private) which have cycles I, II and III of Basic Education in Beirut city.

Table 3.7

Sample of Teachers Surveyed and their Response and Selection Rates (N = 600)

Educa-tional Zone	Number of Schools having Cycles II, II, & III			Number of Schools Selected			Number of Teachers Surveyed			Number of Teachers responded			Final Number of Teachers Selected		
	Pub	Pr	Incl	Pub	Pr	Incl	Pub	Pr	Incl	Pub	Pr	Incl	Pub	Pr	Incl
Beirut (1)	6	16	21	3	3	15	60	60	300	50	53	300	48	50	
Beirut (2)	20	56		3	3		60	60		55	60		51	56	292
Beirut (3)	4	18		3	3		60	60		52	56		49	54	
Total	30	90	21	9	9	15	180	180	300	157	161	300	148 24.7%	160 26.7%	292 48.7%
				N= 33			N= 660			N= 618			N= 600		

The researcher herself, with the help of a research assistant, delivered or distributed the survey in the actual educational setting of the teacher participants and delivered one-on-one in order to secure the biggest percentage of response rate. Some schools requested to have the questionnaire sent to them by e-mail so that they disseminate to their teachers to be collected in one/two weeks. Some other schools

permitted the researcher to distribute the questionnaires to teachers one-to-one and collect them in one sitting depending on the convenience of teachers. That was advantageous since the researcher observed the teacher participants surveyed during the study as she disseminated the questionnaire during their common recess and was available to address any questions about the survey items. She was there to clarify the understanding of any item in the questionnaire where need be. In addition, the researcher intended to visit the schools during their recess time to have a high response rate from teachers. Another critical factor is that the researcher made a minimum of three visits per school, which allowed her to observe the participants' real social contexts.

Brief instructions were communicated to the teachers in the cover letter and verbally asserting that their confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy would be maintained. The cover letter assured the respondents that participation in the study was voluntary; they could opt-out at any stage without any negative consequences (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Hence, they were requested not to write their names nor the name of the school. A well-founded protocol was followed, and trustworthiness was detected. The survey was devised to be understood and completed, using conventional pen-and-paper assessment techniques.

Anecdotal Evidence Procedures

As a narrative-based tool, the anecdotal evidence is a useful technique of reflecting the multifaceted, interconnected, and unpredicted complexity that exists in organizations. The participating teachers were asked to provide semi-structured written narratives of a significant episode related to inclusion. The narrative inquiry asked about a brief incident when the participants had a significant

(positive/negative) experience with a student with SEN (e.g., encountering SEN student(s) at school).

Though the anecdotal evidence prompt was added as a part of the questionnaire for the sake of convenience, the majority of the participants opted not to answer this section. The result was 160 usable anecdotes received (see Figure 3.18).

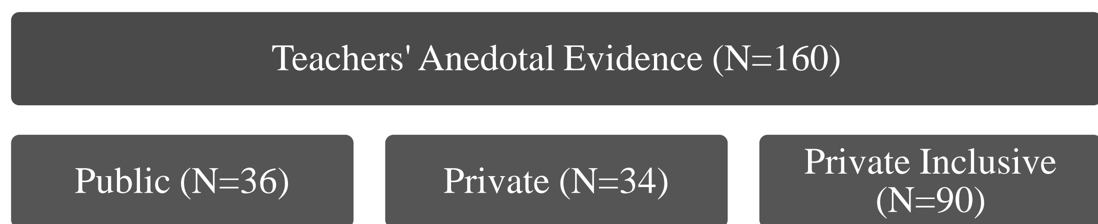

Figure 3.18. Visual representation of collected anecdotes

FGDs Procedures

Focus group interviews were utilized to obtain information from teachers. Generally, focus group interviews involve the use of in-depth interviews, and the selection of participants is purposive (Bell, 2010; Liamputtong, 2011). Participants are selected because they can provide a focused view on a specific topic due to their knowledge of the area under investigation. Focus group interviews are characterized by group dynamics and social interaction which motivate participants to talk, elicit more responses, and allow for comparison of agreements and disagreements on issues related to the topic under discussion (Bell, 2010).

The researcher planned for the FGDs ahead of time and made sure the location and schedule were convenient for most participants. Referring to the contact details provided earlier by the participating teachers after submitting their questionnaires, the researcher called them and invited them to brunch, where the FGDs would take place. It was agreed to have the meeting on Saturday as it is the teachers' day off.

The first FGD was canceled as only 3 participants attended, though 10 participants agreed to take part in the research; as such, it was rearranged in the subsequent week. Hence, five FGDs were executed with a range of 10-12 participating teachers (See Table 3.8).

Table 3. 8

Focus Group Discussions

FGD # 1	FGD # 2	FGD # 3	FGD # 4	FGD # 5
Pr-INCL N = 10	Pr N = 11	Pub N = 12	Pr-INCL N = 11	Pub N = 12

Brunch on the teachers' day off (Saturday) was held at a restaurant in Hamra area, and pastries and refreshments were served. The recorded FGDs sessions took place in a noise-free conference room and lasted between one and one and a half hours. Name tags were provided to participants upon their arrival, and coffee was served. The first fifteen minutes were spared for socializing and welcoming participants. Then the researcher made a welcoming note through which participants were reminded of the purpose of the meeting and that their participation was voluntary and their contribution would be kept anonymous.

After that, the FGD questions were handed to teachers, and a slide show was displayed portraying the case of each of the vignettes representing SEN children. Directly after each vignette, the participants were asked to answer these quantitative questions about the level of challenge they perceive to have if this SEN child were in their class and about their self-efficacy to teach that student:

A. If you had this student in your class, to what extent do you find it challenging to effectively serve and respond to the student's learning, behavioral and/or social needs?

1. Not Challenging
2. A Little Challenging
3. Very Challenging
4. Extremely Challenging

B. Considering IE as pedagogy to provide a curriculum and to make use of an approach that is inclusive and catering to the needs of all students, do you believe you will be successful in achieving these if this student were in you class?

1. Extremely Successful
2. Very Successful
3. Successful
4. Not successful

Next, teachers were prompted to respond to the following qualitative question "Focusing on the student you identified as the most challenging in respect of providing for their needs (Question 1), what would be the major reason for your difficulty?" Each participant was given five minutes to record their answers on the paper followed by a round table approach of where each teacher was given two to three minutes to justify his/her answer.

Finally, the session was wrapped up and the participants were served food and refreshments. Directly after the session ended the researcher wrote down her notes on any observations she made during the session.

Ethical Consideration

Ethics are of great value when conducting research. The primary considerations are that participants should be treated with respect, should not be abused in any way, and should be fully aware of what is happening to them or with

them as part of the research process (Oliver, 2010). To make sure that research participants are dealt with respect, are fully informed, and not abused by the research process, it is essential to deem some vital ethical principles.

Therefore, throughout the research undertakings, the researcher maintained the highest level of ethical standards expected of researchers. For example, feedback was sought and considered from the university committee concerning the ethical appropriateness of the research design and approach, and prior to collecting data from public and private schools, permission and consent was obtained from the MEHE (to access public schools) as well as from school boards (to access private schools). Further to that, and aligned with the recommendations of Cohen et al. (2007), Creswell (2012, 2014), Corbin and Strauss (2008), and Oliver (2010) the following ethical issues were considered: anonymity of respondent participants; protection of confidentiality of responses; and care in reporting small subsets of results so that the identity of specific individuals is not revealed.

Creswell (2012) suggests that obtaining relevant permission ensures participants' cooperation and helps in securing the appropriate data collection (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2012, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). That said, utmost care was given to protect the confidentiality of all participants and to lessen the likelihood of intimidation. Because all data collected is anonymous, there was no risk of disclosing identifying or personal participant information (Oliver, 2010).

Thus, the names of the interview respondents were anonymous. For the ease of reference, each participant of the decision-makers, principals, and teachers had a distinct code. Thus, the code of a decision-maker comprised of two letters (DM) indicating the position, a number, and the acronym of the organization he/she represented. For example, DM1-MEHE refers to the first decision-maker

representing the Ministry of Education. The code of a principal comprised of one letter (P) indicating the position, a number, and the school category (Pub for public, Pr for private, & Pr-INCL for private inclusive). For example, P1-Pr-INCL refers to the first principal of a private inclusive school.

While names of all participating teachers were not requested to be written on the survey paper, and schools were kept anonymous. Instead, the researcher gave each survey an ID number. Besides, all data were carefully reported to ensure that it did not allow for the school name to be identified. Only grouped scores were reported, and qualitative responses were labeled with the participants' gender, age and years of teaching experience. The contact details of teachers who showed interest to participate in the FGDs were recorded on an independent paper to notify them of the event at a later time.

In addition, participants were informed about the study and their rights by providing them with informed consent (see Appendix A). The informed consent form included a description of the study, the voluntary and confidential nature of the study, the participant's right to withdraw from the study at any time, and the risks and benefits to the participants of participating in the study. Participants revealed their consent by filling in the questionnaire.

For further confidentiality, electronic data was stored on a personal, secure, password-protected computer, and the hard copy data in a locked cabinet in the same home office of the researcher. All the stored data will be discarded later.

Anecdotal Evidence Procedures

The researcher found that it is suitable to attach the anecdotal evidence prompt, the fourth tool of data collection, to the questionnaire for the sake of convenience, feasibility, and time. Thus, it was more convenient to reach the

participating teachers in the same research context and through the same medium and at the same time. This minimized the chance of teachers' reluctance to answer questions related to the same research twice.

Summary of Data Gathering Tools

Table 3.9 summarizes the data gathering methods used throughout the research and provides the rationale for their use.

Table 3.9

Summary of Data Gathering Methods and Rationales

Method	Details of Procedures	Rationale
Survey	Survey completed by a total of 660 teachers in mainstream schools (public, private, and private inclusive) in the three educational regions of Beirut capital.	To explore their conceptions and challenges when implementing IE in their schools.
Focus Group Discussions	5 focus group discussions with 12-12 teachers each different school.	To explore further and to follow up the conceptions of a group of teachers in relation to IE. To further explore why they find including SEN students in their classroom challenging.
Anecdotes	A written small narrative by the participating teachers where they report on an incident they encountered with an SEN student.	To explore how responding teachers reveal their understanding and challenges of IE through their narration of an anecdote.
Semi-Structured Interviews	Semi-structured interviews with 45 study respondents: 15 decision-makers and 30 principals.	To explore their conceptions and challenges when implementing IE in their schools.

Data Analysis Procedure

This study used MMR techniques combining methods from both the qualitative and quantitative paradigms. Administering mixed methods research require thorough, operationally rough investigations (Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2007). The qualitative approaches used included classroom interviews with decision-makers, focus group discussions with teachers, and

anecdotal evidence of teachers. The quantitative methods included surveying teachers. Data were analyzed with the help of two computer research programs: NVivo and SPSS. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 25) was used with the quantitative data.

As mentioned earlier, having adopted the MMR, the researcher made use of a multi-method, triangulation approach that occurred throughout the data collection period and afterwards the analysis period. Triangulation included checking the findings from surveys, interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and anecdotes for consistency. Whilst trying to attain theoretical sensitivity, "the ability to recognize what is important in data and give it meaning" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 46), the researcher employed the recommended analytic techniques: 1) “Asking, what is really going on here? 2) Maintaining an attitude of skepticism toward any categories or hypotheses brought to or arising early in the research, and validating them repeatedly with the data themselves.” (p. 47)

The section below describes how the data was analyzed and the methods used to have a valid and reliable research study. The data analysis procedure adopted in a mixed-methods research analyzes the identified themes as per the protocols of each utilized data collection instrument; i.e., the survey, semi- structured interview, focus group discussion, artifacts, and anecdotes. Therefore, quantitative as well as qualitative data analysis protocols were considered.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 25, one of the most widely used software packages in education research, was utilize for quantitative data analysis. The following structure for data analysis, suggested by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) and Cohen et al. (2007) was used:

Preparing for data analysis. Since a paper questionnaire was used, the author herself did the data entry of the scale items and responses using an excel sheet. The dataset was screened for missing data, such as an incomplete questionnaire, before data analyses were conducted. The researcher discarded some of the questionnaires that were not adequately answered, and the result was 600/660 usable questionnaires. For the sake of accuracy, the researcher, with the help of her research assistant, double checked the data entry of each of the survey items before exporting them to SPSS Version 25.

Analyzing the data. First, the reliability of the overall scales and sub- scales was analyzed using Cronbach's alpha. Second, basic demographic information was assembled and analyzed. To answer the first and second research questions, the mean scores for each of the items of the Inclusive Education Practices Faculty Survey (IEPFS) and the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES) were computed determining the average for each item in each variable, and standard deviations to find the spread of scores around the mean. The highest possible score on the IEPFS survey was 100. An overall score above 50 was interpreted as having positive IE conceptions. Whilst the highest possible score on the CIES survey was 84 and the lowest score was 2. A high score on CIES indicated that the respondent was highly concerned about including SEN students in the classrooms in comparison with those respondents with lower scores. The respondent who marked ‘not concerned at all’ in all the 21 questions got a score of 21; while a respondent who marked ‘very concerned’ in all the 21 items obtained a score of 84. Thus, a lower CIES score indicated that a respondent is less concerned about his or her ability to implement inclusion. This way teachers’ conceptions of IE (SEN, educator’s role, school practices, and comfort) and their concerns about the various factors (resources,

acceptance, academic standards, and workload) when teaching SEN children were determined.

To answer the third research question, a Chi-Square test of independence was administered to determine if there is a significant relationship between teachers' IE conceptions and concerns.

Finally, to answer the fourth research question, Ordinal Logistic Regression analysis was run with each of the conceptions and concerns subscales entered as the dependent variable and the background variables (from the demographic survey) as the independent variables. These analyses were conducted to determine which variables had a significant impact on IE conceptions and concerns.

Reliability and Validity

To ensure that the quantitative instruments were still valid, the researcher conducted scale reliability analysis. Multon and Coleman (2010) explained that Cronbach's alpha coefficient is the most commonly used method to quantify the reliability of an instrument by determining scale reliability (internal consistency) of the instrument. Cronbach's alphas were run for the total of each scale and for each factor of the scales. According to Pallant (2016), it is generally conventional that a Cronbach's alpha value of .7 is desired. To Multon and Coleman (2010), ranges with .90 and above demonstrate high reliability, .80 to .89 demonstrate very good reliability, and .70 to .79 demonstrate good or adequate reliability.

In the current study, the internal consistency of the four conception factors and the total of IEPFS scale and the internal consistency of the four concern factors and the total CIES scale based on the responses from the final survey population (n=600) were computed using Cronbach's alpha. The two scales were found to have high internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .84 for IEPFS and .91 for CIES,

suggesting that the scales were reliable to be used for further analysis (Multon & Coleman, 2010; Pallant, 2016). Cronbach's α coefficients are summarized in Table 3.10 and 3.11.

Table 3.10

Reliability Statistics of IEPFS & CIES-L

IEPFS		CIES-L	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.84	25	.91	21

The coefficient alphas were found acceptable for all four factors and the total IEPFS scale (see Table 3.11). For each sub-scale individually, the Cronbach's alphas were .65 for conceptions of SEN inclusion, .61 for conceptions of Teacher's Role, .76 for conceptions of School Practices, and .74 for conceptions of Teacher's Comfort and Self-efficacy. While the second sub-scale (Teacher Role) has lower than desired alphas, Pallant (2016) states that it is acceptable and not uncommon to have alphas of .5 when a factor contains five or less items, as is the case with this sub-scale. Due to these alpha's, it was deemed acceptable to continue with the analysis of the measure as it was used in the current study.

Table 3.11

Cronbach's Alpha Results for the IEPFS Sub-scales

Scale Factors	Cronbach's Apha	Intrepretation as per Pallant's (2016) SPSS manual
IEPFS		
SEN Inclusion	.65	Acceptable
Teacher Role	.61	Acceptable
School Practices	.76	Good or adequate
Teacher's Comfort and Self-Efficacy	.74	Good or adequate

Very close to Sharma and Desai's (2002), the coefficient alphas were found acceptable for all four factors and the total CIES scale (see Table 3.12). For each factor individually, the Cronbach's alphas were 0.82 for Factor I (Concerns about lack of resources), 0.65 for Factor 2 (Concerns about acceptance), 0.86 for Factor 3 (Concerns about academic standards), and 0.73 for Factor 4 (Concerns about workload). Whilst Sharma and Desai (2002) reported internal consistency for this measure at 0.91 for the total score, .82 for ‘Lack of resource’ (Factor I), .70 for ‘Concern about Acceptance (Factor II), .84 for 'Concern about Academic Standards' (factor III), and .74 for ‘Concerns about Workload’ (Factor IV).

The coefficient alpha for the entire scale with the three parts taken in totality was 0.91.

The coefficient alpha for the entire scale with the three parts taken in totality was 0.91.

Table 3.12

Cronbach's Alpha Results for the CIES – L Sub-scales

Scale Factors	Cronbach's Apha	Intrepretation as per Pallant's (2016) SPSS manual
	CIES-L	
Factor I: Resources	.82	Very good
Factor II: Acceptance	.65	Acceptable
Factor III: Academic Standards	.86	Very good
Factor IV: Workload	.71	Good or adequate

According to Creswell (2014), threats to internal validity have to do with the procedures related to data collection and participants in an experimental study, threats that may impact research results. It is essential to maintain internal validity without which one is unable to conclude variable correlations and cause and effect

relationships (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). This study was non-experimental. Because the analysis was conducted to determine the correlations between variables, it was essential to ensure the internal validity of this study. Eventually, weak instrumentation can lead to an imprecise measurement of variables, and poor selection methods of participants can result in the selection of participants whose features may unintentionally affect study results (Creswell, 2014). To minimize the effects of these threats to the internal validity of the study, the researcher employed pre-existing instruments with verified internal consistency and conducted her scale reliability analysis to confirm the appropriateness of the tools for the particular selected sample. In addition, to decrease the chances of human error while handling the data during the collection and analysis processes, the author sought the help of a research assistant to double-check over the exported study data to an Excel spreadsheet prior importing to SPSS for further analysis. Besides, threats to validity based on participant selection was mitigated by the recruitment of a diverse population (teachers, principals, and decision-makers) to participate in this study, an action that should reduce the effect of participants' hidden or underlying characteristics.

External validity, on the other hand, is subject to threats that appear when the investigator draws conclusions from the sample data and inappropriately applies them to other populations, other settings, or past or future situations (Creswell, 2014). Inappropriate conclusions occur when a researcher generalizes to other groups, not under investigation (Creswell, 2014). Accordingly, external validity in a study is essential to maintain because research results are most valuable when they are accurately applied to situations and populations (Leedy & Ormond, 2013). One threat to external validity in this study was that the conceptions and concerns of

teachers might have been representative of the particular school culture within Beirut Capital. Hence, teachers in other school districts in Lebanon with diverse missions, values, and support may have different perspectives regarding IE.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Since an individual semi-structured interview, part of the focus group discussion (one open-ended question) and anecdotal evidence are qualitative; it is recommended that data collection and analysis coincide (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The process of analysis involves bringing order to the data, organizing what is explored into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units (Patton, 2015). Therefore, this study followed the guidelines of Corbin and Strauss (2008), Creswell (2014), Gall et al. (2010) and Patton (2015) that are based on simultaneous data collection and analysis. The constant comparative and thematic analysis methods were both used to analyze the data obtained from individual and focus group interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The digitally recorded individual semi-structured interviews and FGDs (the qualitative data) were transcribed to be able to analyze the data. The anecdotes were compiled and type-written. Since some of the anecdotes were written in Arabic, the researcher translated them to English. Next, transcripts were imported to the software Nvivo 12 (www.qsrinternational.com) to systematically organize and sort data for easy retrieval, management, and analysis. For the sake of thorough familiarity with the data prior analysis, the researcher listened to all interview tapes twice. Each transcribed interview was read to provide an initial familiarization with the data. In an attempt to categorize the emerging data, the researcher developed a general coding protocol in the form of a concept tree derived from the semi-structured interview schedule and reviewed literature.

Coding and constant comparative analysis. To start with, transcripts were read and re-read for familiarization. With software assistance, inductive analysis, as described by Patton (2015), was used to analyze the data. According to Patton, the first step of data analysis is the formation of 'free nodes.' Parallel to the creation of free nodes, some memoing (Creswell, 2014, & Patton, 2015) was carried out. Memoing helps the researchers write memos or notes to themselves regarding any insights they derive from the data.

The second step was when the free nodes with similar or thematically linked content were identified and grouped to form 'tree nodes,' each bearing the name of a theme. The third step is the identification of connections within the themes and making interpretations.

At the second reading, data were given an initial code. The term 'code' often implies a number or a symbol to represent something. Similarly, coding, as it is applied to qualitative data analysis, can often imply looking for, and giving a theme to the data. Patterns and themes were not sought, but rather the data were coded based on 'descriptions' to organize a large amount of information into smaller parts for later retrieval and focused coding (Cresswell, 2014). In an attempt to categorize the emerging data, the researcher developed a general coding protocol derived from the semi-structured interview schedule and reviewed literature. After that, procedure axial and open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was subsequently used by the researcher to advance the analysis further. Some comments from participants had more than one code. For example, P25 said the following:

Of course, they can. They need to be prepared for this. They need proper training, extra courses. This way, they are ready to serve these kinds of students. Again, we need to remember the importance of collaboration between the classroom

teachers to deliver the best instruction to these students. Still, some SEN cases require special services and specialists like speech therapist, for example. In other words, it is a long process that needs a complete and well-structured system (Files\\Pr-Interviews\\P25-Pr).

This passage was given three codes: (a) A GE teacher can deliver SEN services; (b) the need for appropriate teacher education and training; and (c) collaboration is important between teachers. After all data from the interviews were coded, over 100 (codes) descriptions were formulated. Thus, codes were created and classified under family codes to assist in reaching broad themes that would interpret the participants' responses regarding their conceptions of and challenges to IE in Lebanon.

After the researcher identified constructs, themes, and patterns that best explain the data collected within participants and across them, the emerged codes were compared across segments to determine commonalities that reflected the underlying value of and the interactions among the coded data. The cumulative emerging data from principals' interviews was organized in two separate tables that included two sections targeting the two aspects of the research questions: IE conceptions and IE challenges as perceived by respondents. As such, the research questions were answered, and the purpose of the study was achieved (Creswell, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gall et al., 2010).

Going further, the researcher used axial coding, a process of putting the data back together in order to make connections between a category and subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). This was done by organizing each category of the cumulative emerging data from the decision-makers, the principals, and schoolteachers in three separate files.

In order to take the analysis process one step further, a taxonomy of the data was produced. Table 3.13 provides an example of one section of the taxonomy from the qualitative data of the interviews.

Finally, the qualitative data were then analyzed with the findings from the quantitative data by directly comparing the items on the conceptions and concerns scales with the qualitative input. Themes were identified in the qualitative data where the comments related to items on the IEPFS and CIES.

Table 3.13

Example of Data Analysis Taxonomy

Theme	Descriptors	Number of Respondents	Example of Transcript
IE Challenges\SEN Acceptance			
Nodes\\IE Challenges\SEN Acceptance/Difficult to maintain discipline	Cannot control SEN behavior	3	
Nodes\\IE Challenges\SEN Acceptance\Lack of time	Tight schedule	3	
Nodes\\IE Challenges\SEN Acceptance\Parents not accepting SEN	Parents of SEN students	19	Some parents are difficult to convince that their child needs to be referred to a specialist for diagnosis. In fact, they refuse the idea of special needs.
	Parents of students without SEN	8	Also, we should not forget the parents who refuse their kid to be in the same class with special needs students.
Nodes\\IE Challenges\SEN Acceptance\Students without SEN not accepting SEN peers	Rejection by non-SEN students	6	

Theme	Descriptors	Number of Respondents	Example of Transcript
Nodes\\IE Challenges\SEN Acceptance\Teachers not accepting SEN students	Refusing to have them in their class	16	

Therefore, the researcher utilized the constant comparative method, which was adequate for generating categories, sub-categories, and codes (Creswell, 2014, 2012; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gall et al., 2010). Then, the resulting data were coded deductively according to the guiding research questions. Axial and open coding (Creswell, 2012, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gall et al., 2010) was subsequently used to advance the analysis further. Lastly, the analysis produced themes that addressed the research questions.

Credibility

While quantitative research generally uses the terms reliability and validity to describe the rigor of research, in qualitative research, rigor refers to the goal of seeking to understand the tacit knowledge of participants' conception of reality. Therefore, credibility, transferability, and dependability measures were considered and incorporated in an attempt to fulfill assumptions and ensure objectivity. Credibility refers to the accuracy by which the participants' perception of the phenomenon was captured and the accuracy by which the researcher reflected her points of view. It is internal validity's equivalence in quantitative studies (Creswell, 2014, 2012, 2011; Creswell, & Plano Clark, 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gall et al., 2010; Patton, 2002). In this study, the multiple sources of methods include the survey, individual interviews, and the focus group interview. First, the researcher targeted the credibility of the study through triangulation. Triangulation improves

credibility by using multiple sources of methods, investigators, or theory (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Secondly, the data were recorded accurately and very precisely by checking the data files alongside the sources and relevant data. Hence, member checking and peer probing were appropriate to fulfill credibility and ensure the accuracy of the information. The researcher encouraged member checking by involving participants (participants were encouraged to provide feedback on all phases of the study, in order to gain their emic perspective truly), used coding checks (two investigators analyzed the data gathered). Further to that, dependability was ensured since the survey, interviews, anecdotal evidence, and FGDs were conducted by the author herself, as the author took complete responsibility for the data collection procedures.

Summary

This study was conducted to collect and analyze data relative to the conceptions and challenges of teachers, principals, and decision-makers regarding IE in mainstream schools. In order to retain the foci on the research questions, the eight research questions were restated at the start of the chapter. This was followed by providing the overall research methodology and the rationale for the use of MMR. The context of the research methodology was sketched, paying attention to the research methods employed. Next, the population and sampling strategies were described, and it was indicated how many participated in the study.

Also, a justification for the data collection methods, including the instruments to be used was presented. The research instruments were fully explored focusing on the questionnaire and the types of questions used, the semi-structured interviews, the FGDs, and the anecdotal evidence. After that, a description of the procedures of administering the research instruments and an explanation of the data analysis

method utilized to analyze the qualitative and quantitative data sets were reported in this chapter. Finally, the ethics and limitations of this study were discussed.

In the following chapters (Four, Five, & Six), the findings of the collected data are discussed and analyzed based on the conceptual framework and research questions guiding the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results: Teachers' Conceptions and Challenges

The researcher's purpose for conducting this study was to determine the conceptions and challenges of teachers, principals, and decision-makers regarding IE in mainstream schools. In the previous chapter, the researcher portrayed the research design, the methodology employed to select the sample, and the procedures followed to collect and analyze the data.

This chapter brings together findings extracted from teachers' surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and anecdotal evidence. The form of data analysis has been both quantitative and qualitative. Items in the survey were analyzed through descriptive statistics for demographic variables, straight forward frequency count and means score for the Likert scale questions answered the first and second research questions, Chi-Square test of independence was computed to answer the third research question investigating the relationship between teachers' IE conceptions and concerns, and Ordinal Logistic Regression (OLR) analysis was utilized to answer the fourth research question on examining the effect of teachers' background variables on their IE conceptions and concerns. The Likert scale questions in the FGDs were analyzed by computing the frequency count and Means scores, as well. Whereas qualitative data analysis protocols of constant comparative and thematic analysis were employed to study teachers' open-ended discussion in the FGDs and their written anecdotes as recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2008), Creswell (2014), Gall et al. (2010) and Patton (2002). Hence, as illustrated in Figure 4.1, the analysis of teachers' data collected from 600 questionnaires, five FGDs, 212 anecdotes, will be clarified. The researcher will provide the results under seven main headings: (a) Teachers' IE Conceptions, (b) teachers' IE challenges, (c) relationships between

teachers' IE conceptions and challenges, (d) predictors of teachers' IE conceptions and challenges, (e) results emerging from FGDs, (f) results emerging from anecdotal evidence, and (g) summary of teachers' results.

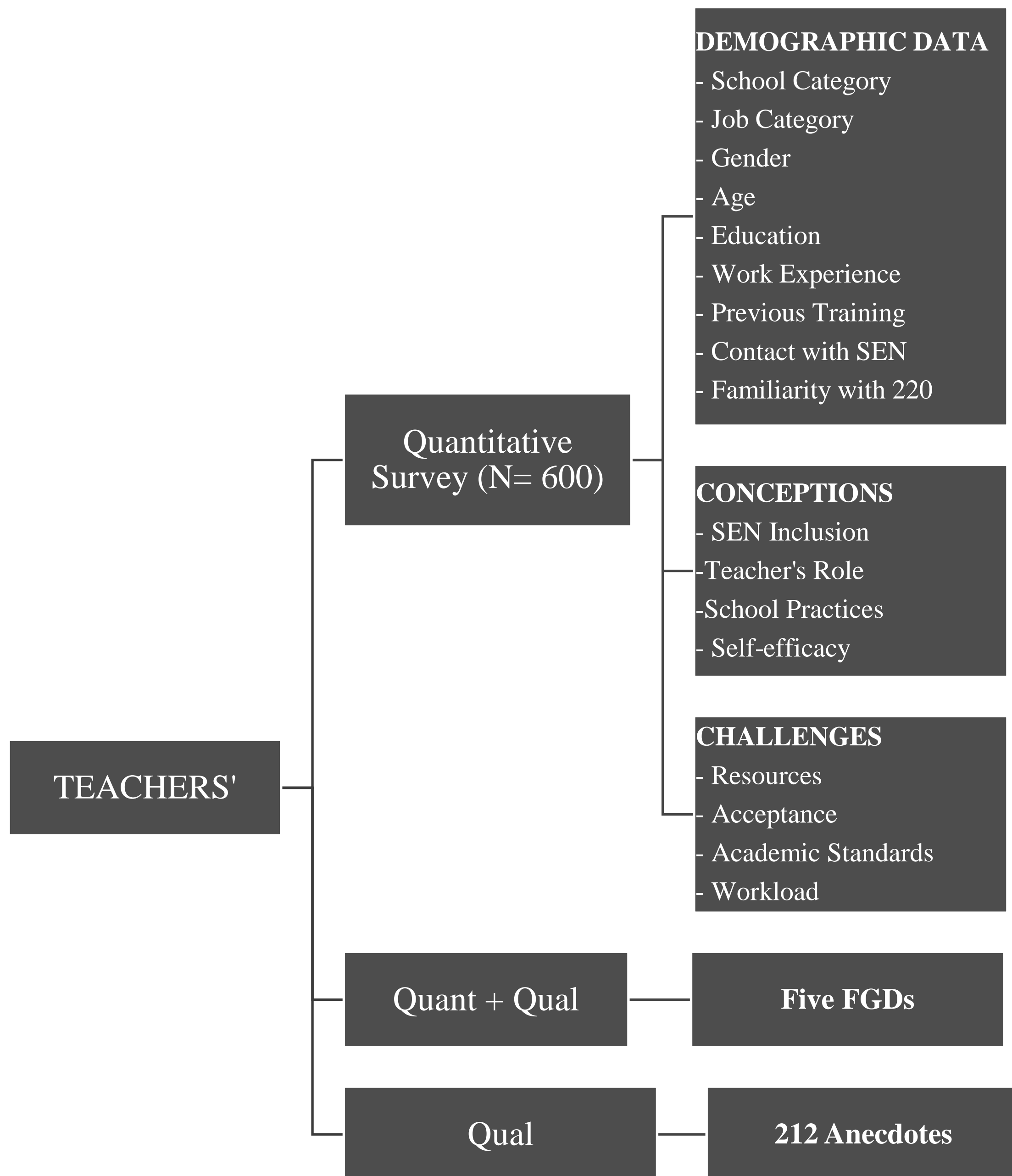

Figure 4.1. Analysis of teachers' QUAN+QUAL responses

This chapter is structured by reporting data as per the research questions (RQs) below:

(1) What are the schoolteachers' IE conceptions?

(2) What are the schoolteachers' perspectives on the concerns they face when implementing IE?

(3) Is there a relationship between teachers' IE conceptions and concerns?

(4) To what extent do teachers' school category, job category, educational background, training, experience, age, SEN contact, and knowledge of Law 220 contribute to their IE conceptions and concerns?

    a. Is there a difference in IE conceptions and concerns between teachers of public, private, and inclusive schools?

    b. Is there a difference in IE conceptions and concerns between special education teachers and general education teachers?

    c. Is there a difference in IE conceptions and concerns based on teachers' educational backgrounds?

    d. Is there a relationship between teachers' training and their IE conceptions and concerns?

    e. Is there a relationship between teachers' experience and their IE conceptions and concerns?

    f. Is there a relationship between the teachers' age and their IE conceptions and concerns?

    g. Is there a relationship between teachers' contact with SEN students and their IE conceptions and concerns?

    h. Is there a relationship between the teachers' knowledge of 220 and their conceptions and concerns about inclusive education?

Before presenting the findings derived from the responding teachers, it would be useful to reiterate that Bronfenbrenner's ecological system model informed and

shaped the current study. This framework is used to present the responses of the different groups of participants. Central to each of the above RQs were the views of the participating schoolteachers who are expected to have direct contact with SEN students and whose views constituted the microsystem of the ecological model. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings derived from the analyses of participating teachers' quantitative and qualitative data.

Teachers' IE Conceptions – Microsystem

One of the main questions that guided this study examined teachers' IE conceptions in mainstream schools in Lebanon. Section II of the survey measured teachers' conceptions. Following the developers of the instrument, teachers are expected to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on 25 positively worded items that can be responded to on a 4 point-Likert-type scale. The conceptions score was calculated by summing the individual score for each question. The survey produces a total score obtained by adding the value of responses on each item. The value of the total score may range from 25 to 100. A score in the upper 25 percentile indicates that the teacher is an advocate of IE, middle 25 percentile indifferent, and lowest 25 percentile an opponent. In other words, higher scores on this scale are indicative of a higher level of agreement on IE conceptions. Data obtained in this study were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25) was used for data analysis. The percent and mean scores for each of the items of the survey were computed. A mean score of 3.0 and above indicates that respondents agree on IE conceptions; whereas a mean score of below 3.0 indicates that respondents disagree on IE conceptions. Table 4.1 illustrates the three quantitative indicators for IE conceptions.

Table 4.1

Three Quantitative Indicators for IE Conceptions

Low x ≤ 2.9		Average 3 > x >3.5		High x ≥ 3.5	
Subtheme	*M*	Subtheme	*M*	Subtheme	*M*
SEN	**2.94**				
		Teacher's Comfort	3.37		
		School Practice	3.35		
		Teacher's Role	3.14		

Findings displayed in Table 4.2 reveal the mean conception scores of all teachers (*N*=600) that answered these questions (*M*= 3.24, *s.d.*=0.42). This indicates that schoolteachers in Lebanon have average IE conceptions (the value of 3.24 lay between 3 = Sometimes, and 4 = I Agree). In fact, the majority of cycles I, II, and III teachers had average conceptions of IE – 51% agreed and 30% sometimes agreed, while 13% did not agree, 4% did not know, and 2% did not answer (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.2

Mean Scores of Teachers' Conceptions (N = 600)

Conceptions of:	*M*	*SD*
Teacher's Comfort	3.37	0.46
School Practice	3.35	0.67
Teacher's Role	3.14	0.71
SEN	2.94	0.52
Conceptions Score	**3.24**	**0.42**

Table 4.3

Conceptions Score Frequency Distribution

	N	*%*
No Answer	12	2
I Just Don't Know	26	4
I Don't Agree	77	13
Sometimes	179	30
I Agree	306	51

The individual responses of the questions in section II of the survey served to measure the conceptions of schoolteachers in different domains related to the inclusion of SEN students in general education. Table 4.4 summarizes the answers for each question. The first column shows the question and its number. The next five columns show the percentage of the distribution of responses. The following two columns show the calculated conception score and its standard deviation per question; while the last column indicates the number of the sample. To simplify the reporting of the data in the following paragraphs, the percentages are the sum of “I just don’t know”, “No, I don’t agree”, “Sometimes”, and “Yes, I agree” responses depending on the question. In addition, questions from section II were grouped along the following domains: (a) Conceptions of SEN inclusion, (b) conceptions of teacher’s role when dealing with SEN, (c) conceptions of school practice, and (d) conceptions of teacher’s comfort and self-efficacy. (i.e. social benefits; academic benefits; general and special education teachers; law, modifications, implementations, financial resources, and leadership).

Table 4.4

Teachers' Responses to the Conceptions Section

Conceptions of:	No answer	I just don't know	No, I don't agree	Sometimes agree	Yes, I agree	M	SD
SEN	**2%**	**1%**	**25%**	**47%**	**26%**	**2.94**	**0.52**
1. Every student, regardless of the special need, should be assigned to and be instructed in general education classes.	2%	1%	27%	50%	21%	2.89	0.79
2. Students who have special needs can be positive contributors to general education classes.	0%	1%	15%	54%	31%	3.14	0.70
3. Any student, and all students, can learn in the general education classroom.	3%	1%	44%	32%	20%	2.65	0.91

Conceptions of:	No answer	I just don't know	No, I don't agree	Sometimes agree	Yes, I agree	M	SD
4. Students without special needs can benefit when a student with a significant special need is included in the class.	2%	0%	17%	51%	29%	3.05	0.82
5. A student with multiple special needs can benefit from and successfully achieve IEP objectives in a general education class.	1%	2%	23%	48%	27%	2.99	0.79
Teacher's Role	**7%**	**3%**	**13%**	**26%**	**52%**	**3.14**	**0.71**
6. Teachers with extensive special education training should NOT be the only ones to deliver special education services.	9%	0%	16%	25%	50%	3.07	1.20
7. A general education classroom teacher can deliver special instruction to students who have IEPs as a part of the general lesson.	9%	0%	20%	39%	32%	2.85	1.16
8. If a classroom teacher does not want to teach a particular child with an IEP, the class placement should change to another teacher who is willing to teach the child.	6%	0%	13%	12%	69%	3.38	1.10
9. When a special education teacher is assigned to deliver services in a general education class, it has a positive impact on the whole class.	7%	0%	5%	28%	60%	3.33	1.10
10. Special educators are equipped to teach general education students.	2%	13%	9%	25%	51%	3.09	1.15
School Practice	**1%**	**8%**	**10%**	**21%**	**61%**	**3.35**	**0.67**
11. I am aware of my school's philosophy about including students with special needs.	0%	12%	10%	18%	61%	3.28	1.05
12. Our school's administration would support teachers working together to include students with special needs.	2%	9%	11%	20%	59%	3.25	1.08
13. The staff in our school feel positively about including students with special needs.	0%	10%	16%	29%	45%	3.08	1.02
14. Staff members in our school are encouraged to collaborate and support all students.	0%	2%	4%	17%	78%	3.71	0.62
15. In our building, students who have special needs feel welcome and participate in all aspects of school life.	0%	5%	10%	22%	62%	3.42	0.87
Teacher's Comfort	**1%**	**5%**	**8%**	**27%**	**58%**	**3.37**	**0.46**
16. I feel comfortable including students with special needs in the general education classroom.	0%	2%	20%	49%	29%	3.06	0.75

Conceptions of:	No answer	I just don't know	No, I don't agree	Sometimes agree	Yes, I agree	M	SD
17. I am adequately prepared to deliver instruction to a wide variety of learners using the general education curriculum as a base for instruction.	0%	7%	10%	22%	60%	3.36	0.93
18. I am willing to collaborate with other teachers.	0%	2%	2%	10%	87%	3.81	0.55
19. I feel comfortable and able to supervise and support the staff assigned to my class	3%	7%	2%	23%	65%	3.40	1.03
20. I am comfortable using technology (computers or adaptive equipment) to support the instruction of a wide variety of learners.	0%	1%	4%	13%	82%	3.77	0.57
21. I can adequately assess the progress and performance of most students who have IEPs.	0%	10%	14%	38%	38%	3.03	0.97
22. I can make instructional and curriculum accommodations for children with IEPs.	0%	12%	15%	34%	39%	2.99	1.02
23. I have the time to collaborate with other teachers when needed.	0%	6%	12%	43%	39%	3.15	0.86
24. I am willing to change and improve my instructional style to be able to reach more students.	2%	1%	2%	7%	89%	3.80	0.67
25. I feel that I can make a difference in the life of a student who has a special need.	0%	7%	4%	36%	53%	3.36	0.84

SEN Inclusion

Questions one to five measured teachers' conceptions of including SEN students in mainstream classrooms with a total mean of 2.94 and a standard deviation of 0.52, which indicated low IE conceptions. These questions scored 2.89, 3.14, 2.65, 3.05, and 2.99, respectively, on the scale of the conception. Question one responses indicated that 50% of the teachers sometimes agreed, and 21%of the teachers agreed that every student, regardless of the SEN, should be assigned to and be instructed in general education classes. Fifty-four percent of the participating teachers sometimes agreed, and 31% of the teachers agreed that students who have special needs could be positive contributors to general education classes (question 2). Question three was

one of the questions with a low conception score where 44% of the teachers did not agree that any student, and all students, can learn in the general education classroom, meanwhile, 32% of the teacher sometimes agreed, and 20% agreed. Question four responses revealed that 51% of the teachers sometimes agreed and 29% of the teachers agreed that students without SENs could benefit when a student with a significant special need is included in the class. As for question five, 48% of the teachers sometimes agreed, and 27% of the teachers agreed that a student with multiple SENs could benefit from and successfully achieve IEP objectives in a general education class.

Teachers' Role

Questions six to 10 measured teachers' conceptions of the role of a teacher in an IE setting with a mean score of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 1.14, indicating average IE conceptions. These questions scored 3.07, 2.85, 3.38, 3.33, and 3.09, respectively, on the scale of the conception. Question 6 responses indicate that 50% of teachers agreed and 25% sometimes agreed that teachers with extensive special education training should not be the only ones to deliver special education services. Question 7 was one of the questions with a slightly low conception score where 39% of the teachers sometimes agreed, and 32% of the teachers agreed that a general education classroom teacher could deliver special instruction to students who have IEPs as a part of the general lesson. Sixty-nine percent of the teachers agreed, and 12 % sometimes agreed with the statement that if a classroom teacher does not want to teach a particular child with an IEP, the class placement should change to another teacher who is willing to teach the child (question 8). In addition, responses to question nine indicate that 60% of the teachers agreed and 28% of the teachers sometimes agreed that when a special education teacher is assigned to deliver

services in a general education class, it has a positive impact on the whole class. Finally, 51% of the teachers agreed, and 25% of the teachers sometimes agreed that special educators are equipped to teach general education students (question 10).

School Practices

Questions 11 to 15 measured teachers' conceptions of their school practices with IE setting with a mean score of 3.29 and a standard deviation of 1.05, indicating average IE conceptions. These questions scored 3.28, 3.25, 3.08, 3.71, and 3.42, respectively, on the scale of the conception. Question 11 was one of the questions with a considerable conception score where 61% of the teachers agreed, and 18% of the teachers sometimes agreed that they are aware of their school's philosophy about including students with special needs. Responses to question 12 indicate that 59% of the teachers agreed and 20% of the teachers sometimes agreed that their school's administration would support teachers working together to include students with special needs. Forty-five percent of the participating teachers agreed, and 29% of the teachers sometimes agreed that the staff in their school feel positive about including students with special needs (question 13). Question 14 was one of the questions with the highest conception score where 78% of the teachers agreed, and 17% of the teachers sometimes agreed to the statement that staff members in their school are encouraged to collaborate and support all students. Finally, 62% of the participating teachers agreed, and 22% of the teachers sometimes agreed that in their school, students who have special needs feel welcome and participate in all aspects of school life (question 15).

Teachers' Comfort

The last ten questions (questions 16 to 25) of the scale of the conception measured teachers' conceptions of their comfort and self-efficacy in an IE setting

with a total mean score of 3.37 and a standard deviation of 0.46 indication average IE conceptions. Questions 16 to 20 had mean scores of 3.06, 3.36, 3.81, 3.40, and 3.77, respectively. Whilst questions 21 to 25 scored 3.04, 2.99, 3.15, 3.80, and 3.36 respectively. Questions 18 and 24 had the highest scores (3.81 and 3.80). Responses to question 16 indicate that 49% of the teachers sometimes agree and 29% of the teachers agree that they feel comfortable, including students with special needs in the general education classroom. Sixty percent of the participating teachers agreed, and 22% of the teachers sometimes agreed that they are adequately prepared to deliver instruction to a wide variety of learners using the general education curriculum as a base for instruction (question 17). Answers to question 18 revealed that 87% of the teachers agreed and 10% of the teachers sometimes agreed that they are willing to collaborate with other teachers. 65% of the teachers agreed, and 23% of the teachers sometimes agreed that they feel comfortable and able to supervise and support the staff assigned to their classes (question19). Question 20 responses showed that 82% of the teachers agreed and 13% of the teachers sometimes agreed that they are comfortable using technology to support the instruction of a wide variety of learners. In response to questions 21 and 22, 38% of the teachers agreed, and 38% of the teachers sometimes agreed that they could adequately assess the progress and performance of most students who have IEPs; whilst 39% of the teachers agreed, and 34% of the teachers sometimes agreed that they could make instructional and curriculum accommodations for children with IEPs. Thirty-nine percent of the participating teachers agreed, and 43% of the teachers sometimes agreed that they have the time to collaborate with other teachers when needed (question 23). The majority of teachers (89%) agreed that they are willing to change and improve their instructional style to be able to reach more students (question 24). Finally, question

25 indicated that 53% of the teachers agreed and 36% of the teachers sometimes agreed that they feel they can make a difference in the life of a student who has a special need.

Teacher's IE Conceptions Ranked

In order to further understand teacher conceptions of various themes of Section II of the survey, the means and standard deviations for the four themes were computed and ranked in order from the highest mean scores to the lowest mean scores. Higher mean theme scores are indicative of a higher level of agreement on IE conceptions. An inspection of the results represented in Table 4.5 and Figure 4.2 below indicates that the teachers had average conceptions about their comfort when dealing with SEN students, followed by their conceptions of school practices, and teachers' role, whereas they had low conceptions of SEN students.

Table 4.5

Ranking of Teachers' IE Conceptions (N = 600)

Conceptions	*M*	*SD*	Quantitative Indicator
Teacher's Comfort	3.37	0.82	Average
School Practice	3.35	0.93	Average
Teacher's Role	3.14	1.14	Average
SEN	2.94	0.80	Low

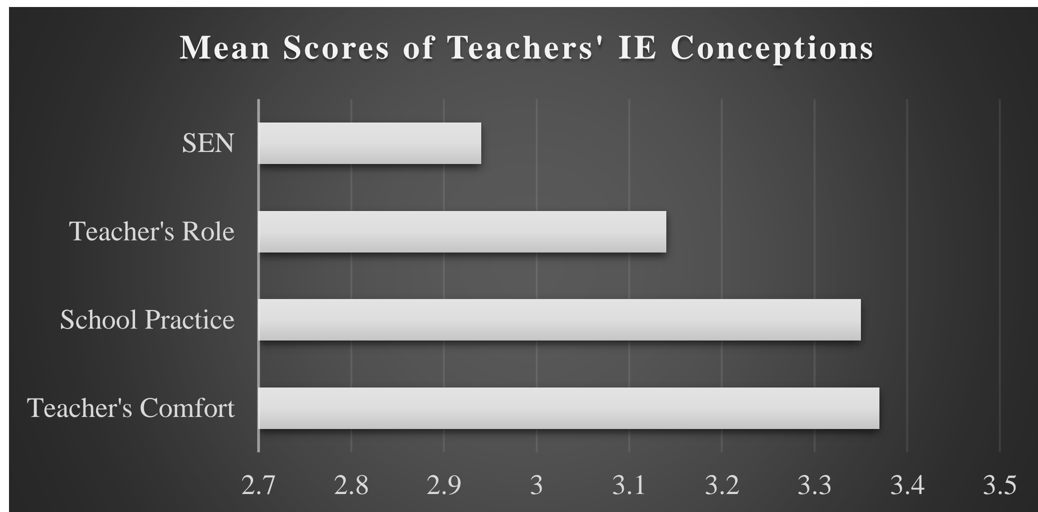

Figure 4.2. Teachers' IE conceptions mean scores ranked

Teachers' IE Challenges – Microsystem

The second question that guided this study examined teachers' IE challenges in mainstream schools in Lebanon. To answer this question, the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES) (Sharma, & Desai, 2002) was used in the current study. This survey aims to gather data on teachers' concerns to IE and the placement of children with SEN in their school and classroom. As described in chapter three and per the developers of the instrument, the overall teachers' IE concerns were determined using 21 negatively worded items with a four-point Likert scale for measurement with 1 = not at all concerned, 2 = a little concerned, 3 = very concerned, and 4 = extremely concerned. Example items include, "I will not have enough time to plan educational programs for students with special needs." and "My workload will increase." The score is obtained by adding all the responses for each item. A score of 84 obtained on the CIES would be indicative of very high degrees of concern regarding inclusive education. Converse to this, a score of 21 is indicative of very low levels of concern concerning including SEN students in mainstream settings. The scale produces an overall concern about the IE score, and further contains four factors that relate to lack of resources, acceptance of SEN students, the

decline of academic standards, an increase in workload. As clarified in chapter three, the reliability analysis of the CIES scale showed an alpha coefficient of 0.91, suggesting that it was a reliable scale to be used for further analysis. This alpha figure compares favorably with that of Sharma and Desai (2002), which had an alpha of 0.91 and Sharma et al. (2007) of 0.92.

The means for each of the items of the CIES were calculated. A mean score of 2.0 or above would indicate teachers' concern for an item; whereas a mean score below 2.0 would indicate that the teachers are not concerned about that item. A mean score between 2 and three would indicate a little concern, and a mean score between 3 and four would indicate a higher level of concern. To simplify reporting the data, three quantitative indicators were used as displayed in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Three Quantitative Indicators for IE Concerns

Low (x ≤ 2) Subtheme	*M*	Average (2 < x < 3) Subtheme	*M*	High (x ≥ 3) Subtheme	*M*
		Resources (Factor I)	2.75		
		Acceptance (Factor II)	2.55		
		Academic Standards (Factor III)	2.47		
		Workload (Factor IV)	2.46		

Findings of the current study displayed in Table 4.7 reveal that the mean concerns score of all teachers (N=600) that answered these questions was 2.55 with a standard deviation of 0.57. This indicates that schoolteachers in Lebanon are relatively apprehensive about IE with an average quantitative indicator (the value of 2.55 lay between 2 = A Little Concerned, and 3 = Very Concerned). In fact, 20% of cycles I, II, and III teachers were extremely concerned, 30% were very concerned,

36% were a little concerned, whereas only 13% were not concerned at all (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.7

Teachers' IE Concerns Statistics (N = 600)

Statistics	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV	Total Concerns Score
Mean	2.75	2.55	2.47	2.46	2.55
Std. Deviation	0.74	0.58	0.76	0.70	0.57

Table 4.8

Concerns Score Frequency Distribution

Response	*N*	%
No Answer	8	1%
Not Concerned at All	79	13%
A Little Concerned	214	36%
Very Concerned	182	30%
Extremely Concerned	117	20%

The individual responses of the questions in section III (CIES-L) of the survey served to measure the concerns of schoolteachers in different domains related to the inclusion of SEN students in general education. Table 4.9 summarizes the answers for each question. The first column shows the question and its number; the next five columns show the percentage of the distribution of responses. The following column shows the calculated concern mean score, and the last two columns indicate standard deviation per question and the number of the sample.

To simplify the reporting of the data in the following paragraphs, the percentages are the sum of “Not concerned at all”, “A little concerned”, “Very concerned”, and “Extremely concerned” responses depending on the question. In addition, questions from section III of the survey were grouped along the following

Factors: (I) Concerns about resources, (II) concerns about acceptance, (III) concerns about academic standards, and (IV) concerns about workload.

Table 4.9

Teachers' Responses on the Concerns Section

Concern	Abbreviated Item	No Answer	Not Concerned at All	A Little Concerned	Very Concerned	Extremely Concerned	*M*	SD
Factor I Resources		**2%**	**13%**	**28%**	**33%**	**25%**	**2.75**	**0.74**
	Inadequate para-professional staff (8)	1%	8%	28%	31%	32%	2.87	0.97
	Inappropriate infrastructure (12)	1%	9%	28%	31%	32%	2.85	0.97
	Inadequate instructional materials (14)	2%	13%	20%	32%	33%	2.82	1.08
	Inadequate resources/special ed. staff (13)	2%	9%	28%	42%	21%	2.73	0.91
	Not enough funds (7)	1%	17%	34%	30%	18%	2.48	1
	Inadequate administrative support (20)	5%	20%	30%	29%	17%	2.34	1.12
Factor II Acceptance		2%	7%	43%	32%	17%	2.55	0.58
	Non-acceptance by parents (6)	0%	14%	27%	40%	19%	2.64	0.95
	Non-acceptance by students without SEN (5)	4%	4%	40%	35%	18%	2.6	0.95
	Lack of knowledge and skills (3)	2%	4%	46%	31%	17%	2.58	0.89
	Not enough time (1)	0%	9%	49%	28%	14%	2.48	0.84
	Difficult to maintain discipline (2)	2%	3%	55%	26%	14%	2.47	0.85
Factor III Academic Standards		1%	19%	32%	29%	19%	2.47	0.76
	Including students requiring assistance in self-help skills (19)	1%	11%	20%	35%	33%	2.87	1.03

Concern	Abbreviated Item	No Answer	Not Concerned at All	A Little Concerned	Very Concerned	Extremely Concerned	*M*	SD
	Difficult to divide attention (18)	1%	10%	28%	37%	26%	2.77	0.96
	High anxiety and stress in teachers (21)	2%	16%	37%	28%	17%	2.43	1.01
	Decline of academic achievement of students without SEN (17)	1%	20%	31%	35%	14%	2.42	0.98
	Decline of school academic standard (15)	1%	23%	42%	22%	12%	2.21	0.96
	Decline of educators' performance (16)	0%	35%	34%	17%	14%	2.09	1.03
Factor IV Workload		2%	14%	40%	27%	18%	2.46	0.71
	Increased stress levels in other staff (11)	1%	11%	41%	33%	15%	2.62	0.93
	Lack of incentives (9)	1%	33%	32%	19%	16%	2.57	0.96
	Additional paper work (4)	3%	2%	43%	32%	20%	2.5	0.9
	Increased workloads (10)	1%	9%	44%	25%	21%	2.16	1.08
	Grand Total	1%	13%	36%	30%	20%	2.55	0.97

Concerns about Resources

Questions eight, 12, 14, 13, seven, and 20 (mean scores arranged ascendingly) measured teachers' concerns about resources (Factor I) in the case of including SEN students in mainstream classrooms with a total mean of 2.75 and a standard deviation of 0.74 indicating average IE concerns. These questions scored 2.87, 2.85, 2.82, 2.73, 2.48, and 2.34, respectively on the CIES-L scale. Question 12 responses indicated that participating teachers were mostly concerned about the inadequate availability of para-professional staff with 32% extremely concerned, 31% very concerned, 28% a little concerned, and 8% not concerned at all. The next level concern teachers had was about the inappropriate infrastructure (question 14) with 32% extremely concerned, 31% very concerned, 28% a little concerned, and 9%

not concerned at all. Responses to question 14 showed teachers' concern about inadequate instructional materials with 30% of the teachers extremely concerned, 32% very concerned, 20% a little concerned, and 13% not concerned at all. As for the inadequate resources/special education staff (question 13), 21% of the teachers were extremely concerned, 42% were very concerned, 28% were a little concerned, whereas 9% were not concerned at all. Teachers' answers to question seven about the lack of funds indicated that 18% of the teachers were extremely concerned, 30% were very concerned, 34% were a little concerned, while 17% were not concerned at all. The concern about the inadequate administrative support, the last item under resources (Factor I) revealed that 17% of the teachers were extremely concerned, 29% were very concerned, 30% were a little concerned, while 20% were not concerned all.

Concerns about Acceptance

Factor II concerns about acceptance were covered in items six, five, three, one, two (mean scores arranged ascendingly). The composite mean score of Factor II was 2.55 with a standard deviation of 0.58, indicating average IE concerns. The mean scores of individual items were 2.64, 2.6, 2.58, 2.48, and 2.47, respectively. Non-acceptance by parents (question 6) had the highest score of Factor II with 19% of the teachers extremely concerned, 40% very concerned, 27% a little concerned, and 14% not concerned at all. The next level of concern about SEN acceptance was reported in question five. Participating teachers indicated their concern about non-acceptance by students without SEN with 18% of the teachers extremely concerned, 35% very concerned, 40% a little concerned, and 4% not concerned at all. Question three identified teachers' concern about their lack of IE knowledge and skills with 17% of the teachers extremely concerned, 31% very concerned, 46% a little

concerned, and 4% not concerned at all. Teachers' responses to question one about the lack of time revealed that 14% of teachers were extremely concerned, 28% were very concerned, 49% were a little concerned, and 9% were not concerned at all. The least mean score of Factor II was that of the concern about the difficulty to maintain discipline with 14% of the teachers extremely concerned, 26% very concerned, 55% a little concerned, and 3% not concerned at all.

Concerns about Academic Standards

Questions 19, 18, 21, 17, 15, and 16 (mean scores arranged ascendingly) measured teachers' concerns about academic standards (Factor III) when including SEN students in mainstream classrooms with a total mean of 2.47 and a standard deviation of 0.76 indicating average concerns. The questions scored 2.87, 2.77, 2.43, 2.42, 2.21, and 2.09 respectively. The highest score appeared in question 19 on teachers' concern about including SEN students requiring assistance in self-help skills with 33% of the teachers extremely concerned, 35% very concerned, 20% a little concerned, and 11% not concerned at all. The next concern score was that of the difficulty of divide attention when having SEN students in the mainstream classroom (question 18). In response to this question, 26% of the teachers were extremely concerned, 37% very concerned, 28% were a little concerned, while 10% were not concerned at all. Question 21 measured teachers' IE concern about their high anxiety and stress with 17% of the teachers extremely concerned, 28% very concerned, 37% a little concerned, and 16% not concerned at all. The concern about the decline of the academic achievement of students without SEN (question 17) indicated that 14% of the teachers were extremely concerned, 35% were very concerned, 31% were a little concerned, and 20% were not concerned at all. About the decline of the school academic standard (question 15) 12% of the teachers were extremely concerned,

22% were very concerned, 42% were a little concerned, whereas 23% were not concerned at all. While the least score on Factor III was indicated in question 16 on teachers' concern about the decline of their performance with 14% of the teachers extremely concerned, 17% very concerned, 34% a little concerned, and 35% not concerned at all.

Concerns about Workload

Factor IV measured teachers' concerns about workload and had a total mean score of 2.46 and a standard deviation of 0.71, indicating average concerns. Questions 11, nine, four, and 10 had mean scores of 2.62, 2.57, 2.5, and 2.16, respectively. The highest score was that of the concern about the increased level stress in other staff (question 11) with 15% of the teachers extremely concerned, 33% very concerned, 41% a little concerned, and 11% not concerned at all. As for the concern about the lack of incentives (question 9), 16% of the teachers were extremely concerned, 19% were very concerned, 32% were a little concerned, and 33% were not concerned at all. Question four measured teachers' concern about additional paperwork when including SEN students. Responses revealed that 20% of the teachers were extremely concerned, 32% were very concerned, 43% were a little concerned, and 2% were not concerned at all. Finally, the least concern of Factor IV was that of the increasing workloads with 21% of the teachers extremely concerned, 25% very concerned, 44% a little concerned, and 9% not concerned at all.

Teacher's IE Concerns Ranked

A cursory look at Table 4.10 indicated the mean score of the 21 items range between 2.87 and 2.09. The Lebanese teachers were the least concerned about the decline of their performance (item 16, M= 2.09), their increasing workloads (item 10, M= 2.16), and the decline of their school academic standard (item 15, M= 2.21).

However, the data indicated that the Lebanese teachers were concerned the most about both, the inadequate availability of para-professional staff and difficulties with including students lacking self-help skills (items 8 & 19, M = 2.87), followed by the inappropriate infrastructure (item 12, M= 2.85) and then inadequate availability of instructional materials (item 14, M= 2.82). These four items also received the highest mean scores of all the items included in the survey.

Table 4.10

Teachers' IE Concern Means Arranged in the Descending Order

Abbreviated Item	*M*	Concern Factor
Inadequate para-professional staff (8)	2.87	I
Including students requiring assistance in self-help skills (19)	2.87	III
Inappropriate infrastructure (12)	2.85	I
Inadequate instructional materials (14)	2.82	I
Difficult to divide attention (18)	2.77	III
Inadequate resources/special ed. staff (13)	2.73	I
Non-acceptance by parents (6)	2.64	II
Increased stress levels in other staff (11)	2.62	IV
Non-acceptance by students without SEN (5)	2.6	II
Lack of knowledge and skills (3)	2.58	II
Lack of incentives (9)	2.57	IV
Additional paper work (4)	2.5	IV
Not enough funds (7)	2.48	I
Not enough time (1)	2.48	II
Difficult to maintain discipline (2)	2.47	II
High anxiety and stress in teachers (21)	2.43	III
Decline of academic achievement of students without SEN (17)	2.42	III
Inadequate administrative support (20)	2.34	I
Decline of school academic standard (15)	2.21	III
Increased workloads (10)	2.16	IV
Decline of educators' performance (16)	2.09	III

Further analysis was conducted to determine the rankings of each of the four factors of the CIES-L. As illustrated in Figure 4.3, the data analysis indicated that the Lebanese teachers were most concerned about the lack of resources (2.75) followed

by the lack of acceptance of SEN students (2.55), followed by decline in academic standard of the classrooms (2.47) and increased workload (2.46). As previously clarified, a minimum score of 2.0 was required for an item or a factor to qualify as a concern. Teachers in Lebanon, therefore, are mostly concerned about the lack of resources needed for an inclusive setting.

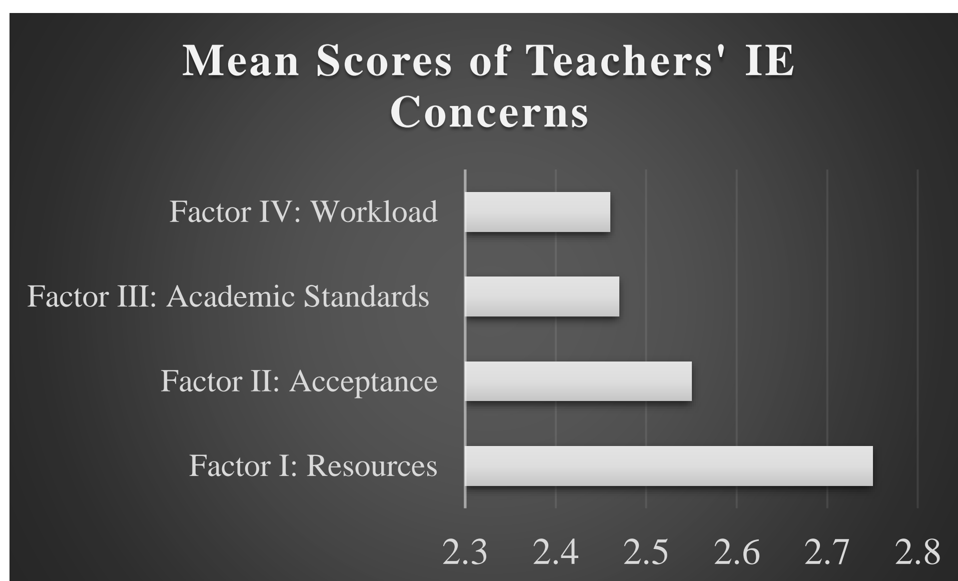

Figure 4.3. Teachers' IE concerns mean scores ranked

In an attempt to reflect on the findings of the concerns survey of the current study, the author retained the four factors generated by Sharma, Aiello, Marie Pace, Round, and Subban (2018) for their CIES measure. Table 4.11 shows the item and factor means for the current study, and the factor means found by Sharma et al. (2018).

Table 4.11

Factor and Item Means for the CIES as Used in the Current Study and Factor Means as Shown by Sharma et al. (2018)

Factor	Item (Abbreviated)	Current Study		Sharma et al. (2018)			
				Australia		Italy	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Lack of Resources		2.75	0.74	2.65	0.77	2.56	0.70
	Inadequate para-professional staff (8)	2.87	0.97				
	Inappropriate infrastructure (12)	2.85	0.97				

Factor	Item (Abbreviated)	Current Study		Sharma et al. (2018) Australia		Italy	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
	Inadequate instructional materials (14)	2.82	1.08				
	Inadequate resources/special ed. staff (13)	2.73	0.91				
	Not enough funds (7)	2.48	1				
	Inadequate administrative support (20)	2.34	1.12				
Concerns about Acceptance		2.55	0.58	2.08	0.52	2.09	0.59
	Non-acceptance by parents (6)	2.64	0.95				
	Non-acceptance by students without SEN (5)	2.6	0.95				
	Lack of knowledge and skills (3)	2.58	0.89				
	Not enough time (1)	2.48	0.84				
	Difficult to maintain discipline (2)	2.47	0.85				
Concerns about Academic Standards		2.47	0.76	2.13	0.68	1.81	0.69
	Including students requiring assistance in self-help skills (19)	2.87	1.03				
	Difficult to divide attention (18)	2.77	0.96				
	High anxiety and stress in teachers (21)	2.43	1.01				
	Decline of academic achievement of students without SEN (17)	2.42	0.98				
	Decline of school academic standard (15)	2.21	0.96				
	Decline of educators' performance (16)	2.09	1.03				
Concerns about Workloads		2.46	0.71	2.09	0.72	1.51	0.46
	Increased stress levels in other staff (11)	2.62	0.93				
	Lack of incentives (9)	2.57	0.96				
	Additional paper work (4)	2.5	0.9				
	Increased workloads (10)	2.16	1.08				
	Total Concerns Score	2.55	0.97	2.26	0.58	2.04	0.50

A comparison was made between the mean factor records of this research and the mean factor records of the study done by Sharma et al. (2018). Their study explored the IE concerns of 153 Australian and 156 Italian in-service teachers whose concern score was slightly above 2, for a mean score of 2 is considered as 'a little concerned' on the concern scale (Sharma et al., 2018). Noteworthy differences between findings can be drawn from the above figures. Teachers of the current study revealed the highest total-scale mean concern score (M=2.55) followed by the Australian (M=2.26) and Italian (M=2.04) counterparts. It is of interest to note that

the Lebanese teachers have the highest mean scores on all four factors. Interesting differences appear, as well, for the three factors of acceptance, academic standards, and workload, where, again, Lebanese teachers revealed the most concern. Whilst participants of both studies felt differently about all factors; they were concerned the most about Factor I: "Lack of Resources."

Table 4.11, above, shows the varied mean concern scores of the 309 participants in Sharma's study and the 600 participants in the current study. The diversity between the answers of the three countries suggests that the reasons behind these concerns may be attributed to legislation and to whether a country is developed or not.

Relationship between Teachers' IE Conceptions and Concerns

The third research question that steered this study examined whether or not there is a relationship between teachers' conceptions and concerns on inclusive education teachers in mainstream schools in Lebanon. Chi-Square test of independence was utilized to investigate this relationship. Table 4.12, shows Beta value ($\hat{\beta} = -0.099$) between teachers' conceptions of and concerns to inclusive education at a 5% significance level, whereby the p-value of the logit function is less than 5%. In other words, the two are inversely related as the IE conceptions increase, teachers' concerns decrease (see Figure 4.4).

The model fitness tests confirm the reliability of the function via the three tests (Model Fitting Information, Goodness-of-Fit, Pseudo R-Square). Tables 4.13, 4.14 and 4.15 reveal p-value= 0, less than 5%.

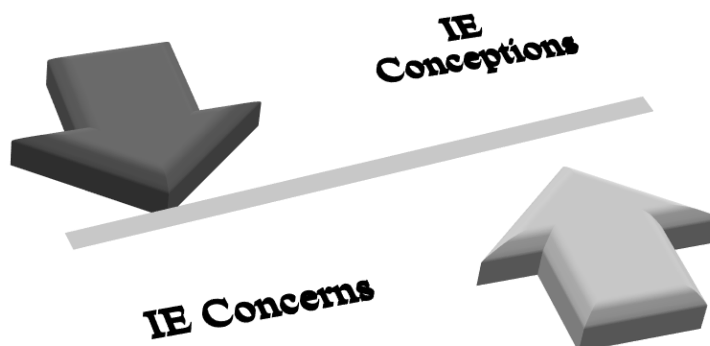

Figure 4.4. Visual representation of the relationship between IE conceptions and concerns

Table 4.12

Logit Model I: Teachers IE Conception and Concerns

	Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold[Survey3Concerns = 22]	-14.081	.967	212.079	1	.000	-15.976	-12.186
[Survey3Concerns = 27]	-13.672	.876	243.536	1	.000	-15.389	-11.955
[Survey3Concerns = 28]	-12.552	.737	289.737	1	.000	-13.997	-11.106
[Survey3Concerns = 30]	-12.254	.718	291.262	1	.000	-13.661	-10.847
[Survey3Concerns = 31]	-11.954	.703	289.127	1	.000	-13.332	-10.576
[Survey3Concerns = 32]	-11.666	.692	284.308	1	.000	-13.022	-10.310
[Survey3Concerns = 33]	-11.178	.678	271.687	1	.000	-12.507	-9.849
[Survey3Concerns = 34]	-11.052	.675	267.787	1	.000	-12.375	-9.728
[Survey3Concerns = 36]	-10.643	.668	254.073	1	.000	-11.952	-9.335
[Survey3Concerns = 37]	-10.497	.665	248.888	1	.000	-11.801	-9.193
[Survey3Concerns = 38]	-10.329	.663	242.825	1	.000	-11.628	-9.030
[Survey3Concerns = 39]	-10.132	.660	235.613	1	.000	-11.425	-8.838
[Survey3Concerns = 40]	-10.071	.659	233.383	1	.000	-11.363	-8.779
[Survey3Concerns = 41]	-9.913	.657	227.592	1	.000	-11.200	-8.625
[Survey3Concerns = 42]	-9.805	.656	223.662	1	.000	-11.090	-8.520
[Survey3Concerns = 43]	-9.678	.654	219.031	1	.000	-10.959	-8.396
[Survey3Concerns = 44]	-9.509	.652	212.938	1	.000	-10.786	-8.232
[Survey3Concerns = 45]	-9.216	.648	202.506	1	.000	-10.485	-7.947
[Survey3Concerns = 46]	-9.069	.646	197.364	1	.000	-10.335	-7.804
[Survey3Concerns = 47]	-8.869	.643	190.439	1	.000	-10.128	-7.609
[Survey3Concerns = 48]	-8.672	.640	183.765	1	.000	-9.926	-7.418
[Survey3Concerns = 49]	-8.477	.637	177.256	1	.000	-9.725	-7.229

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	[Survey3Concerns = 50]	-8.400	.635	174.707	1	.000	-9.645	-7.154
	[Survey3Concerns = 51]	-8.281	.634	170.841	1	.000	-9.523	-7.040
	[Survey3Concerns = 52]	-8.031	.630	162.768	1	.000	-9.265	-6.797
	[Survey3Concerns = 53]	-7.992	.629	161.516	1	.000	-9.225	-6.760
	[Survey3Concerns = 54]	-7.884	.627	158.082	1	.000	-9.113	-6.655
	[Survey3Concerns = 55]	-7.642	.623	150.491	1	.000	-8.863	-6.421
	[Survey3Concerns = 56]	-7.520	.621	146.697	1	.000	-8.737	-6.304
	[Survey3Concerns = 57]	-7.314	.617	140.321	1	.000	-8.524	-6.104
	[Survey3Concerns = 58]	-7.153	.615	135.418	1	.000	-8.358	-5.948
	[Survey3Concerns = 59]	-6.936	.611	128.849	1	.000	-8.134	-5.739
	[Survey3Concerns = 60]	-6.750	.608	123.255	1	.000	-7.942	-5.559
	[Survey3Concerns = 61]	-6.601	.606	118.807	1	.000	-7.788	-5.414
	[Survey3Concerns = 62]	-6.394	.602	112.665	1	.000	-7.575	-5.213
	[Survey3Concerns = 63]	-6.256	.600	108.616	1	.000	-7.433	-5.080
	[Survey3Concerns = 64]	-6.105	.598	104.199	1	.000	-7.278	-4.933
	[Survey3Concerns = 65]	-6.062	.597	102.918	1	.000	-7.233	-4.890
	[Survey3Concerns = 66]	-5.689	.593	92.181	1	.000	-6.851	-4.528
	[Survey3Concerns = 67]	-5.587	.591	89.271	1	.000	-6.746	-4.428
	[Survey3Concerns = 68]	-5.430	.590	84.811	1	.000	-6.586	-4.275
	[Survey3Concerns = 69]	-5.199	.587	78.302	1	.000	-6.350	-4.047
	[Survey3Concerns = 70]	-5.019	.586	73.315	1	.000	-6.168	-3.870
	[Survey3Concerns = 71]	-4.920	.586	70.590	1	.000	-6.068	-3.773
	[Survey3Concerns = 72]	-4.853	.585	68.752	1	.000	-6.001	-3.706
	[Survey3Concerns = 73]	-4.604	.585	61.984	1	.000	-5.751	-3.458
	[Survey3Concerns = 75]	-4.442	.585	57.632	1	.000	-5.589	-3.295
	[Survey3Concerns = 76]	-4.264	.586	52.912	1	.000	-5.413	-3.115
	[Survey3Concerns = 77]	-4.217	.587	51.670	1	.000	-5.366	-3.067
	[Survey3Concerns = 79]	-3.956	.590	44.945	1	.000	-5.113	-2.800
	[Survey3Concerns = 80]	-3.780	.594	40.523	1	.000	-4.944	-2.616
	[Survey3Concerns = 81]	-3.585	.600	35.735	1	.000	-4.760	-2.409
	[Survey3Concerns = 82]	-3.351	.609	30.248	1	.000	-4.545	-2.156
Location	Survey2Conceptions	**-.099**	.008	166.814	1	.000	-.114	-.084

Table 4.13

Logit Model I Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	2698.171			
Final	2525.728	172.443	1	.000
Link function: Logit.				

Table 4.14

Logit Model I Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	6513.717	2702	.000
Deviance	2003.940	2702	1.000
Link function: Logit.			

Table 4.15

Logit Model I Pseudo R-Square

Pseudo R-Square	
Cox and Snell	.250
Nagelkerke	.250
McFadden	.039
Link function: Logit.	

Predictors of Teachers' IE Conceptions and Concerns

Ordinal Logistic Regression (OLR) analyses were conducted in order to answer the fourth research question that explored how much teachers' IE conceptions and concerns change due to varying background variables. Considering the p-value = 0, the hypothesis follows:

H0: there are no statistically significant factors between the variables that influence the *Conceptions Score*

H1: there is at least one statistically significant factor between the variables that influence the *Conceptions Score*

Table 4.18, shows that there is a significant impact of the five following variables: Inclusive School category, General Education, Age Groups (>25), Experience 16 to 20 years, Special Education job category, and Knowledge of 220, on teachers' Conceptions of Inclusive Education at 5% significance level, whereby the p-value of the logit function is less than 5%. Public-Private and Special

Education were insignificant while determining the factors that affect teachers' conceptions (p=0.408 highly above 5%). Since there is at least one variable that is statistically significant, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

More specifically, teachers in general education job category ($\hat{\beta}$= - 1.133), young teachers below the age of 25 (-2.471), teachers with teaching experience between 16 and 20 ($\hat{\beta}$= - 0.689) have a negative impact on IE Conceptions. Put differently, teachers with the latter gaps have lower conceptions than those who do not. In contrast, Inclusive school category ($\hat{\beta}$= + 1.442), Special Education ($\hat{\beta}$= + 1.091) and knowledge of Law 220 ($\hat{\beta}$= + 0.65) have a positive impact on conceptions. In other words, teachers with these characteristics have higher IE conceptions than those who do not. In addition, as teachers grow older than 25 years, their IE conceptions improve (see Figure 4.5).

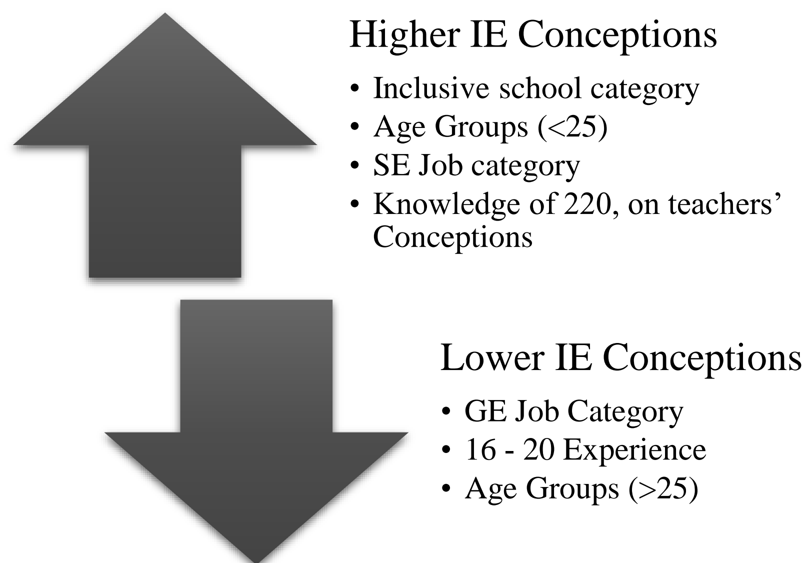

Figure 4.5. Visual representation of predictors of teachers' IE conceptions

The model fitness tests confirm the reliability of the function via the two tests, the Model Fitting Information and Goodness-of-Fit, with P-value= 0 less than 5% (see Tables 4.16 & 4.17).

Table 4.16

Logit Model II Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	3271.845			
Final	2961.209	310.636	15	.000

Link function: Logit.

Table 4.17

Logit Model II Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	13071.905	4728	.000
Deviance	2664.802	4728	1.000

Link function: Logit.

Table 4.18

Logit Model II (Teachers' Background Variables & Conceptions)

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Survey2Conceptions = 35]	-6.929	1.157	35.838	1	.000	-9.197	-4.660
	[Survey2Conceptions = 37]	-5.779	.752	59.072	1	.000	-7.253	-4.305
	[Survey2Conceptions = 39]	-5.465	.684	63.913	1	.000	-6.805	-4.125
	[Survey2Conceptions = 40]	-4.810	.580	68.728	1	.000	-5.947	-3.673
	[Survey2Conceptions = 46]	-4.641	.560	68.633	1	.000	-5.739	-3.543
	[Survey2Conceptions = 48]	-4.354	.531	67.233	1	.000	-5.395	-3.313
	[Survey2Conceptions = 49]	-4.233	.520	66.199	1	.000	-5.252	-3.213
	[Survey2Conceptions = 50]	-4.124	.511	65.067	1	.000	-5.126	-3.122
	[Survey2Conceptions = 51]	-4.023	.503	63.850	1	.000	-5.010	-3.036
	[Survey2Conceptions = 53]	-3.837	.490	61.231	1	.000	-4.798	-2.876
	[Survey2Conceptions = 56]	-3.675	.480	58.604	1	.000	-4.616	-2.734
	[Survey2Conceptions = 57]	-3.536	.472	56.111	1	.000	-4.461	-2.611
	[Survey2Conceptions = 58]	-3.473	.469	54.920	1	.000	-4.391	-2.554
	[Survey2Conceptions = 59]	-3.303	.460	51.543	1	.000	-4.204	-2.401
	[Survey2Conceptions = 60]	-3.251	.458	50.470	1	.000	-4.148	-2.354
	[Survey2Conceptions = 61]	-2.981	.446	44.657	1	.000	-3.856	-2.107
	[Survey2Conceptions = 62]	-2.831	.441	41.295	1	.000	-3.695	-1.968
	[Survey2Conceptions = 63]	-2.796	.439	40.503	1	.000	-3.657	-1.935
	[Survey2Conceptions = 64]	-2.664	.435	37.488	1	.000	-3.516	-1.811
	[Survey2Conceptions = 65]	-2.602	.433	36.073	1	.000	-3.451	-1.753
	[Survey2Conceptions = 67]	-2.087	.421	24.615	1	.000	-2.912	-1.263
	[Survey2Conceptions = 68]	-1.899	.417	20.697	1	.000	-2.717	-1.081
	[Survey2Conceptions = 69]	-1.830	.416	19.309	1	.000	-2.646	-1.014
	[Survey2Conceptions = 70]	-1.712	.415	17.040	1	.000	-2.525	-.899
	[Survey2Conceptions = 71]	-1.571	.413	14.461	1	.000	-2.381	-.761
	[Survey2Conceptions = 72]	-1.411	.412	11.761	1	.001	-2.218	-.605
	[Survey2Conceptions = 73]	-1.288	.411	9.847	1	.002	-2.093	-.484
	[Survey2Conceptions = 74]	-.975	.409	5.685	1	.017	-1.776	-.174
	[Survey2Conceptions = 75]	-.625	.408	2.348	1	.125	-1.425	.175
	[Survey2Conceptions = 76]	-.505	.408	1.531	1	.216	-1.304	.295
	[Survey2Conceptions = 77]	-.265	.408	.421	1	.516	-1.065	.535

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	[Survey2Conceptions = 78]	-.158	.408	.150	1	.698	-.958	.642
	[Survey2Conceptions = 79]	.113	.409	.077	1	.782	-.688	.915
	[Survey2Conceptions = 80]	.301	.410	.539	1	.463	-.502	1.104
	[Survey2Conceptions = 81]	.666	.412	2.622	1	.105	-.140	1.473
	[Survey2Conceptions = 82]	.831	.412	4.055	1	.044	.022	1.639
	[Survey2Conceptions = 83]	1.137	.414	7.531	1	.006	.325	1.949
	[Survey2Conceptions = 84]	1.251	.415	9.085	1	.003	.438	2.065
	[Survey2Conceptions = 85]	1.538	.417	13.613	1	.000	.721	2.356
	[Survey2Conceptions = 86]	1.867	.419	19.828	1	.000	1.045	2.689
	[Survey2Conceptions = 87]	2.011	.420	22.887	1	.000	1.187	2.834
	[Survey2Conceptions = 88]	2.238	.422	28.133	1	.000	1.411	3.065
	[Survey2Conceptions = 89]	2.504	.424	34.881	1	.000	1.673	3.335
	[Survey2Conceptions = 90]	2.910	.427	46.367	1	.000	2.072	3.747
	[Survey2Conceptions = 91]	3.486	.433	64.672	1	.000	2.636	4.335
	[Survey2Conceptions = 92]	4.281	.448	91.384	1	.000	3.403	5.158
	[Survey2Conceptions = 93]	4.534	.455	99.305	1	.000	3.642	5.425
	[Survey2Conceptions = 94]	4.755	.463	105.594	1	.000	3.848	5.662
	[Survey2Conceptions = 95]	5.385	.496	117.982	1	.000	4.414	6.357
	[Survey2Conceptions = 96]	5.914	.542	119.268	1	.000	4.853	6.976
	[Survey2Conceptions = 98]	7.351	.815	81.256	1	.000	5.752	8.949
Location	[Pub_PrivSchool=1]	-.179	.217	.684	1	.408	-.604	.245
	[Pub_PrivSchool=2]	0a	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[Incl_RegSchool=1]	1.442	.233	38.369	1	.000	.986	1.898
	[Incl_RegSchool=2]	0a	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[GenEdCode=0]	-1.133	.383	8.770	1	.003	-1.883	-.383
	[GenEdCode=1]	0a	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[SpEdCode=0]	-.898	.349	6.631	1	.010	-1.581	-.214
	[SpEdCode=1]	0a	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[AgeGroup=0]	-2.471	.470	27.641	1	.000	-3.392	-1.550
	[AgeGroup=1]	.805	.394	4.166	1	.041	.032	1.577
	[AgeGroup=2]	.546	.309	3.131	1	.077	-.059	1.151
	[AgeGroup=3]	1.459	.265	30.368	1	.000	.940	1.978
	[AgeGroup=4]	0a	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[ExpTeach=1]	.178	.319	.309	1	.578	-.448	.803
	[ExpTeach=2]	-.525	.321	2.672	1	.102	-1.155	.105
	[ExpTeach=3]	-.443	.313	1.999	1	.157	-1.057	.171
	[ExpTeach=4]	-.689	.301	5.254	1	.022	-1.279	-.100
	[ExpTeach=5]	0a	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[SpEduTraining=0]	-.693	.776	.798	1	.372	-2.213	.827
	[SpEduTraining=1]	1.091	.187	33.940	1	.000	.724	1.457
	[SpEduTraining=2]	0a	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[Knows220=1]	.650	.196	10.989	1	.001	.266	1.035
	[Knows220=2]	0a	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Table 4.21, shows that there is a significant impact of the following variables, Public-Private, Special Education, Age, Experience and Special Education Training at 5% significance level, whereby the p-value of the logit function is less than 5%. Knowledge of Law 220 proved to have a negative yet insignificant impact on teachers' Concerns (p=0.1 above 5%).

More specifically, teachers in public schools ($\hat{\beta}$= + 0.746), have higher concerns than those in private schools. Lack of Special Education ($\hat{\beta}$= +1.143) also adds up to teachers concerns. On a further note, age has a significant and positive impact on teachers concerns, but what is worth noting is that the intensity of this impact lessens [below 25 ($\hat{\beta}$= + 3.132), 25-35 ($\hat{\beta}$= +1.181) and 35-45 ($\hat{\beta}$= +0.925)] as teachers grow older in age until age effect becomes insignificant for those above 45. On the other hand, experience [0-5 years ($\hat{\beta}$= -0.704), 11-15 years ($\hat{\beta}$= -1.053)] and special education ($\hat{\beta}$= - 0.962) training reduces teachers concerns (see Figure 4.6).

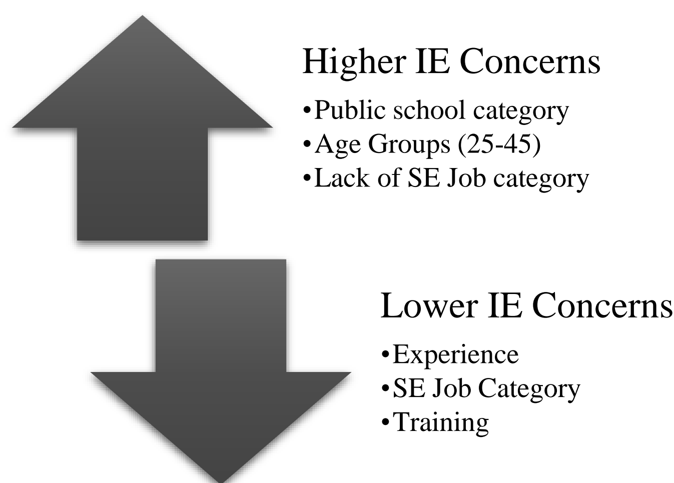

Figure 4.6. Visual representation of predictors of teachers' IE concerns

The model fitness tests confirm the reliability of the function via the two tests, the Model Fitting Information and Goodness-of-Fit, with P-value= 0 less than 5% (see Tables 4.19 & 4.20).

Table 4.19

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	3460.707			
Final	3305.662	155.045	15	.000

Link function: Logit.

Table 4.20

Goodness-of-Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	14176.007	4914	.000
Deviance	2927.769	4914	1.000

Link function: Logit.

Table 4.21

Parameter Estimates (Teachers' Background Variables & Concerns)

	Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
[Survey3Concerns = 22]	-5.403	0.815	43.913	1	0	-7.001	-3.805
[Survey3Concerns = 27]	-4.997	0.704	50.336	1	0	-6.378	-3.617
[Survey3Concerns = 28]	-3.89	0.52	55.937	1	0	-4.909	-2.87
[Survey3Concerns = 30]	-3.594	0.492	53.379	1	0	-4.559	-2.63
[Survey3Concerns = 31]	-3.291	0.469	49.148	1	0	-4.211	-2.371
[Survey3Concerns = 32]	-2.997	0.453	43.844	1	0	-3.884	-2.11
[Survey3Concerns = 33]	-2.5	0.433	33.396	1	0	-3.348	-1.652
[Survey3Concerns = 34]	-2.373	0.429	30.617	1	0	-3.214	-1.532
[Survey3Concerns = 36]	-1.96	0.419	21.84	1	0	-2.782	-1.138
[Survey3Concerns = 37]	-1.808	0.417	18.815	1	0	-2.625	-0.991
[Survey3Concerns = 38]	-1.628	0.414	15.441	1	0	-2.44	-0.816
[Survey3Concerns = 39]	-1.413	0.412	11.758	1	0.001	-2.22	-0.605
[Survey3Concerns = 40]	-1.346	0.411	10.713	1	0.001	-2.153	-0.54
[Survey3Concerns = 41]	-1.178	0.41	8.258	1	0.004	-1.982	-0.375
[Survey3Concerns = 42]	-1.066	0.409	6.786	1	0.009	-1.868	-0.264
[Survey3Concerns = 43]	-0.935	0.409	5.235	1	0.022	-1.736	-0.134
[Survey3Concerns = 44]	-0.763	0.408	3.503	1	0.061	-1.563	0.036
[Survey3Concerns = 45]	-0.464	0.407	1.298	1	0.254	-1.262	0.334
[Survey3Concerns = 46]	-0.31	0.407	0.582	1	0.446	-1.108	0.487
[Survey3Concerns = 47]	-0.097	0.407	0.057	1	0.812	-0.894	0.701
[Survey3Concerns = 48]	0.119	0.407	0.085	1	0.77	-0.679	0.917
[Survey3Concerns = 49]	0.327	0.407	0.646	1	0.421	-0.471	1.126
[Survey3Concerns = 50]	0.406	0.407	0.991	1	0.319	-0.393	1.204
[Survey3Concerns = 51]	0.523	0.408	1.647	1	0.199	-0.276	1.322
[Survey3Concerns = 52]	0.773	0.408	3.582	1	0.058	-0.027	1.573
[Survey3Concerns = 53]	0.812	0.408	3.956	1	0.047	0.012	1.612
[Survey3Concerns = 54]	0.922	0.409	5.096	1	0.024	0.122	1.723

	Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
[Survey3Concerns = 55]	1.175	0.41	8.23	1	0.004	0.372	1.977
[Survey3Concerns = 56]	1.303	0.41	10.104	1	0.001	0.5	2.107
[Survey3Concerns = 57]	1.517	0.411	13.62	1	0	0.711	2.322
[Survey3Concerns = 58]	1.677	0.412	16.581	1	0	0.87	2.484
[Survey3Concerns = 59]	1.891	0.413	20.94	1	0	1.081	2.7
[Survey3Concerns = 60]	2.074	0.414	25.052	1	0	1.262	2.886
[Survey3Concerns = 61]	2.222	0.416	28.604	1	0	1.408	3.037
[Survey3Concerns = 62]	2.431	0.417	33.939	1	0	1.613	3.249
[Survey3Concerns = 63]	2.57	0.419	37.67	1	0	1.749	3.39
[Survey3Concerns = 64]	2.72	0.42	41.884	1	0	1.896	3.544
[Survey3Concerns = 65]	2.763	0.421	43.129	1	0	1.939	3.588
[Survey3Concerns = 66]	3.104	0.425	53.279	1	0	2.271	3.938
[Survey3Concerns = 67]	3.189	0.427	55.888	1	0	2.353	4.025
[Survey3Concerns = 68]	3.316	0.429	59.833	1	0	2.476	4.157
[Survey3Concerns = 69]	3.5	0.432	65.558	1	0	2.653	4.347
[Survey3Concerns = 70]	3.639	0.435	69.883	1	0	2.786	4.492
[Survey3Concerns = 71]	3.714	0.437	72.214	1	0	2.858	4.571
[Survey3Concerns = 72]	3.767	0.438	73.829	1	0	2.908	4.626
[Survey3Concerns = 73]	3.97	0.444	79.919	1	0	3.1	4.841
[Survey3Concerns = 75]	4.104	0.448	83.744	1	0	3.225	4.983
[Survey3Concerns = 76]	4.253	0.454	87.78	1	0	3.364	5.143
[Survey3Concerns = 77]	4.294	0.456	88.817	1	0	3.401	5.187
[Survey3Concerns = 79]	4.518	0.466	94.113	1	0	3.605	5.43
[Survey3Concerns = 80]	4.676	0.474	97.278	1	0	3.747	5.605
[Survey3Concerns = 81]	4.862	0.486	100.26	1	0	3.91	5.814
[Survey3Concerns = 82]	5.089	0.502	102.66	1	0	4.105	6.073
[Pub_PrivSchool=1]	0.746	0.218	11.679	1	0.001	0.318	1.173
[Pub_PrivSchool=2]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.
[Incl_RegSchool=1]	0.022	0.226	0.009	1	0.924	-0.422	0.465
[Incl_RegSchool=2]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.
[GenEdCode=0]	-0.013	0.38	0.001	1	0.972	-0.757	0.731
[GenEdCode=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.
[SpEdCode=0]	1.143	0.349	10.755	1	0.001	0.46	1.826
[SpEdCode=1]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.
[AgeGroup=0]	3.132	0.469	44.642	1	0	2.213	4.051
[AgeGroup=1]	1.181	0.395	8.942	1	0.003	0.407	1.955
[AgeGroup=2]	0.925	0.31	8.927	1	0.003	0.318	1.532
[AgeGroup=3]	0.468	0.26	3.237	1	0.072	-0.042	0.977
[AgeGroup=4]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.
[ExpTeach=1]	-0.704	0.32	4.843	1	0.028	-1.331	-0.077
[ExpTeach=2]	-0.533	0.321	2.762	1	0.097	-1.162	0.096
[ExpTeach=3]	-1.053	0.315	11.194	1	0.001	-1.67	-0.436
[ExpTeach=4]	-0.511	0.3	2.902	1	0.088	-1.099	0.077
[ExpTeach=5]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

	Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
[SpEduTraining=0]	-1.127	0.775	2.113	1	0.146	-2.647	0.393
[SpEduTraining=1]	-0.962	0.186	26.707	1	0	-1.326	-0.597
[SpEduTraining=2]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.
[Knows220=1]	-0.321	0.195	2.713	1	0.1	-0.703	0.061
[Knows220=2]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Results Emerging from Schoolteachers' Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus group discussions with selected teachers were arranged to explore the topic of inclusive education in the form of vignettes. The discussion aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of SEN students they would find challenging/not challenging to include in their classrooms. The framework of vignettes prepared by the researcher guided the SEN cases that were brought up in discussion. Five FGDs were executed with a range of 10 to 12 participating teachers and 56 teachers (see Table 4.22).

Table 4.22

Composition of Focus Groups by Schools

	FGD # 1 Private - INCL	FGD # 2 Private	FGD # 3 Public	FGD # 4 Private -INCL	FGD # 5 Public
Teachers (n)	10	11	12	11	12
Total	56				

The researcher presented participating teachers with five case descriptions of SEN students in the form of vignettes (See Appendix D). The students depicted were characterized as having special needs associated with such factors as physical impairment, or emotional/psychiatric status. The first vignette presented Salma, a girl having learning difficulty associated with social development need. The second vignette portrayed Malek, an ADHD child of normal intelligence, and the third vignette introduced Nabil, a child with communication and interaction problems. The fourth vignette described Jad who has mild Cerebral Palsy that affected his legs;

while the fourth vignette presented Celena, a visually impaired student. The teachers were asked to rate the students portrayed in the vignettes on the level of difficulty they would have in providing an inclusive education for them and to identify what specific characteristics or attributes of the students they would find most challenging. The teachers in the study were asked three questions about of the vignettes to explore (a) the extent to which they find the cases challenging, (b) to check their perceptions of their success if in a position of having such SEN student, and (c) to identify their major reason behind their difficulty in having such a student (the one they rated 'the most challenging'). The first question is given a four point Likert-scale from 1 - 'Not Challenging' to 4 - 'Extremely Challenging'. A similar four point Likert-scale is used for the second question, with 1 being 'Extremely Successful'; and 4 being 'Not Successful'. An open-ended response item was assigned for third question. Teachers were prompted to respond to the following qualitative question "Focusing on the student you identified as the most challenging in respect of providing for their needs (Question 1), what would be the major reason for your difficulty?" Participants were given five minutes to record their answers on the paper followed by a round table approach where each teacher was given two to three minutes to justify his/her answer.

That noted, the data obtained in this study from the FGDs were of both quantitative and qualitative nature. The first two Likert-scale questions were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis. The percent and Mean scores for each of the four vignettes were computed. A mean score of 3.0 and above indicates that respondents have high level of IE challenge; whereas a mean score of below 3.0 indicates that respondents have lower IE challenge. The findings obtained from the

last question qualitative question were analyzed by employing the constant comparative and thematic analysis as recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2008)

Summary of Vignettes Presented at FGDs

The first vignette introduced Salma, a nine-year-old girl who has substantial problems in recalling information and whose achievement across all curriculum subjects is very low. Compared to her peers, she has low self-esteem due to her immature social skills. She has few friends and is excluded by many of her classmates. Salma's parents are overly protective, which has resulted in her having limited social and recreational experiences.

The second vignette presented Malek, an ADHD seven-year-old child of normal intelligence. He has a specific difficulty in learning to read, which leads to problems in several subject areas. He is usually a well-disciplined student, but many times is inclined to impulsive actions and hyperactivity.

The third vignette introduced Nabil, an eight-year-old hard-working, well-mannered boy with communication and interaction problems. Any tasks related to oral presentations Nabil finds it overwhelmingly difficult. He has a severe problem in speech fluency, repeats words and phrases, and echoes sounds. He blinks continuously whenever he stutters. Some of his peers tease him, and this overtly upsets him. He gets frustrated with children and teachers who finish sentences for him.

The fourth vignette presented Celena, a ten-year-old girl whose visual impairment developed due to a car accident at age eight**.** She is intelligent, loves school, and can move around unaided. However, her capacity to read and write from the board is restricted. Celena needs considerable individual support to write or to read a distant text. Because of her sight impairment, she gets upset, especially when

her support teacher is not available. She comes from a supportive family and has a small circle of friends.

The last vignette portrayed Jad, a 12-year old child who has mild Cerebral Palsy that affected mobility in both his legs. He can move on a walker unaided, but his capacity to participate in a range of physical activities is restricted. Though Jad needs more time to move from one place to another and support to carry his belongings, he has normal intelligence and loves math more than other subjects. Because of his mobility impairment, some of the school children bully Jad. He comes from supportive family background and has a small circle of friends

Teachers' IE Challenge in Response to FGDs Vignettes

The means challenge scores of all teachers (*N*=56) that answered these questions on the five vignettes were 1.79, 2.32, 2.75, 3.57, and 1.68 with a standard deviation of 0.87, 0.77, 0.96, 0.60, and 0.47 respectively (see Table 4.24). This indicates that schoolteachers have a moderate level of IE challenge. In fact, 51% of the participating teachers reported perceiving the SEN cases to be 'Very Challenging' and 'Extremely Challenging', while 49% of the teachers indicated perceiving the SEN cases to be 'A Little Challenging' and 'Not Challenging' to include in their mainstream classrooms (see Table 4.23).

Table 4.23

Teachers' IE Challenge Frequency Score Distribution in Response to Vignettes

Likert Scale	*N*	Value	%
Not Challenging	11	1	20%
A Little Challenging	16	2	29%
Very Challenging	17	3	30%
Extremely Challenging	12	4	21%

Table 4.24

Teachers' IE Challenge Ranked Mean Scores in Response to Vignettes

SEN Cases	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Vignette 4: Physical Needs – Visual Impairment	3.57	0.60	56
Vignette 3: Communication and Interaction Needs	2.75	0.96	56
Vignette 2: Behavior, Emotional and Social Development Needs	2.32	0.77	56
Vignette 1: Learning Difficulty	1.79	0.87	56
Vignette 5: Physical Needs – Mobility Impairment	1.68	0.47	56

Table 4.25 summarizes the answers for each vignette. The first column shows the presented SEN category and vignette number; the next five columns show the percentage of the distribution of responses, where the answer showing a high level of challenge (scores 3 to 4) is marked in bold and underlined. The following two columns show the calculated challenge mean score and its standard deviation per vignette; while the last column indicates the number of the participants in the FGDs.

Table 4.25

Teachers' Responses to the First Question on the Vignettes

Vignettes	Not Challenging	A Little Challenging	Very Challenging	Extremely Challenging	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Vignette 1: Learning Difficulty	46%	32%	18%	4%	1.79	0.87	56
Vignette 2: Behavior, Emotional and Social Development Needs	14%	43%	39%	4%	2.32	0.77	56
Vignette 3: Communication and Interaction Needs	13%	23%	41%	23%	2.75	0.96	56
Vignette 4: Sensory Needs – Visual Impairment	0%	5%	32%	63%	3.57	0.60	56
Vignette 5: Physical Needs – Mobility Impairment	27%	41%	18%	14%	2.2	0.99	56

When introduced to the first vignette, 46% of the teacher did not find Salma's SEN case challenging. Meanwhile 32% of the teachers found it a little challenging, 18% of the teachers said it was very challenging, and 4% said it was extremely challenging (see Figure 4.7).

In response to the question if Malek (displayed in the second vignette) were to be included in their mainstream classroom, 14% of the teachers did not find him challenging to include, 43% of the teachers reported that his case was a little challenging, 39% of the teachers found it very challenging, while 4% of the teachers found it extremely challenging (see Figure 4.8).

Upon introducing Nabil in the third vignette, 13% of the participating teachers said his case was not challenging to include in their classroom, and 23% of the teachers found it a little challenging. While 41% of the teachers said Malek was very challenging to them, 23% of the teachers reported that he was extremely challenging (see Figure 4.9).

In response to the question if Celena (portrayed in the fourth vignette) were to be included in their mainstream classroom, none of the participating teachers found her not challenging to include, and 5% of the teachers found her a little challenging. However, 32% of the teachers reported that her case was very challenging, and 63% said it was extremely challenging. Thus, Celena was perceived as the most challenging SEN case to include in mainstream classrooms due to her visual impairment (see Figure 4.10).

Jad, the child with mobility impairment introduced in the last vignette scored the lowest level of challenge with 27% of the participating teachers indicating his case as ‘Not Challenging’ and 41% of the teachers saying it was ‘A Little Challenging.’ Conversely, 18% of the teachers reported that including him was ‘Very Challenging’, and 14% of the teachers conveyed that it was ‘Extremely Challenging’ (see Figure 4.11).

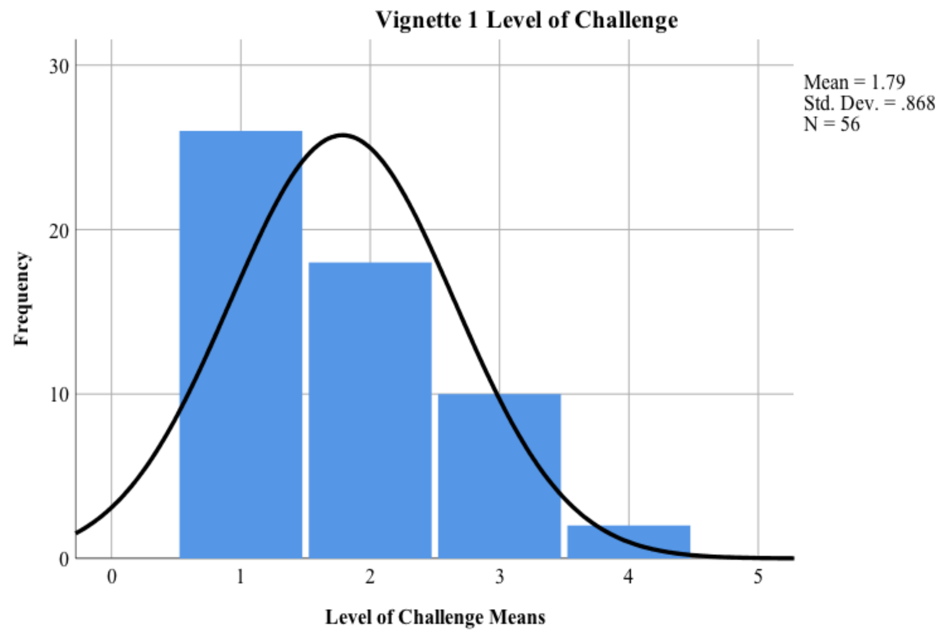

Figure 4.7. Teachers' level of challenge in response to the first vignette (Learning Disabilities)

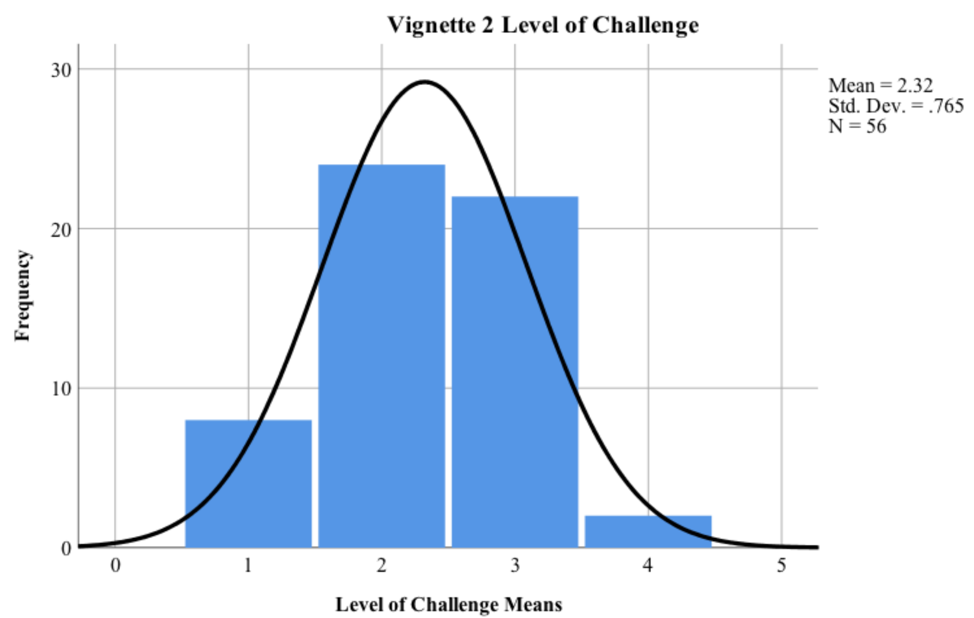

Figure 4.8. Teachers' level of challenge in response to the second vignette (Behavioral and Emotional Disorders)

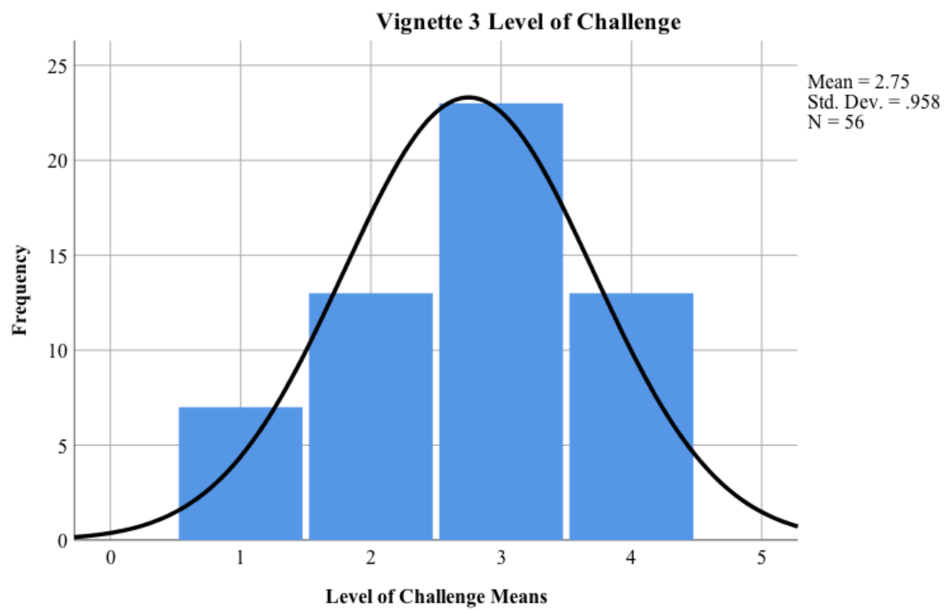

Figure 4.9. Teachers' level of challenge in response to third vignette (Communication Disorder)

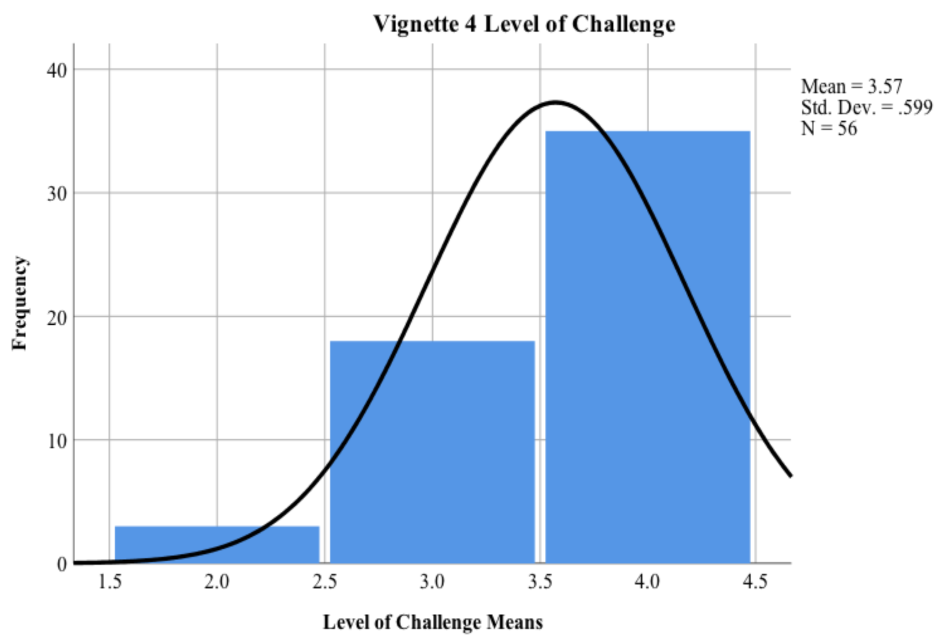

Figure 4.10. Teachers' Level of challenge in response to the fourth vignette (Visual Impairment)

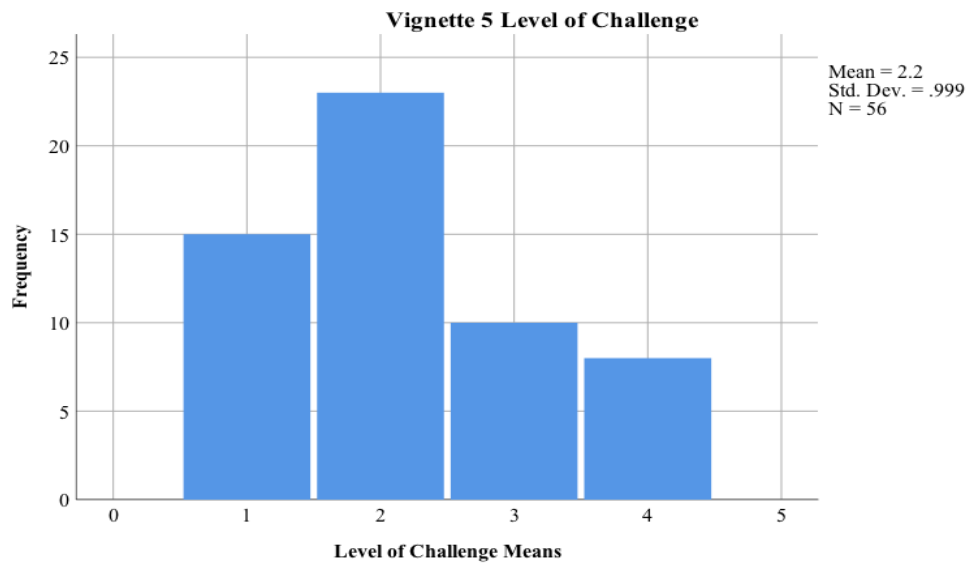

Figure 4.11. Teachers' level of challenge in response to the fifth vignette (Physical Disabilities)

Teachers' Level of IE Challenge in Response to FGDs Vignettes as per School Category

Table 4.26 displays, in descending order, the results of teachers' level of challenge in response to the five SEN cases of the vignettes as per school category (Private, Public, and Private-Inclusive). As a friendly reminder, scores 1 to 2 show little to no challenge, and scores 3 to 4 indicate high levels of challenge. It evident that teachers of private schools indicated the highest level of challenge (*M* = 3.2) in response to the five vignettes, followed by the teachers of the public schools (*M*= 2.8). Whereas private inclusive schoolteachers indicated the lowest level of challenge (*M* = 1.8) if having to include the SEN cases in their mainstream classrooms.

Table 4.26

Teachers' Level of Challenge in Response to FGDs Vignettes as per School Category (N=56)

School Category		Vignette 1	Vignette 2	Vignette 3	Vignette 4	Vignette 5	Total Score
Private	*M*	**2.5**	**3.0**	**3.7**	**4.0**	**2.6**	**3.2**
	N	11	11	11	11	11	11
	SD	1.0	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.9	0.6
Public	*M*	**2**	**2.6**	**3.0**	**3.7**	**2.8**	**2.8**
	N	24	24	24	24	24	24
	SD	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.6
Pr-Inclusive	*M*	**1.2**	**1.6**	**1.9**	**3.2**	**1.3**	**1.8**
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21
	SD	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.6
Total	*M*	**1.8**	**2.3**	**2.8**	**3.6**	**2.2**	**2.5**
	N	56	56	56	56	56	56
	SD	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.6	1.0	0.8

Teachers' IE Success in Response to FGDs Vignettes

The means level of success scores of all teachers (N=56) that answered these questions on the five vignettes were 3.11, 3.23, 3.34, 3.80, and 2.46 with a standard deviation of 0.78, 0.77, 0.96, 0.40, and 0.99 respectively (see Table 4.27). This indicates that schoolteachers perceived themselves to have a moderate low level of success if including SEN students in their mainstream classrooms. In fact, 36% of the participating teachers reported perceiving themselves as 'Not Successful'; in contrast 39% of the teachers said they would be 'Successful', 25% said they would be very successful and none indicated they would be 'Extremely Successful' if the SEN cases were included in their classrooms (see Table 4.28).

Table 4.27

Teachers' Level of Success Frequency Score Distribution in Response to Vignettes

Likert Scale	*N*	Value	%
Extremely Successful	0	1	0%
Very Successful	14	2	25%
Successful	22	3	39%
Not Successful	20	4	36%

Table 4.28

Teachers' IE Success Ranked Mean Scores in Response to Vignettes

SEN Cases	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Vignette 4: Physical Needs – Visual Impairment	3.80	0.40	56
Vignette 3: Communication and Interaction Needs	3.34	0.96	56
Vignette 2: Behavior, Emotional and Social Development Needs	3.25	0.77	56
Vignette 1: Learning Difficulty	3.11	0.78	56
Vignette 5: Physical Needs – Mobility Impairment	2.46	0.99	56

Table 4.29 recaps the responses for each vignette. The first column shows the presented SEN category and vignette number; the next five columns show the percentage of the distribution of responses, where the answer showing low level of success in including the SEN student (scores 3 to 4) is marked in bold and underlined. The following two columns show the calculated level of success mean score and its standard deviation per vignette; while the last column indicates the number of the participants in the FGDs.

In response to the first vignette, 25% of the participating teachers perceived themselves to be very successful if including Salma in their mainstream classroom, 39% of the teachers said they would be successful, whereas 36% of the teachers did not perceive themselves to be successful if Salma were their classroom (see Figure 4.12).

Table 4.29

Teachers' Responses to the Second Question on the Vignettes Level of Success (N = 56)

Vignettes	Extremely Successful	Very Successful	Successful	Not Successful	*M*	*SD*
Vignette 1: Learning Difficulty	0%	25%	39%	36%	3.11	0.78
Vignette 2: Behavior, Emotional and Social Development Needs	0%	20%	36%	**45%**	3.25	0.77
Vignette 3: Communication and Interaction Needs	5%	18%	14%	**63%**	3.34	0.96
Vignette 4: Physical Needs – Visual Impairment	0%	0%	20%	**80%**	3.80	0.40
Vignette 5: Physical Needs – Mobility Impairment	25%	14%	50%	11%	2.46	0.99

If Malek, displayed in the second vignette, were to be included in their mainstream classroom, 20% of the teachers perceived themselves to be very successful, 36% said they would be successful, while 45% of the teachers reported they would not be successful (see Figure 4.13).

As for Nabil, in the third vignette, 5% of the participating teachers said they would be extremely successful if he were included in their classroom, and 18% of the teachers said they would be a very successful. While 14% of the teachers reported they would be a little successful if Malek were in their classroom, 63% of the teachers did not perceive themselves to be successful (see Figure 4.14).

Meanwhile the majority of the participating teachers (80%) did not see themselves as successful, 20% of the teachers said they would be successful if Celena, portrayed in the fourth vignette, were to be included in their mainstream classroom. This indicated that the participating teachers did not favor SEN students with physical or sensory impairment (see Figure 4.15).

When the last vignette portraying Jad with mobility impairment was

displayed, 25% of the teachers reported they would be 'Extremely Successful,' 14% of the teachers revealed they would be 'Very Successful,' 50% of the teachers said they would be 'Successful,' while 11% did not perceive themselves to be successful. Thus, the highest level of IE success reported was that of the SEN child with mobility impairment (see Figure 4.16).

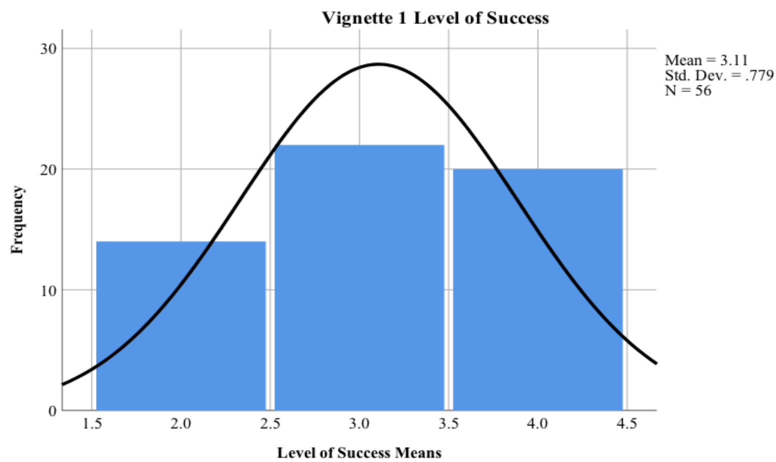

Figure 4.12. Teachers' level of success in response to the first vignette (Learning Difficulty)

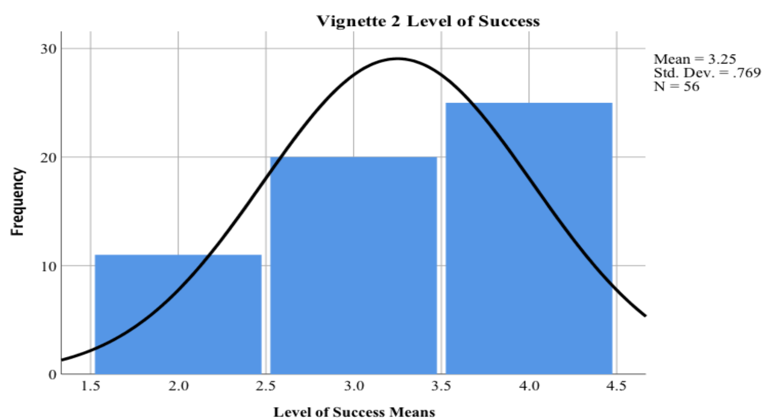

Figure 4.13. Teachers' level of success in response to the second vignette (Emotional and Behavioral Problems)

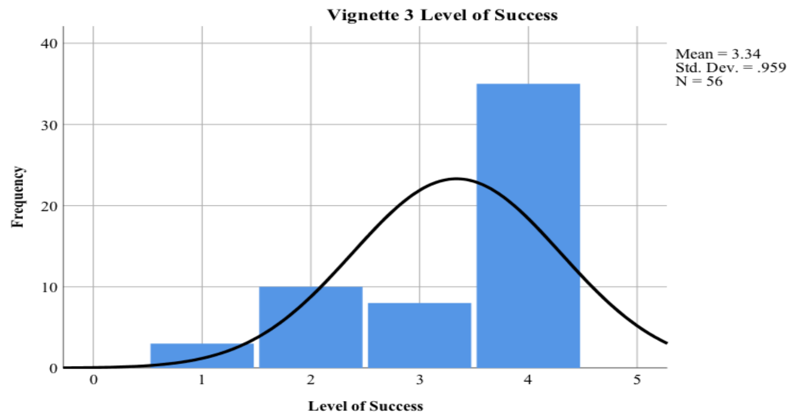

Figure 4.14. Teachers' level of success in response to the third vignette (Communication Disorders)

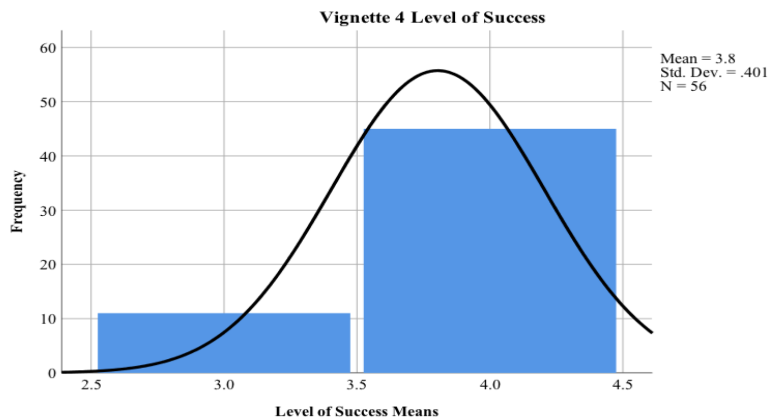

Figure 4.15. Teachers' level of success in response to the fourth vignette (Visual Impairment)

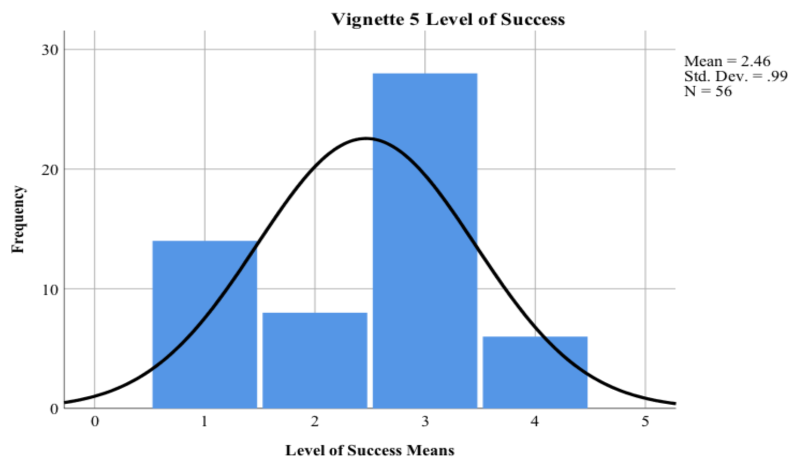

Figure 4.16. Teachers’ level of success in response to the fifth vignette (Physical Disability)

Teachers' level of IE success in response to FGD vignettes as per school category. Table 4.30 displays, in descending order, the results of teachers' level of challenge and level of success in response to the five SEN cases of the vignettes as per school category (Private, Public, and Pr-Inclusive). As a friendly reminder, scores 1 to 2 show a high level of success, while scores 3 to 4 indicate a low level of success. Results revealed that both public and private responding schoolteachers have the same level of perceived success (*M* = 3.7), which is rather low. Whilst the private inclusive teachers reported perceiving a higher level of success (*M* = 2.4) if including the SEN children in their classrooms.

Table 4.30

Teachers' Success in Response to FGDs Vignettes as per School Category

School Category		Vignette 1	Vignette 2	Vignette 3	Vignette 4	Vignette 5	Total Score
Public (N = 24)	Mean	**3.6**	**3.8**	**4**	**4**	**2.9**	**3.7**
	Std. Deviation	0.5	0.4	0	0	0.5	0.3
Private (N = 11)	Mean	**3.5**	**3.6**	**4**	**4**	**3.3**	**3.7**
	Std. Deviation	0.5	0.5	0	0	0.6	0.3
Pr-Inclusive (N=21)	Mean	**2.3**	**2.5**	**2.2**	**3.5**	**1.5**	**2.4**
	Std. Deviation	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.6
Total (N = 56)	Mean	**3.1**	**3.3**	**3.3**	**3.8**	**2.5**	**3.2**
	Std. Deviation	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.4	1.0	0.8

Teachers' Justification of the Most Challenging SEN Case

The reflective commentaries to the vignettes proved to be just as informative as the responses to the survey questions. The majority of teachers (80%) reported less preference for learners with physical SENs related to visual impairment (Celena's case). The reason for these preferences for learners with learning difficulties was expressed, "they are not easy to manage and accommodate." Mobility SEN was the category most frequently endorsed by teachers (89%). It

emerged from the data that learners with mobility SEN did not put serious demands on the part of teachers in the lines of instructional provisions. Take, for instance, this remark from a private schoolteacher:

The least preferred categories were visual or hearing SENs and students with emotional disorders. Participants of the study believed they could not adequately accommodate these learners in regular classrooms. It could be understood from the data that teachers seemed to prefer selective inclusive practice rather than the fully inclusive model.

In sharp contrast to the negative stances recorded, some teachers had positive attitudes towards inclusive education. One positive statement made by an inclusive schoolteacher was, “In the initial stages, learners without SENs treat those with SENs differently. They end up isolating them, but ultimately things normalize later.”

Importantly, a significant portion of both regular and special teachers (N=38) felt that the pull-out programs delivered in integration classes were the most appropriate and effective form of inclusion. This evidence suggests that in the teachers’ mindset, integration classes were deemed equivalent to inclusion. As one special educator from an inclusive school put it: “For me, to implement inclusive education, it is essential that the child’s needs are catered for in a separate classroom. We call that of the pull-out program.”

In order to gain an insight into the challenges of IE, teachers were asked to give their opinion about the inclusion of the most types of categories of SEN they considered challenging; the opinions of teachers differed. To delve deeper into teachers’ justification of the most challenging SEN case, textual analysis of participants’ responses to the open-ended question was used to complement the quantitative information.

IE Challenges. Throughout the transcripts of FGD conversations, some barriers were highly visible in teachers' responses: (a) Teachers' knowledge and skills, (b) workload, (c) collaboration; and (d) resources and infrastructure.

Lack of teacher's preparation. During the FGDs, some teachers were concerned about the feasibility of including learners with physical SENs at the classroom level:

> It is very difficult since most of them cannot write; some of them are very playful and disruptive. They even fight with other learners. They need attention all the time. It is not easy to teach them in a regular class. (Private schoolteacher)
>
> Teaching students with physical disabilities is quite challenging. First of all, you have to be certain that the child is safe and accepted by others. This means one has to collaborate with parents, students, and others; it means more work. Also, we are not trained. We don't have adequate knowledge and facilities to manage such children. (Public schoolteacher)
>
> Students with physical disabilities need extra help. They need more attention, support, and time than other children in their academic work. Moreover, we need to finish the curriculum. I think special educators should teach children with disabilities, or at least a teacher assistant should be given. Although we have one special educator in our school, she is not trained in special education. She also has to teach her regular class, and so how is she going to help me? This is not working. (Private schoolteacher)

It was clear from the above statements that teachers are deeply concerned about the issue of inclusion of SEN children in their schools. They highlighted the need for professional development: "We do not have the skills to work with learners

with disabilities. We should be trained to work with these children and learn to accommodate them as far as possible," a public schoolteacher commented. "A student like that [Celena] needs personal attention ... The general education teacher has no time to be empathetic and tolerant and provide each child with what he or she needs. That's problematic," another public schoolteacher echoed.

Whilst a private schoolteacher favored segregation to IE and stated:

> I suppose it would be better for them [SEN students] to be in a special setting that, in my opinion, relates to them, meets their real needs. It's a better place for the children because they are not in front of everyone. Maybe it's more comfortable for them when no one sees them.

Going further into the discussion, teachers were probed to voice their concerns about including SEN students in their classroom. About 60% of the participating teachers were negative about the benefits of IE. Their reasons expressed concern about including SENs in regular classrooms, and their statements were dominated by negativity about IE. Teachers gave reasons such as 'inclusive education disadvantages the normal students', 'SENs consume all the teaching time', 'I do not have enough time', 'I have to finish the syllabus objectives before exam' and 'They will drop my class pass average while I am being judged by the pass average". This is an interesting comment raised by teachers about such practical issues. It is important to emphasize that MEHE needs to take into consideration the concern of practicing teachers and resolve such issues. It seems that negative mindsets are rooted in the lack of knowledge and skills in meeting the learning needs of SEN students in regular classrooms. This was apparent in the comments of one private schoolteacher: "I see no benefit, more so I don't have the knowledge and skills of

what it [IE] requires. If only I was familiar with the concept, maybe to some extent, I would try it."

Workload. Teachers' responses were preceded by phrases like 'they are a burden,' 'I don't have time,' 'increased workload' and 'they should go to a special school.' The participants expressed frustrations about the workload they have to contend with in primary schools. A public schoolteacher reflected their displeasure in the following remark, "We are teaching large classes, it's a lot of work. You have to make sure that all children are catered for. This is not easy." Teachers also complained about the high student ratio. In order to emphasize the issue, one of the teachers said: "Student-teacher ratio is not favorable. We teach large numbers of students. Having a child with a disability is a real problem. It is unmanageable to give equal attention to all students." The following excerpt could best illustrate the issues of 'lack time':

> It is sometimes very hard to work with such kinds of students. Because they take more time to teach. I really hate to have these kinds of students in my class. They need much attention and time, so it is not easy to teach them in a regular class. (Private schoolteacher)

Teaching SEN students was perceived to be a burden since it creates more demands on the part of the teachers. This is something that teachers were not prepared to undertake. It seemed that teachers prefer to have learners without SENs because they did not demand additional attention, preparation, and time outside the teachers' normal scope of work. ***Collaboration.*** Collaboration, a significant IE aspect, concerned the participating teachers throughout the FGDs. Some teachers complained about the inadequate collaboration between special educators, regular teachers, and parents. Highlighting the importance of collaboration, one of the

teachers from an inclusive school said, “Collaboration is needed when you put a child with a disability in a regular classroom. We need time to prepare and sit together. They [SEN students] need to have an IEP, and we have to assess them according to their IEP.”

Inadequate Resources and Infrastructure. Supporting the implementation of IE needs intensive care from the side of stakeholders, including MEHE. The FGDs indicated that there is deep-rooted inadequacy of resources, training, as well as infrastructure, a matter that impedes the progress of IE. Consider this statement made by a teacher from public schools: “We do not have any resource materials, books. Our building is not suitable to implement inclusive education. Children with SEN have no access to computers.”

Although it is the responsibility of the MEHE and stakeholders of private schools to support IE implementation, workshops appear to be missing due to the lack of funds and shortage of resource personnel to run workshops. Some teachers mentioned the lack of funds for school-based training and for obtaining curriculum support materials.

Teachers who had SEN students in their classrooms emphasized the need to address the physical structure of their school buildings to facilitate effective implementation of IE. One INCL teacher remarked, “We do not have adequate big classrooms to accommodate the needs of students in wheelchairs or those that are visually impaired or those who are deaf.” Another teacher commented, “The building is not suitable for students with special needs. Not even the toilets are accessible to them.” These scenarios indicated the need for more supportive teaching environments for SEN students.

Results Emerging from Teachers' Anecdotal Evidence

In order to illustrate rather than rationalize the conceptions of what IE may be like in the eyes of schoolteachers in the context of the educational encounter, some anecdotes will be displayed. This will help the reader understand the significance of seeing SEN in educational encounters. The anecdotes below share the often-unrecognized phenomenon in the educational context of teachers' experience of school encounters, for they represent the personal and moral encounter between a teacher and a student. Teachers see SEN students in various ways and attribute different meanings to the word. Thus, even if the condition of the teachers' seeing is from within the educational encounter, the modes of seeing will differ significantly. That said, some modes of seeing appear to support IE while other modes of seeing seem to resist IE.

The participating teachers were asked to narrate an encountered incident of a significant (positive/negative) experience with an SEN student while making sure they answer the questions that follow: (1) What happened, (2) what significance did the incident have at the time it was occurring, (3) what did it mean to you at that time, and (4) what is the significance of the incident now?

In the anecdotal evidence presented here, the voice of teachers articulating their experience with an SEN student will be illustrated and analyzed under two main themes: Conceptions and challenges. A total of 212 narratives written by the responding teachers were reviewed. The researcher identified three key themes under conceptions and eight key themes under IE challenges as illustrated in Table 4.31 (Teachers' IE Conceptions and Challenges from Anecdotal Evidence)

Some teachers (N= 13) denied the possibility of educating SEN students especially those who were intellectually challenged as illustrated by this teacher

(T18-Pub):

> The higher the level of intellectual disability, the more difficult to include in the regular classroom. I had hyperactive student in grade two and he constantly disturbed the whole class that I couldn't keep him in class during my periods. Also, he failed in all subjects. I believe this student needs a special treatment in a different class.

Table 4.31

Teachers' IE Conceptions and Challenges from Anecdotal Evidence

IE Conceptions	IE Challenges
1. SEN Acceptance 2. Respect 3. Preparation of SEN students to real life	1. Difficulty of including intellectually challenged children 2. Difficulty of including aggressive SEN children 3. SEN students suffer in mainstream schools 4. Not helpful in upper classes 5. Parents in denial 6. Assessing the academic performance of SEN children 7. Academic standards of students without SEN 8. Teacher education and training

Other teachers (N= 14), though, strongly believed that not all children could be included into mainstream schools especially those children who displayed aggressive behavior (for example, children with ADHD and severe autism). As this teacher (T2-Pub) commented:

> Not everyone is fit to be in a regular classroom. The case we take into consideration to integrate a student is their level of mental disability. Students with disabilities like ADHD and those that exhibit aggressiveness are difficult to teach socially; we tend to separate them using the habit of lesser abuse.

IE advocates (N=29) asserted that inclusion prepares SEN children to live a typical life in the 'real world' as conveyed by one participant (T3-Pr-INCL):

> The inclusive class signifies a mini society that consists of children with and without disabilities. In my class, I have two SEN students (one with mild autism and another dyslexia) I deal with them somewhat like all the others, give them suitable instruction, and care as suggested by the school counselor.

Another teacher (T89-Pr-INCL) asserted:

> In our class, we don't distinguish between teachers. Children who want help can get it both from the GE teacher and me. I work with one of the subject teachers. We decide which things are important, like basic skills, and which are unimportant.

The theme of respect surfaced as well when this teacher (T95-Pr-INCL) wrote,

In my class, I have one visually impaired child and another child with epilepsy. The students admire them and help them when they can. Children learn to sacrifice, feel that they need to give something out not only to take. They learn to respect each other. I continuously advise my students that they don't have to love one another but to respect one another.

Some teachers (N=26) felt that the children learned to be more caring towards others and learned to be more sympathetic to the needs of others. As this teacher (T100-Pr-INCL) conveyed the description of 'open-minded in an exciting way,

> In my class children happily work in pairs with children with disabilities; they are open-minded, they assist each other, despite when they complete a task before the kids with disabilities, they ask if they can help them.

Yet, some others (N= 9) expressed their annoyance because of SEN students' reliance on their typical peers for support such as T257-Pr-INCL:

> My regular students are expected to babysit the SE students in their group or to do the work, while the SE kids write down what they are told. Most of my SE students are competent in so much more, but the SE teacher doesn't want to push them. She is convinced that group work helps them learn. She won't even push them to write if they don't want to! I get so much frustrated!

Other teachers (N=19) believed that inclusive education did not lead to open-mindedness nor to raising children's self-esteem as one teacher (T4-Pr) affirmed "… the student with disabilities is hurt the most." Another teacher (T90-Pr-INCL) recounted her experience with an SEN child whose parents transferred him to a special school:

> I worked with the child in my class, but he was very timid and had weak self-esteem, because of his disability. I consider including special needs students in a regular class seems likable for a well-written composition or for describing a bright picture of the society.

Some teachers (N=14) expressed their concern about the future educational careers of SEN children. They believed inclusion helped at the early stage of education unlike upper classes such as this grade 8 teacher (T88-Pr-INCL) who had two SEN students:

> When they were in lower classes, the children don't notice differences. For them, this kind of environment is just natural; however, it's not the same when they grow older. Inclusion works well with young children; but, the older they get, the more difficult the inclusion process.

These findings back up those of Wolska (2003) that children in upper classes find it more challenging to be accepted, to make friends, and to fit in.

Concerning some teachers (N=19), parents can be a barrier, especially when they resist providing the needed support to their child, such as this teacher (T80-Pr-INCL) complained:

> I had a child in grade two who had multiple needs. The parents didn't want him to get identified, and the principal kept telling me to do what the parents wanted, to keep her in the classroom and not give her any special attention because the parents didn't want her to get any special attention from an educational assistant or me.

On the other hand, some teachers (N= 15) expressed their concern about assessing the academic performance of SEN children like this teacher (T15–Pr) in a private school:

> How do I grade them? Also, you have to use your professional judgment. And then I have to think about, in terms of their actual effort. Is this a significant piece of work for this student or is it just average? I don't know how fair that is. What would be the damage that I am causing this child if I do give him an exaggerated mark for example? What's the damage to this child if I give it a low mark? So, it's difficult!

Meanwhile other teachers (N=18) were worried about the academic standards of students without SEN in the classrooms like T1-Pr who said, ". . . other students in the class make less improvement while taught with learners with SENs."

Some teachers (N= 20) voiced their being not ready regarding including SEN children in regular classrooms. They do not feel that their teacher education and training has prepared them for including SEN learners in their classrooms in terms of

legislation, teaching practices, and maintaining discipline. As an example, T2-Pr wrote:

> I work really hard and I seek want to help every kid that I have, but I think I truly do not understand what we are doing. I mean what's an IEP? What does the law say? Well, it doesn't tell very much about what the SE teacher will do to help me in what I am supposed to do.

Another example is T32-Pub who reported: "Some of the children in my class are really badly behaved, they can't sit quiet, don't complete their work and are periodically screaming. I imagine they might have a learning difficulty, but I don't know what to do."

While T96-Pr-INCL, concerned about her teaching practices and self-efficacy in an inclusive classroom, stated:

> The biggest difficulties I have with inclusion, is not certainly with students with SENs, but with me and my teaching methods. How can I be better? When I recieve the IEP I wonder, 'Am I truly taking this?' Many times, I'm sure that I am giving much more, but I don't believe that I am reaching their needs.

Some other (N= 16) teachers complained about how SEN children are underestimated, like T250-Pr-INCL:

> I have a kid who can't step without the walker and has language problems. At first my colleagues said that he is a hopeless case and not to expect much from him because he was spoiled and his parents refused all their criticisms. I showed him some care, and as the year progressed, with the help of a physical and speech therapist, in addition to the modified instruction and IEP, I took care of him. The child improved significantly and started to be independent. Therefore, this hopeless case turned out to be a significant humorous individual

with a strong will. Now I realize that children with special needs will never stay the same.

Summary of Teachers' Results

In this chapter, the researcher presented the quantitative and qualitative findings extracted from teachers' survey, focus group discussions (FGDs), and anecdotal evidence in response to four research questions investigating teachers' IE conceptions and challenges. Bronfenbrenner's ecological system model informed and shaped the current study to present the responses participating teachers who are expected to have direct contact with SEN students and whose views constituted the microsystem of the ecological model.

A total of 600 teachers in public, private, and inclusive schools of Cycles I, II, and III of basic education located in the three areas of Beirut Capital provided usable surveys with a 91% response rate. The demographic data yielded an amalgamated profile of a 'typical Lebanese teacher', a relatively young female below the age of 35 years holding a basic academic qualification in general education with over 10 years teaching experience, who would have included having SEN students in her classroom, would have received some formal training relevant to SEN students, but who is not aware of the local IE related Law 220.

In response to the first RQ, results of the survey indicated that 75 % of the teachers are IE advocates due to their considerably average IE conceptions (M = 3.24; SD = 1.42). Though the respondents generally agreed that SE and GE teachers (a) can work collaboratively with SEN students, (b) are the key to implement a change in their schools and build an inclusive environment, and (c) are ready to deliver SEN services to SEN students, teachers had the lowest score when asked if IE has social and academic benefits to both students with and without SENs.

The second RQ targeted schoolteachers' IE challenges and proved to be relatively worried about IE (*M* = 2.55; *SD* = 0.57). The respondents are concerned the most about both, the inadequate availability of para-professional staff and difficulties with including students lacking self-help skills followed by the inappropriate infrastructure and then the inadequate availability of instructional materials. They are the least concerned about the decline of their performance, their increasing workloads, and the decline of their school academic standard. The rankings of each of the four factors of the CIES-L indicated that the Lebanese teachers were most concerned about the lack of resources followed by the lack of acceptance of SEN students, followed by a decline in the academic standard of the classrooms and increased workload.

The third RQ examined whether or not there is a relationship between teachers' IE conceptions and concerns in mainstream schools in Lebanon. A significant Beta coefficient ($\hat{\beta}$ = - 0.099, $p<.05$) on teachers' IE conceptions and concerns indicated that teachers who have relatively higher IE conceptions are likely to have a lower degree of IE concerns and vice versa.

The fourth RQ investigated the effect of teachers' background variables on their IE conceptions and concerns. Findings of OLR estimated that teachers in general education job category ($\hat{\beta}$ = - 1.133), young teachers below the age of 25 ($\hat{\beta}$ = - 2.471), and teachers with teaching experience between 16 and 20 ($\hat{\beta}$ = - 0.689) have a negative impact on IE Conceptions. In contrast, Inclusive School category ($\hat{\beta}$ = + 1.442), Special Education ($\hat{\beta}$ = + 1.091) and knowledge of Law 220 ($\hat{\beta}$ = + 0.65) have a positive impact on conceptions. In other words, teachers with these characteristics have higher IE conceptions than those who do not. In addition, as teachers grow older than 25 years, their IE conceptions improve.

Further, teachers in public schools ($\hat{\beta}$ = + 0.746), have higher concerns than those in private schools. Lack of Special Education ($\hat{\beta}$ = +1.143) also adds up to teachers concerns. On a further note, age has a significant and positive impact on teachers concerns but what is worth noting is that the intensity of this impact lessens [below 25 ($\hat{\beta}$ = + 3.132), 25-35 ($\hat{\beta}$ = +1.181) and 35-35 ($\hat{\beta}$ = +0.925)] as teachers grow older in age until age effect becomes insignificant for those above 45. On the other hand, experience [0-5 years ($\hat{\beta}$ = -0.704), 11-15 years ($\hat{\beta}$ = -1.053)] and special education ($\hat{\beta}$ = - 0.962) training reduce teacher' IE concerns.

In FGDs, five vignettes, each representing a child with different SEN category, were displayed to participating teachers who were asked to report their level of IE challenge and success if they had to include them in their mainstream classrooms. Schoolteachers revealed having an average level of IE challenge with 51% of the participating teachers perceiving the vignettes of SEN cases to be 'Very Challenging' and 'Extremely Challenging', while 49% of the teachers indicated perceiving the SEN cases to be 'A Little Challenging' and 'Not Challenging' if included in their mainstream classrooms. Findings also showed that teachers of private schools indicated the highest level of challenge in response to the five vignettes, followed by the teachers of the public schools; whereas private inclusive schoolteachers indicated the lowest level of challenge if having to include the SEN cases in their mainstream classrooms.

Further, participating teachers revealed a rather low level of success if including SEN students in their mainstream classrooms with 36% of the participating teachers perceiving themselves as 'Not Successful' in contrast to 39% who said they would be 'Successful', 25% who said they would be very successful, and none who indicated they would be 'Extremely Successful' if the SEN cases were included in

their classrooms. Results as well showed that both public and private schoolteachers have the same but a rather low level of perceived success; whilst private inclusive schoolteachers reported perceiving a higher level of success if including the SEN children in their classrooms. When requested to justify their selection of the most challenging SEN case, the majority of teachers reported less preference for learners with physical SEN related to visual impairment for they are difficult to manage and serve. Mobility SEN, on the other hand, was the category most frequently endorsed by teachers (89%) since they do not put serious demands on the part of teachers in the lines of instructional provisions. Upon analyzing teachers' justification of the most challenging SEN case, some challenges were detected from teachers' responses: (a) Teachers' knowledge and skills, (b) workload, (c) collaboration, and (d) resources and infrastructure.

The last section of in this chapter presented the results of 212 anecdotes provided by the responding teachers yielding three key themes under conceptions (SEN acceptance respect, preparation of SEN students to real life) and eight key themes under IE challenges (intellectually challenged children, aggressive SEN children, SEN students suffering in mainstream schools, upper classes, parental denial, assessment of the academic performance of SEN children, the academic standards of students without SEN, and teacher education and training). Some teachers denied the possibility of educating SEN students, especially those who were intellectually challenged, while some others believed that SEN children with aggressive behavior should not be included in mainstream schools. Conversely, IE advocates asserted that inclusion prepares SEN children to live a normal life in the '*real world*,' and others felt that the typical children learned to be more caring and sensitive towards others. Some challenges were depicted as well when some teachers

expressed their annoyance because of SEN students' reliance on their typical peers for support, and some others believed that IE did not lead to open-mindedness nor to fostering of children's self-esteem. Future educational careers of SEN children were the concern of some teachers on the belief that inclusion helped at the early stage of education, unlike upper classes. To some others, parents can be a barrier when resisting seeking the needed support to their child, whereas some teachers expressed their concern about the academic assessment of SEN children. Going further, several teachers asserted their education program and training had not prepared them to include SEN learners in their classrooms.

Having presented the findings concerning teacher's IE conceptions and challenges, the researcher now turns to provide the findings of principals' IE conceptions and challenges in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Results: Principals' IE Conceptions and Challenges

This research aims to explore the conceptions and challenges related to IE through the eyes of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers. This chapter presents the findings related to principals' IE conceptions and challenges.

Because principals assume overlapping positions, they find themselves in the exosystem (due to their relationship with the school board and decision-makers), in the mesosystem (due to their relationship with teachers and staff), and in the child's microsystem (due to their direct connections with the child and parents) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Hence their IE conceptions and challenges were investigated for their focal role in the success or failure of IE. The results presented in this chapter answer the fifth and sixth research questions that follow:

(5) What are the Lebanese school principals' IE conceptions?

(6) What are the Lebanese school principals' perspectives on the challenges they face when implementing IE?

These findings are discussed in two sections: The first reports principals' IE conceptions while the second section presents principals' IE challenges. The findings were established by reviewing the interview transcripts and researcher's notes, organizing the data, looking for patterns that emerged from the data, and cross-validating the data obtained for accuracy. This constant comparative analysis of the participating principals' interviews (N=30), allowed the researcher to carefully analyze the data for recurring regularities and sort them into themes.

As illustrated in the treemap (Figure 5.1: Interview Themes Treemap), the results have been arranged by themes and sub-themes under the headings of IE conceptions and IE challenges.

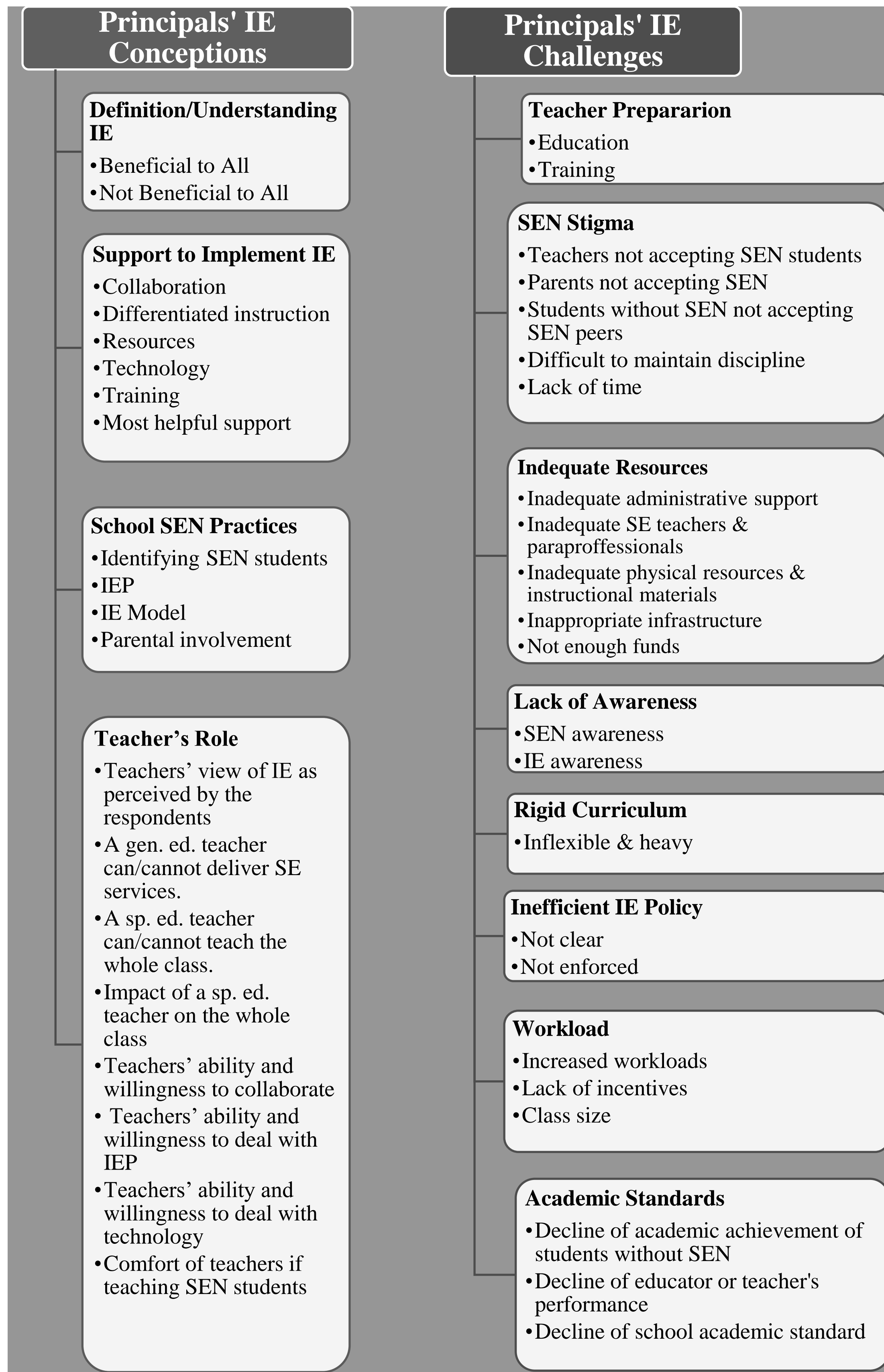

Figure 5.1. Principals' interview themes treemap

Five themes and 22 sub-themes under IE conceptions and eight themes and 19 sub-themes under IE challenges emerged. The author used SPSS software to determine the frequency and percentage of each theme and subtheme based on the responses provided by the three categories of principals: (a) Public: Pub; (b) private: Pr; and (c) private inclusive: Pr-INCL. These themes are examined in light of literature that contends that school leaders are central to the shaping of inclusive school cultures (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). For ease of interpretation, the frequency and percentage of each theme and subtheme are presented in separate tables.

Principals' IE Conceptions – Exo, Meso, and Microsystem

The interview questions attempted to capture the principals' IE conceptions. As displayed in Figure 5.2 (Principals' IE Conceptions), the data collected were subsequently coded into themes and sub-themes. Under the title of IE conceptions, four themes and 20 sub-themes emerged: (a) Definition or understanding of IE; (b) principal's support to implement IE; (c) school SEN practices; and (d) teacher's role. In the following section, the findings will be presented thematically.

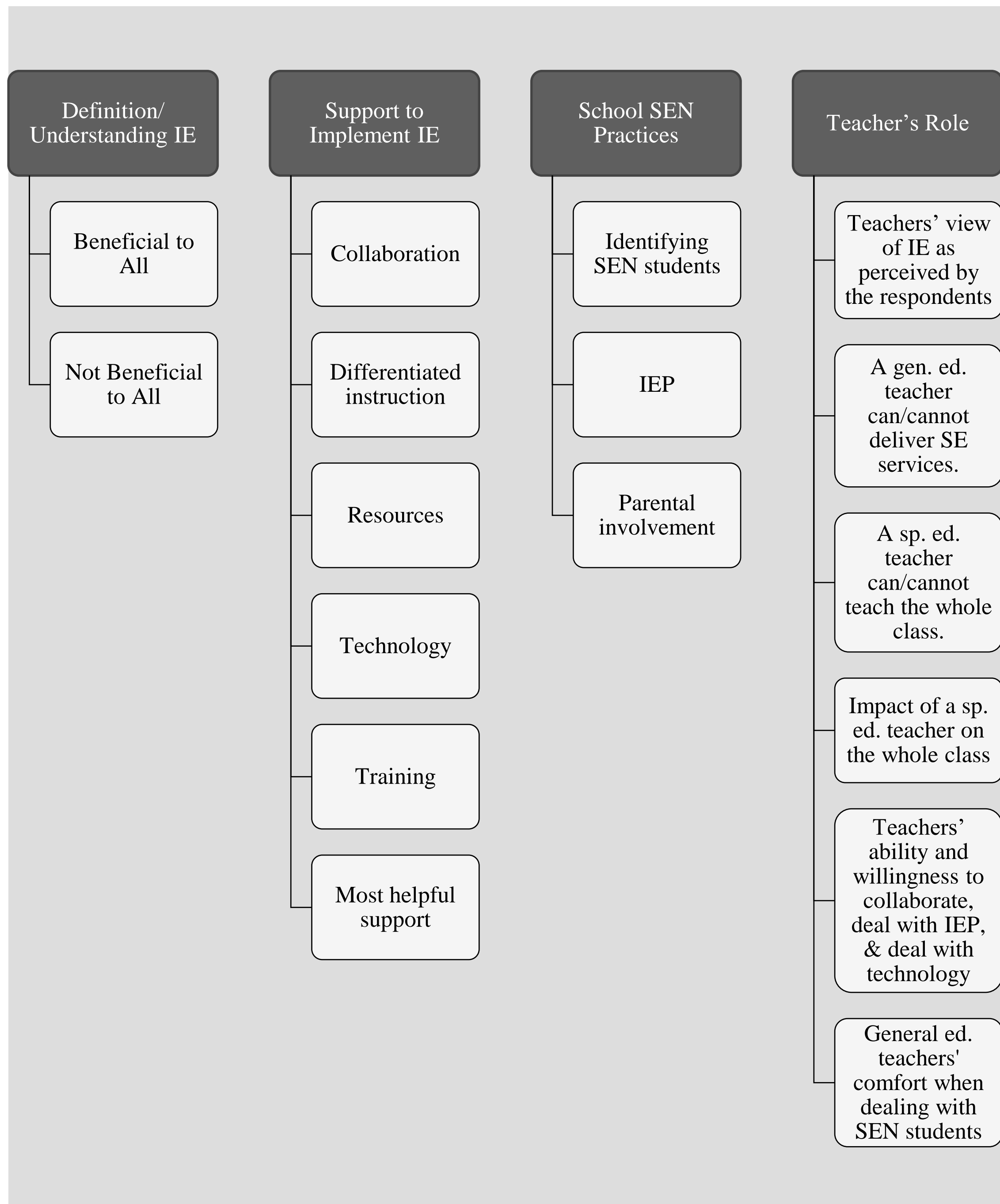

Figure 5.2. Principals' IE Conceptions

Understanding of IE

Participants were asked: "What is your understanding of IE? Can you define it? Do you think IE is beneficial to all students with and without SEN in mainstream schools? What is your school philosophy?*"* Unlike Pub and Pr principals, all the INCL principals (N=13) were able to provide a thorough definition of IE which

touched on the natural academic, social and safe school setting that received and served all students regardless of their abilities. For example, P23, a female principal of a private inclusive school with an MA/MS degree and 12 years of experience, who has had formal training, and is aware of Law 220 expressed her understanding of an inclusive school as one where:

> . . . all students are welcomed regardless of gender, socio-economic background, or academic need. They learn and participate in all aspects of the school record. Students with SEN use most or all of their time studying with their peers, and the school promotes awareness of the shared benefits of inclusion. (P23-Pr-INCL)

Another INCL female principal, with an MA/MS degree and 13 years of experience, who did not receive formal training, and is not aware of Law 220, declared that IE "is a commitment to providing education for all students in their regular schools. It is the commitment to educate all children in a safe environment without isolation" (P1-Pr-INCL). P17-Pr-INCL, a male principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and two years of experience, who has not received any formal training, and is not fully aware of Law 220, elaborated further that IE is insured ". . . when students receive individualized instruction according to their abilities" (P17-Pr-INCL).

While P19, a female principal of a private school, with BA/BS degree and 15 years of experience, who has had formal IE training, but is not fully aware of Law 220, did not give a clear definition of IE, she did confirm its positive value:

> There are differences between children, and if we monitor these differences correctly we can cultivate a healthy person and is beneficial to the society around him, opposed to if we were to place him in a specialized center which

may slow him further; instead it will allow him to progress and reach the required level. (P19-Pr)

When asked if IE is beneficial to all students with and without SEN, most of the principals began to state what they thought of IE and whether they considered it beneficial or not to all students. Their responses fell under three categories: Full IE advocacy, conditional IE advocacy, and IE resistance. Full IE advocacy was indicated by12 (40%) principals who considered IE as beneficial to all students with and without SEN. Seven principals (23%) implied conditional IE advocacy; whereas, 11 principals (37%) showed IE resistance and did not consider it beneficial to all students with and without SEN (see Figure 5.3).

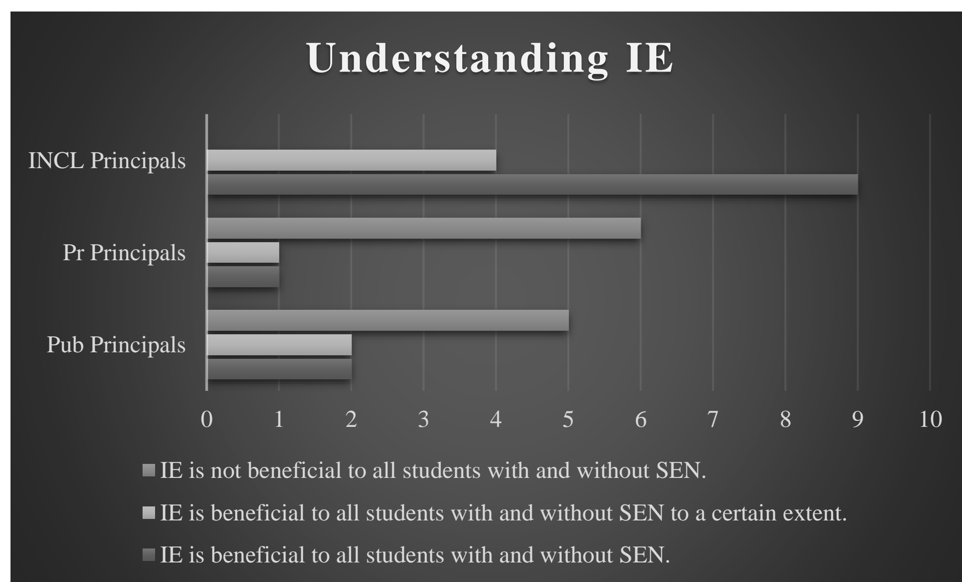

Figure 5.3. Visual representation of principals' understanding of IE

Beneficial to all. The majority of inclusive (INCL) school principals (N= 9), one private (Pr) principals, and two public (Pub) principals were positive on the benefits of IE to all students. Most INCL principals emphasized the social and emotional benefits rather than the academic ones. The highlighted benefits included significant friendships, respect, more genuine affection and understanding of personal differences, and readiness for adult living in a diverse society. Such as P1, a

female principal, with an MA/MS degree and 13 years of experience, who did not receive formal training, and is not aware of Law 220, said:

> Of course, it is very beneficial for them, for those that have learning needs or any special needs. They will get more confident. They will have confidence in front of their friends. Everybody has needs, but they learn how to help their friends and accept them in the classroom, sometimes they go to the learning center because they see their friends having fun. (P1-Pr-Incl)

Whereas P17, a male principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and two years of experience, who has received formal training, but is not fully aware of Law 220, stated that "we need to have a balance and not to neglect the emotional and psychological state of the students, not to only focus on their education" (P17-Pr-INCL).

One female principal of a public school, with a BA/BS degree and two years of experience, who has not had any IE relevant training and is not aware of Law 220, expressed her full support due to having a close SEN relative who happened to be successful in a foreign country meanwhile he was rejected in his native country, Lebanon:

> In America, my brother is accepted for any position, but when he comes to Lebanon and applies to jobs, they look at his hand and consider it a barrier, even though he is the most successful hotel director in the Holiday Inn. ... So we should not exclude disabled people from our society or consider them unable to succeed; disabled people have an interest in their future and want to become successful. We need to give them love, care, and motivate them to feel confident. (P15-Pub)

Yet, another female principal of a public school, with a BA/BS degree and three to five years of experience, who has not had any IE relevant training and is not aware of Law 220, was concerned about the difficulty of implementing IE: "It is beneficial for all the students; however, it's difficult for the teacher to apply it if it is not studied correctly" (P12-Pub). It is evident that this principal is aware of the need for adequate teacher preparation if IE is to be endorsed.

Beneficial to a certain extent. While the nine INCL principals expressed unconditional advocacy to inclusion, four INCL, two Pub, and one Pr principals reported that IE is not beneficial to all students except in certain conditions. Their conditional support to IE has to do with the severity of the SEN and academic success. To the INCL (N=4) and Pr (N=1) principals, IE is beneficial when considering mild SEN cases: "For sure yes, but not in all cases, inclusion is very important, a child is not allowed to be excluded just because s/he has learning problem or learning difficulties," P4, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and two years of experience, who has received formal training and is familiar with Law 220, said. Moreover, P6, a male principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and three to five years of experience, who has received formal training and is aware of Law 220, commented:

> Unless there is a severe case; we cannot include this child, for a specific reason, which is sometimes a physical disability combined with severe intellectual disabilities. So they need to have a special school; that is what we saw in London. (P6-Pr-INCL)

Another male principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and six to ten years of experience, who has received formal training, but is not fully aware of Law 220, did not reveal a solid understanding of what IE means and

referred to it as a mere physical placement of SEN students in a regular school for the sake of social interaction while asserting that it's not one size fits all:

> It is beneficial to a certain extent; it is beneficial for both because students without special needs would have an idea of dealing with other students. Whereas students with the learning difficulties have at least a chance to be included in a regular classroom, to have more social interaction with other students. There are certain cases where IE did not fit; it does not fit everyone; it is not one size fits all. (P7-Pr-INCL)

Whereas a male principal of a private school, with an MA/MS degree and three to five years of experience, who has had formal training, and is not aware of Law 220, said: "Now definitely we are not talking about severe cases" (P26-Pr).

Most Pub school principals (N=5) shed light on the idea that their schools are not ready to cater to the different needs of SEN students simply because they lack the qualified human resources. As such, SEN students may be included in primary classes like cycles one and two but are not able to make it through cycle three, having in mind the official Brevet exam: “Certain students have specific learning disabilities that can continue with us until a certain point. For example, they can pass the first cycle, second cycle; however, the third cycle becomes a little more difficult for them.” (P20-Pub)

Likewise, P14, a female principal of a public school, with an MA/MS degree and 11 to 15 years of experience, who has received IE relevant training and is aware of Law 220, contended that even with the availability of resources, including SEN students in mainstream school has not been scientifically evidenced to be efficient except for first level grades:

> I can include these students, in this case, we are specifically speaking about students with not only learning difficulties but mental issues as well, we can put these types of students in some of the classes, like grades one, two, and three. (P14-Pub)

Not beneficial to all. A total of 11 principals (six Pr, & five Pub) were sure that IE is not beneficial to all students with and without SEN. Instead, some (N=10) opted to the notion of segregating students with intellectual SEN as indicated by P24, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with an BA/BS degree and six to ten years of experience, who has not had any IE relevant training, and is not aware of Law 220, "I'm sure those with intellectual disabilities should be kept within the special program in a special place, they should be segregated. I do not think they can manage in regular school." Moreover, P15 said,

"I prefer that students with intellectual disabilities be together, and students with physical disabilities be together, we should not include them together, and I am against inclusion" (P15-Pub).

Some others (N=2) indicated the feeling of *pity towards* SEN children, but at the same time they affirmed that they cannot be included in a mainstream school, "I feel pity for the special needs kids, but the regular school, in general, is not the best place for them," said P24-Pr. The majority of principals (N=10) who are IE opponents asserted that the benefit goes to the SEN students unlike those students without SEN, who though may learn to accept differences, will be subject to distraction and hindered progress. For instance, P25, a female principal of a private school, with an MA/MS degree and three to five years of experience, who has not received formal IE training, and is not aware of Law 220, clarified:

> It is of more benefit to the SEN student than the regular student. The SEN child receives the education that is customized for him and develops good social skills as well as self-confidence. However, the regular student may get the benefit of accepting different peers and developing a sense of respect as well as helping them. They may face some distractions in the classroom because of the issues that arise from SEN kids, especially if they have an emotional or behavioral disturbance. (Pr25-Pr)

Furthermore, P27, a female principal of a public school, with a BA/BS degree and three to five years of experience, who has not received any IE relevant training and is not fully aware of Law 220, went on to say: "Education-wise, regular students do not benefit. They will be slowed down because of distraction" (P27-Pub 27).

On the other hand, P21, a female principal of a public school, with a BA/BS degree and two years of experience, who has received formal IE relevant training but is not fully aware of Law 220, argued that though IE is a nice and attractive trend to value differences and to get over the assumption "that only the medical doctor is the only smart one, and the mechanical engineer isn't smart" (P21-Pub), its implementation is very challenging.

One Pub principal, a female, with a BA/BS degree and three to five years of experience, who has not received any IE relevant training and is not aware of Law 220, rationalized that it was due to the general rejection of SEN individuals in our society that she was against IE:

> Our society has many complexes; if our society accepted others, then I would say that they should learn together, but because there still is a 0.01% chance that there are students who will treat the SEN students differently and hurt them,

I prefer that students with special needs have a room intended for them. . . I am against inclusion. (P28)

Hence, it is due to cultural grounds that this principal did not favor IE. The next theme tackles principals' support to implement IE.

Support to Implement IE

Principals’ conceptions of the needed support to implement IE were explored through the following questions and prompts: How can a principal facilitate IE implementation? What type of support can a principal provide? Which one is the most helpful support? Almost 53% of the participating principals, the majority of whom were from INCL schools, articulated various responses. Two Pub, four Pr, and 13 INCL school principals shared their conceptions when prompted. Whereas the rest opted not to answer this question since they had not experienced IE in their schools as was reported.

As illustrated in Figure 5.4, the major sub-themes tracked were: (a) Collaboration, (b) differentiated instruction; (c), resources, (d) technology, (e) training, (f) needed training, and (g) the most helpful support.

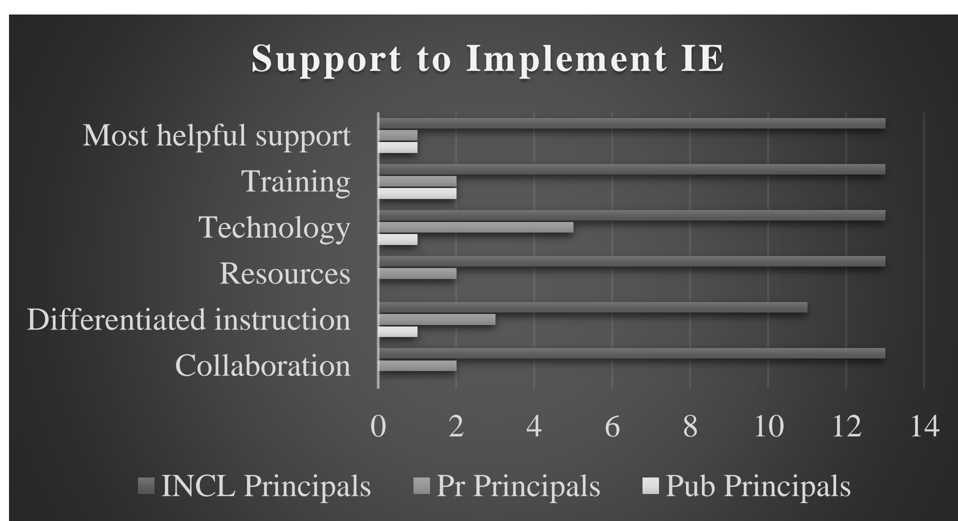

Figure 5.4. Principals’ visualization of their support to implement IE

Collaboration. A total of 15 principals (50%) revealed the theme of collaboration as an element of support to facilitate IE. The researcher looked for keywords that implied the idea of collaboration like cooperate, meet, advise, follow up, coordinate, share, teamwork, scheduled meetings, and informal meetings.

All INCL principals (N=13) indicated that they encouraged their teachers to meet formally and informally so that they interact with each other to follow up on the progress of SEN children in their class. For example:

P2, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with a BA/BS degree and two years of experience, who has received formal training, and is not fully aware of Law 220, explained:

> Regular meetings are held with them, with the SED team, with the head of the division, with the parents of SEN learners. So, there is continuous follow-up and support from all the available people at school. The counselor and external specialists coordinate and exchange recommendations. Then the former follows up implementations with the teachers of the class, the SED and the head of the division. (P2, Pr-INCL)

P8, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and three to five years of experience, who has received formal training, but is not aware of Law 220, elaborated:

> There is a scheduled meeting and follow up between the teachers and the consultant. They have to sit together and talk about SEN students' progress in the regular class. So, they talk together to know what modifications they have to do in the regular class. So, they have to prepare weekly the lesson to go parallel.

Another female principal (P18-Pr-INCL) of an INCL school, with an MA/MS degree and 16 to 20 years of experience, who has received formal training and is aware of Law 220, elaborated by explaining how her staff shared information and documents to facilitate serving SEN students:

> Sometimes the coordinator or head or cycle takes training; we take what we have learned from this training, and provide the same thing to the teachers in our school; this includes sharing all the documents we take, we make copies for them, and then we have a meeting where we discuss what happened. Everyone understands and is careful about students with special needs. (P18-Pr-INCL)

On the other hand, P6, a male principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and three to five years of experience, who has received formal training and is aware of Law 220, showed his concern about the collaboration between the part-time teachers and staff in his school:

> We have a team, a coordinator, and an external consultant. We ask teachers to coordinate with the LS [learning support] coordinator and the SE teacher. Seventy percent it is working and 30% it is not working, especially with those part-time teachers. (P6-Pr-INCL)

Two Pr principals (P25 & P29) indicated the importance of collaboration even though their schools are not inclusive. However, P29, female principal of a private school, with a BA/BS degree and three to five years of experience, who has not had any IE training and is not aware of Law 220, hinted to the idea that the presence of an SEN specialist at the school could encourage the GE teachers to totally depend on them, for "whenever they discover a weakness in a student, they go

and refer it to special ed. It is not going to be their job; it is going to be the job of the SE teachers" (P29-Pr).

Differentiated instruction. Fifteen principals (50%) emphasized differentiating instruction as a means of IE support. Several actions were stated in relevance to differentiated instruction such segmenting the learning outcomes, utilizing computer-assisted instruction, the one-to-one instruction or pull-out sessions, modifying instructional materials and exams like the font size, the length and the level of difficulty of the exam, the duration of the task, or having an assistant that read and wrote for the SEN student where appropriate. For example:

> First, we do modification to the curriculum. We extend the program so that the student studies at his or her own pace. We chunk the objectives so that the student can learn without pressure. We simplify the instructions and modify exams based on the recommendation of the specialist who diagnosed the case of the SEN student. We, most of the time, provide pull out sessions to cover the gap and work on a one-to-one basis with the child. (P2-Pr-INCL)
>
> There was no need for a shadow teacher because differentiated instruction worked well; with no extra effort, it worked well, and they could manage by themselves, no modification, just with a particular focus, whenever there is a need, the teacher can intervene in the modification of exams. (P17-Pr-INCL)

P3, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and three to five years of experience, who has received formal training and is aware of Law 220, and P22, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and six to ten years of experience, who has had IE training and is aware of Law 220, explained that they changed the setting; so sometimes the SEN student is in the class, resources room, or alone in the library. P3 elaborated that they

used an accommodation checklist that is to be checked by the teachers after the accomplishment of each task assigned to an SEN student. However, P22 went on to clarify that differentiating instruction is suitable for mild SEN students:

> When it comes to elementary we have tried differentiated instruction, it works for students with mild cases, but it doesn't work with a student who is one or two levels below his classmates, he will get frustrated, what we do is pulling them out from their classrooms, we are giving them English, Math, and Arabic, and you can say one to one, the largest group will be five when it is the pull-out, and the teacher, there is a special educator. (P22-Pr-INCL)

P6 indicated the importance of differentiating instruction but went further to explain, "We still have to follow up with the teachers, to do the modification for these students: 'please be careful because you can't give this student a lot of work', 'please be careful that this student cannot analyze'. . ." (P6-Pr-INCL).

Pr (N=2) and Pub (N=1) principals encouraged differentiated instruction as well; however, it was clear that they employed it in assessment only. For instance, P19 explained that for the visually impaired student:

> You have to increase the font. Alternatively, if the font is small, you have to read the question to him. The disability is just related to visual impairment, but his focus and knowledge is like the other kids; he gets really high grades. So the questions are precisely the same, but we give him more time. (P19-Pr)

Another principal added being lenient in exam corrections:

> We provide them with different exams, straightforward exams. We do not go towards critical thinking. For those who cannot take a 50-minute exam, we allow them to leave the classroom every 15 minutes; they have a special case. We do not grade them like the others; if I am teaching science, I do not remove

points for grammar mistakes. I look for scientific words; I can tell if he has understood or not. I am lenient in my corrections. (P29-Pr)

P20, a female principal of a public school, with a BA/BS degree and three to five years of experience, who has not received any IE relevant training and is not fully aware of Law 220, mentioned that they could only help by giving the SEN extra time to finish the exam.

Meanwhile P26, a male principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and three to five years of experience, who has never received IE training and is not aware of Law 220, mentioned using technology in the classroom as a means to differentiate instruction to "attract students' attention, especially that we have different learning styles. So, our teachers are used to differentiated instruction to make sure all the class achieved the learning outcome of the lesson" (P26-Pr).

Resources. A third constituent that was tracked under the support to implement IE was the convenience of resources. A total of 15 principals (50%) declared the importance of having sufficient human and physical resources. Eleven out of 13 INCL principals elicited the availability of resources, be it minimal or satisfactory. Some INCL principals emphasized having in their school buildings human resources such as specialists in SE; assistant teachers or co-teachers; psychologists; counselors; speech, occupational, and psychomotor therapists. As for the physical resources, they cited the accessible school building that has ramps; toilets for SEN students; elevators; wheelchair; a computer lab; interactive boards; attractive classroom setting; resources room with various books, audiovisuals, and sensory objects suitable for SEN students. Two INCL principals (P1 & P2) stated that because their building is small and old, they did not have elevators; so, in the

case of an SEN student with motor disability, they had to move the whole class to the ground floor.

Two Pr principals (P5 & P29) highlighted the necessity of having sufficient human and physical resources to be able to serve SEN students but that it was difficult for them to afford the costs.

Technology. A total of 19 principals (63%) cited the use of technology as an efficient means of support to implement IE. The principals stated the value of having available technological tools for the sake of facilitating instruction to all student in general and to SEN students in particular. Of the tools mentioned were the computers, LCD projectors, interactive boards, and Ipads. One Pub principal emphasized the importance computer assisted instruction; however, “the computers that I have are very old and aren’t working well” (P27-Pub).

Training. When prompted to clarify if the principals provided training to their teachers and staff to implement IE, 17 principals (75%) stated that they did. Some INCL principals provided in-house training or outside the school. Some others had some of their teachers register online courses or travel abroad in case of an IE related workshop or conference. For example, P1 (Pr-INCL) said: "Sometimes we travel outside to attend workshops about inclusion, peer coaching." While P7 (Pr-INCL) mentioned "online courses that are offered by, for example, UK universities or Harvard universities, where teachers can take an online course or participate in workshops."

Other principals send the head of the department or the subject coordinator to receive formal training sessions to share later with the rest of the teachers at the school.

P2 and P23 stated ongoing training throughout the year to maintain the preparedness of the teachers:

> We prepare things for them in order to minimize the obstacles that would come, but usually, we know, we take a look at our students with the learning difficulties and special needs and assume and prepare ahead of time the needs of the teachers. It is ongoing training, so we know, we switch from thing to another, we cover the learning disabilities, so we are working on behavioral issues, we finished, tick we have finished, we work on many things. (P2-Pr-INCL)

> Our school does a training induction for teachers every year, with workshops run by SE specialists. The teachers learn different teaching styles, how to be aware of SEN students' needs, when to refer an issue to a school specialist, and what each specialist's role is. Teachers also learn about the different SEN students currently registered in the school, so they are better equipped to help them learn. By taking the time to prepare the school team, we create a positive climate that benefits our SEN students, and the teachers feel more confident. (P23-Pr-INCL)

P22 declared the value of equipping her teachers with the necessary training that helps them better serve all the students:

> Every school year we start our school year with training our teachers for differentiated instruction from different perspective, whether it is identifying the students, whether it is catering for the students, whether it is preparing the affirmation for the students, so we are targeting different learning and teaching processes in the schools with the teachers every year. (P22-Pr-INCL)

Having in mind teachers' strengths and weaknesses, P22 said: "We have some teachers that needed to go more about the IEP, so we had an expert from the British council coming to us and sitting with the teachers and discussing how an IEP should be" (P22-Pr-INCL). While P1, female principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and 13 years of experience, who did not receive formal training, and is not aware of Law 220, contended: "Sometimes I see a need in the teacher, I advise her to take this workshop" (P1-Pr-INCL). When prompted to explain how she knew of teachers' needs, P1 answered: "We give needs assessment at the beginning of the year."

When prompted to explicate if the training was an option to teachers or mandatory, 2 INCL principals said it was not, whereas the other 11 INCL principals said it was mandatory since it was part of the school policy. For instance, P7 said: "Professional development is one of the policies of the school, and when all teachers do sign their contracts, there is a policy that they must go through these professional developments whenever there are [available] workshops for Special Ed" (P7-Pr-INCL).

While 13 INCL principals tackled IE related training to support its implementation, two Pr and two Pub principals stated that they did not provide their teachers with training. Pr principals said their schools did not have the service for SEN students in their schools. Whereas the Pub principals affirmed that teachers did not receive training: "If this subject matter were in my hands, I would take action towards it today. It is an official decision within the ministry. However, on this subject matter, the initiative is still lacking" (P27-Pub). Similarly, P28, a female principal of a public school, with a BA/BS degree and two years of experience, who has not received any IE relevant training and is not aware of Law 220, stated,

"During my time as a teacher, and as of now as a principal, no; we don't have any teachers who have undergone training courses" (P28-Pub).

Most helpful support. Principals were further asked to mention the most helpful support to implement IE. Principals (50%) provided various input highlighting the value of teacher training and professional development. Three INCL and two Pr principals confirmed that SEN related awareness is the most helpful support. Five INCL principals indicated that the most helpful support is the proper use of computer-assisted instruction. However, to P7, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and six to 10 years of experience, who has received formal training but is not fully aware of Law 220, it is the whole process that matters: “I think it’s a process, I can’t tell you exactly what is the most helpful, because it’s like a package, all together, it can make a change” (P7-Pr-INCL).

School SEN Practices

Principals’ conceptions of the school SEN practices to implement IE were explored through the following questions and prompts: How do you identify SEN students in your school? Is there a specific process that you go through to detect them? Does your school have a site-based planning team to identify SEN students and prepare individualized educational plans (IEPs)? The related retrieved data from principals’ responses fell under the following themes: (a) Identifying SEN students; (b) IEP; and (c) parental involvement (see Figure 5.5).

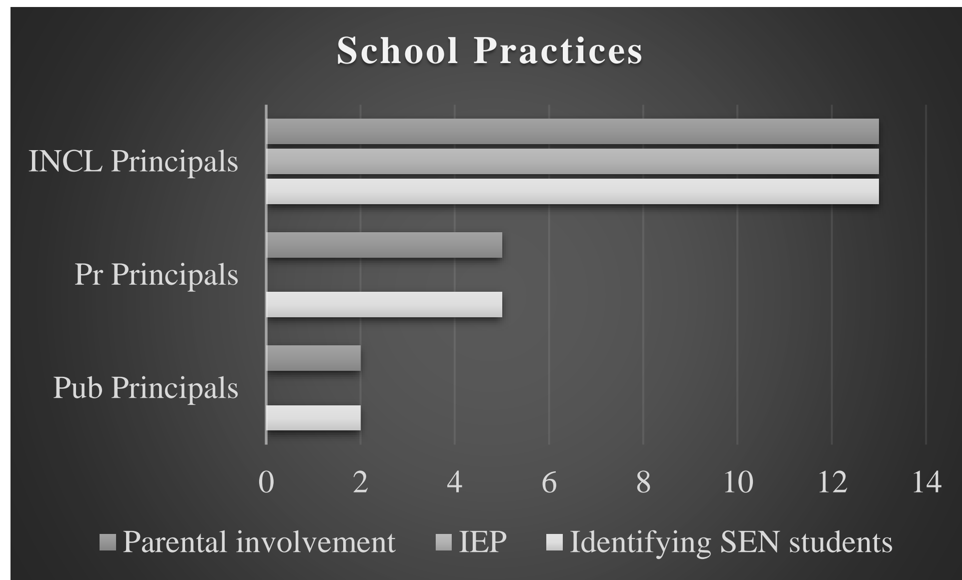

Figure 5.5. Visual representation of school SEN practices

Responses were retrieved from about 67% of the participating principals, the majority of whom were from INCL schools. Two Pub, 5 Pr, and 13 INCL school principals shared their thoughts when prompted. Whereas the rest chose not to answer this question since they had not experienced IE in their schools as was reported.

Identifying SEN students. Meanwhile, some principals reported having a department dedicated to detect, screen, diagnose, and follow up the progress of SEN students; some others indicated that it was through outsourcing or simple referral to a qualified specialist that provided the recommended intervention to be executed by the school.

All INCL principals (N=13) explained that during the early elementary school years, schoolteachers might recognize a child as a possible candidate for SE services in different ways. In many cases, some parents felt their child had difficulty and discussed this issue with the teacher. This discussion, in addition to the teacher's observation, might lead to a formal evaluation that might confirm that the child is eligible for SE services. Even without input from parents, the teacher could

recognize that the child was having learning or behavioral difficulties and request a formal evaluation. If this occurs, the school notifies the parents to ask for their consent to allow the evaluation process to begin. Hence, an official diagnostic report from a credible specialist is a prerequisite for a child to be entitled to SEN services as P1 stated: “We do not accept any child into the special department if we do not have an evaluation from an academic psychologist.” (P1-Pr-INCL). Most INCL principals (N=9) reported external referrals to specialists: “We want a second opinion; we want something external so that the parents would agree with it, would feel that it was their option; it is not something imposed from the school” (P7-Pr-INCL).

> If we have any psychological problems, the counselor will see him, we make sure that depending on the help that is needed we consult a psychologist, we do an observation after the parents have of course agreed to do so they meet with the consultant they discuss the recommendations, and then he is externally referred. (P2-Pr-INCL)

> We do require an external assessment; I do not want the parents to say like ‘they are doing this because they want their labeling of the child” or it ‘costs more.’ You know how parents feel, so that is why we always ask for an external assessment for students, so parents are convinced it is a need for their child. (P22-Pr-INCL)

For newcomers, an entrance exam and an interview with the student help identify SEN students as well. For example:

> We interview the kids; we ask them to spend one whole day at the school, in the classroom before we do an evaluation entrance exam. We can advise the parent if he has a problem to go and get an evaluation from an external

> specialist. In case the child has a problem, and he has the evaluation report, we start working with him. (P1-Pr-INCL)
>
> We discover their SEN while they are in the classroom. We begin working with them when they start school at three years old. We wait three or five months to understand the students very well, and then, when the teachers notice there is an issue with a student, they inform the Special Ed. Department head and me. We then have a meeting with the parents and begin to work with this child. (P18-Pr-INCL)

After having an identified SEN case, some INCL principals (N=10) brought up the factor of SEN student ratio per class, the level of SEN severity, and the convenience of resources as criteria for accepting them:

> We do not accept new learners unless we have the proper environment prepared for them, and if we have the staff, the required number, who can deal with them, and the ratio, we have to respect the ratio learners with special needs to learn to the whole class. (P2-Pr-INCL)

Many INCL principals noted that they only accepted mild SEN students: “We only take one kid per section if they have major SENs, but minor SENs, we take a maximum of two” (P3-Pr-INCL)

While all the INCL principals reported how they identified SEN, five Pr principals emphasized that though their schools did not have a clear IE policy nor a professional intervention, they contributed, to a certain extent, when it comes to detecting SEN students. However, they were concerned that parents deny SENs in their child. For instance, P16, a male principal of a private school, with a BA/BS degree and three to five years of experience, who did not receive formal training, and is not aware of Law 220, reported:

> We discover it, but the parents completely deny that their son has this problem. So, here, the relationship is between the teacher and the students. The teacher works hard to benefit these students. However, there is not anything official that we do. (P16-Pr)

IEP. It was anticipated to receive IEP related input from INCL principals only simply because it was not applicable at the other private or public schools. All INCL school principals mentioned having a SE department that takes care of all SEN services, including the IEPs. “We work as a team,” P1, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and 13 years of experience, who did not receive formal training, and is not aware of Law 220, commented. They indicated considering an IEP as a documented plan developed to summarize and record the individualization of an SEN student’s education program. Besides, it was defended that the proper execution of the plan provided an ongoing record to help with continuity in programming and transition planning. Thus, principals elaborated that the IEP guided the implementation of learning support services inside or outside the classroom to align the educational program with the needs of the student.

Some principals (N=3) mentioned that one teacher, in consultation with parents, developed an IEP. Others implied that it was prepared jointly by a team including the counselor, general and SE teacher, and parents a small group or an expanded team, depending on the complexity of the student’s needs. Two INCL principals emphasized that the individualized goals linked to the student’s assessed special needs, and in some cases, short term objectives as well as the teaching strategies to be used. Five INCL principals stated that the IEP encapsulate adaptations and modifications in the regular curriculum, the required human and physical resources, and the recommended setting and conditions such as the in-class

or pull-out environment. For instance, P2, female principal of a private inclusive school, with an BA/BS degree and two years of experience, who has received formal training, and is not fully aware of Law 220, declared: *"*We have programs divided into three levels, we have the minor intervention, partial intervention, full intervention and recently we started the transitional class, so we have four levels of intervention depending on the case" (P2-Pr-INCL). P22 noted that they do have a term plan that they did not refer to as IEP: "What we do is a term plan with the educational consultant for special needs, with the special needs coordinator and with the teachers and with the parents." (P22-Pr-INCL)

Therefore, the participating INCL principals served SEN students based on their needs. They indicated that many SEN students could achieve the learning outcomes for some subjects with no or minor adaptations, some others needed further adaptations, while a smaller proportion needed individualized outcomes different than the curriculum.

Parental involvement. Sixteen principals denoted parental involvement throughout their conversation, most of whom were INCL principals (N=13), while the other three were Pr principals. It was well understood that all INCL principals recognized the significance of family involvement to serve SEN students better. Most principals expressed that parents' involvement is one of the main aspects of the educational process, especially when they participate in drafting the IEP and not by merely signing the document prepared by the SE department. "We do not take any action without the parents," P18 stated. "When we do the IEP, we do our meetings with the parents involved," P22 declared. "Sometimes we make modifications as parents recommend," *P1* explained but then went on to remark on the issue of parents' SEN awareness, "when the parents are convinced and accept, they can help"

(P1-Pr-INCL). Nevertheless, though "a lot of information is helpful from parents, some information misleads the decision; so, we do further investigations," argued P4 (Pr-INCL).

Going further, P2 elaborated: “With educated parents, the problem is reducing significantly, because if they do not accept the idea, then it is difficult” (P2-Pr-INCL). Like P2, P7 was concerned about parents' attitude and level of SEN awareness when asked to contribute to their child's IEP:

> We do ask parents to take part, yet in Lebanon, parents are not very much aware of the process itself. At first, we do encourage them to read the document. Then we send them a copy to sign. Usually, people sign without reading; they do not understand what is going on, although we try so many times to lecture about it. (P7-Pr-INCL)

To further help spread awareness amongst parents, P23 went on to say: "Our school holds lots of orientation sessions and meetings between parents, specialists, and teachers, to support SEN students' families" (P23-Pr-INCL).

While all the responding INCL principals (N=13) pointed to parental involvement, only five Pr principals mentioned its importance in serving SEN students. For example, P29 contended, "Not only the teacher, the administration as well, have to work together as a team, with the parents, so that it works. It is time-consuming, but it works okay" (P29-Pr). The other two Pr principals explicated that parents take care of their children if they have a specific need since that was not their responsibility: "We do have some special needs students in the elementary cycle one and two. Their parents take care of giving them support at home through a private tutor," alleged P26 (Pr).

On the other hand, two Pub principals touched on parents' involvement in a shallow manner. For example, P20 said:

> Parents come and tell me that their child has ADHD and is on medication. Others do not tell us because they are scared our school would reject their child. We later discover this and send them to specialized centers, and we tell them to follow up there, we cannot do more than that. (P20-Pub)

Teacher's Role

Principals' IE conceptions of teacher's role were explored through the following questions and probes: Do you think a GE teacher can deliver SE services? What if he/she refuses to teach a particular child? What happens in this situation? Does a SE teacher have a positive impact on the whole class? Can he/she teach GE students? How do you think GE teachers view inclusion? Are teachers able and willing to cater to the wide variety of learners in the GE curriculum in terms of collaboration with the SE teacher? Are teachers able and willing to cater to the wide variety of learners in the GE curriculum in terms of technology? Various themes were retrieved from the principals' responses to the teacher's role, as illustrated in Figure 5.6. Each of the themes below will be explicated with illustrations from principals' interviews.

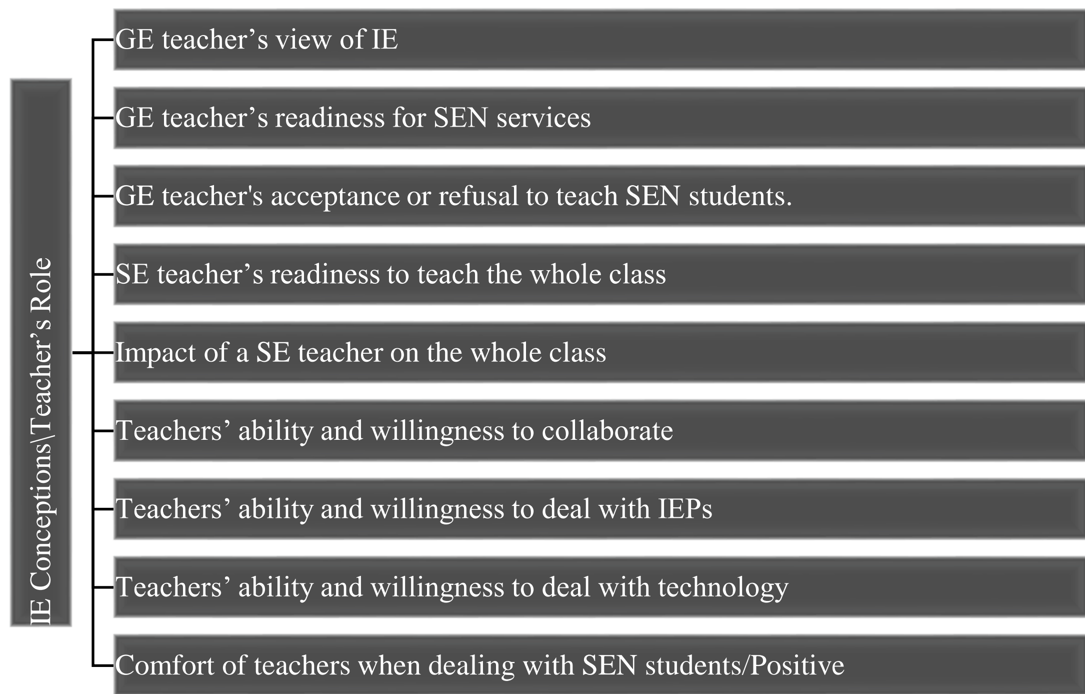

Figure 5.6. Principals' conceptions of teachers' role

GE teachers' view of IE. Meanwhile, 23% of the principals (7 INCL) indicated that GE teachers positively viewed IE, 63% (7 Pub, 6 Pr, & 6 INCL) said the opposite and four principals stated that they had no idea. (See Figure 5.7)

P18, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and 16 to 20 years of experience, who has had IE training and is aware of Law 220, remarked: "We believe that IE is the same as any other education system." P23 said, "In our school, they are used to it. So, it is not new" (Pr-INCL). While P4 implied that her teachers' view of IE is gradually getting better: "Teachers are willing to help these students; now we have like 70% of cooperative teachers." (Pr-INCL)

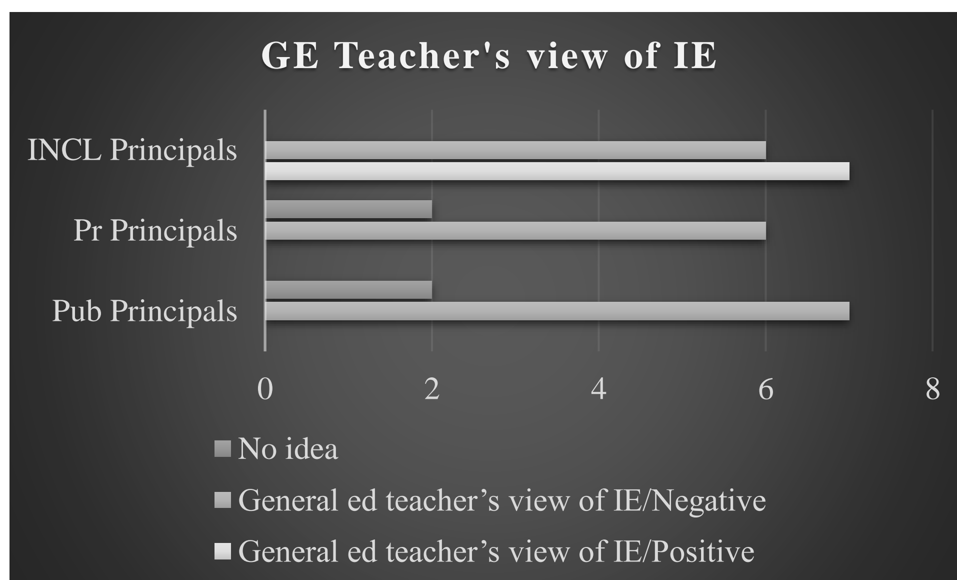

Figure 5.7. Visual representation of general ed. teacher's view of IE

On the other hand, the principals who reported their teachers' negative views justified that it was due to their indulgence in traditional teaching, feelings of frustration and guilt, and due to the extra work that is required. "Look, they do not accept it. They still feel, I do not want to say everyone, but those who have been teaching for a long time, they still live in traditional teaching," P6 (Pr-INCL) commented. To P3, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and three to five years of experience, who has received formal training and is aware of Law 220, most of her teachers reported feelings of frustration and guilt due to the time that was taken away from the majority of the students in order to accommodate the needs of one student with special needs. P8, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and three to five years of experience, who has received formal training, but is not aware of Law 220, hinted to teachers' complaints about the excessive amount of time needed to attend additional meetings, complete paperwork, and collaborate with specialists for they considered it as unfair in correspondence to the time dedicated to the other learners in the class: "They feel like, they have to deal with them in different ways, this will take time and

will not be beneficial as it should." (P8-Pr-INCL). While one Pr principal (P26-Pr) said: "Our regular teachers do not feel at ease when dealing with a special needs student." P10, a female principal of a public school, with a BA/BS degree and three to five years of experience, who has not received any IE relevant training and is not fully aware of Law 220, echoed: "IE is not liked and is complained about."

A GE teacher's readiness for SEN services. Eight principals (3 INCL, 3 Pr, & 2 Pub) confirmed that a GE teacher can deliver SEN services. For instance, P4 stated: "Yes, if she has the passion of teaching because teaching is not a job; it is an art" (P4-Pr-INCL). While P18 replied: "All our teachers have done education at USJ, most of them. There are now new teaching methods in the bachelor degrees that they take; they take many courses on inclusion" (P18-Pr-INCL). Whereas P22 said: "Any regular teacher should accept them and cater for them" (P22-Pr-INCL). (See Figure 5.8)

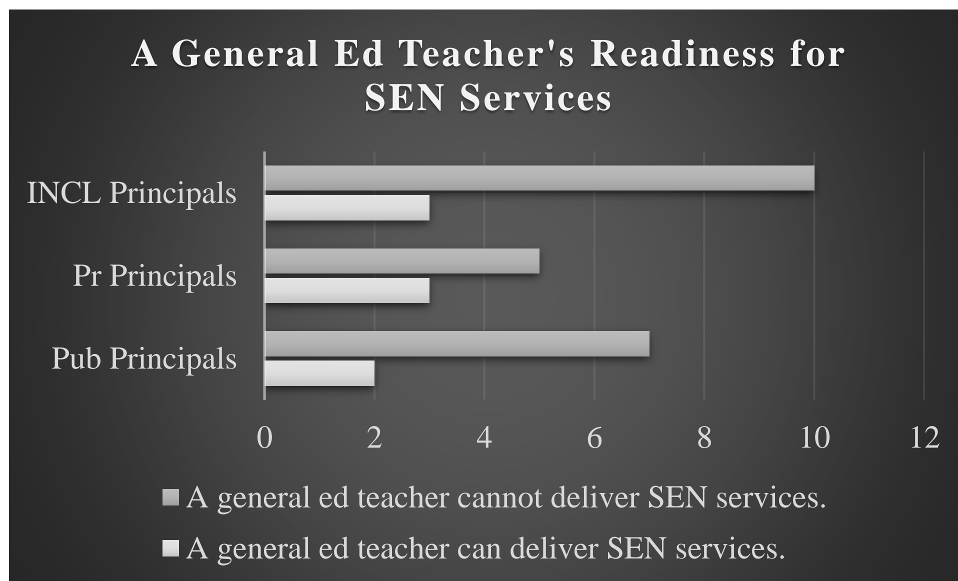

Figure 5.8. Visual representation of a general ed. Teacher's readiness for SEN services

A total of 22 principals (10 INCL, 5 Pr, & 7 Pub) confirmed that GE teachers cannot deliver SEN services unless they receive formal education and training. They

declared that if GE teachers should work with SEN students, they need to have the knowledge and skills to meet their diverse needs. They need to understand how to provide instruction that meets the content and grade level standards, but at the same time, still in alignment with the students' IEP: "Must be trained," P17 (Pr-INCL) affirmed, "they need the proper education and training to do so," P23 (Pr-INCL) upheld.

While five Pr and seven Pub principals were certain that a teacher should have a specialty in SE, proper training, and assistance to be able to do so by saying: "They need to be prepared for this. They need proper training, extra courses." (P25-Pr)

"For the teacher to be capable of providing services to special need students, he/she must undergo training courses; if the teacher takes training courses, of course, he/she will be able to, why not?" (P28-Pub)

The primary rationale for not agreeing with having a GE teacher teach in the regular education classroom that has SEN students focused on the ability to successfully teach all the students. "The teacher is trying to teach and take care of the whole class, and it is hard to do that with the special needs child in the classroom" (P21-Pub).

GE teacher's acceptance or refusal to teach SEN students. When principals were asked if the GE teachers refuse to teach an SEN child, 43% (2 INCL, 4 Pr, & 7 Pub) replied that it is acceptable if they refuse, while 57% insisted that they cannot (see Figure 5.9). For instance, P13, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and 13 years of experience, who did not receive formal training but is aware of Law 220, stated: "I guess the teacher has the right to refuse." Some others (N=5) added that the teachers were not prepared to do it:

"If they are not prepared, the administration should not force them" (P23-Pr).

"Most probably they will refuse to teach him. I will not ask them to do something that is not part of their specialty." (P26-Pr)

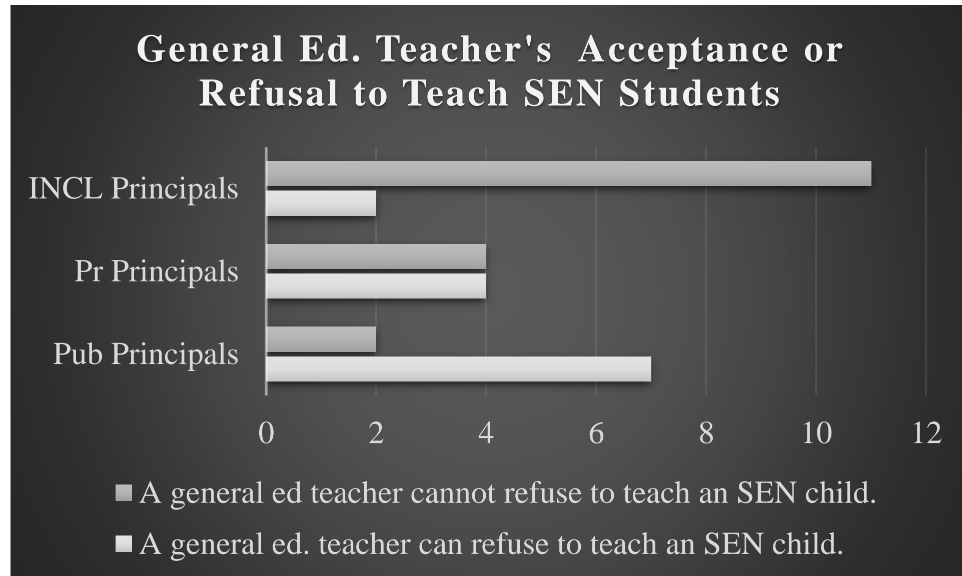

Figure 5.9. Visual representation of general ed. Teacher's acceptance or refusal to teach SEN students

Two Pub principals declared that they follow the law as P28 (Pub) maintained: "I follow the law, so if the law tells me that the teachers have to teach special needs students with regular students, then the teachers have to follow this law; I follow the law."

While a total of 17 principals (57%), the majority of whom were INCL principals asserted that teachers cannot refuse simply because it was part of their school mission, policy, and recruitment contract sheet:

P1 (INCL): "She cannot refuse, she cannot!"

P2, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with a BA/BS degree and two years of experience, who has received formal training but is not fully aware of Law 220: "All teachers who join this school know our policy; they know we are an inclusive school."

P6 (INCL): "We have never faced such an issue because there is follow up."

P9 (INCL): "When we recruit teachers, and it is in their contract, they know they have to expect students with learning difficulties."

P17 (INCL): "There is no room to refuse or accept; if there is a need, you need to do it."

Meanwhile, P4 (INCL) elaborated by saying that sometimes a principal should force and model how to serve SEN students: "They need to be forced to do it, sometimes you need to say, this is how it should be done." Likewise, four Pr and two Pub principals confirmed that if the administration decided to server SEN students, teachers should comply:

P29 (Pr): "Once the administration decides to follow this plan or this program, she has to abide."

P14 (Pub): "The teacher is required to get used to this."

A SE teacher's readiness to teach the whole class. Seventeen percent of the principals (2 Pr, & 6 Pub) were positive that a SE teacher can teach the whole class:

"This is expected. A teacher specialized in SE can teach all students." (P25-Pr)

"Yes, they can, why not? On the contrary, they have more knowledge that enables them to do so, of course." (P11-Pub)

"Of course. For a teacher to realize and know the problems of learning difficulties, the teacher must know of normal students." (P27-Pub)

Whereas the majority of respondents (83%) assured that a SE teacher should be prepared and assisted to be able to teach the whole class (see Figure 5.10). All INCL principals declared that the SE teacher could teach the whole class in lower

grade levels like cycle I and II, but that this becomes difficult for cycle III, especially that the subject matters become more demanding at this level:

> Nowadays, our universities graduate teachers or special ED teachers with general education. They can work with students in lower grades, not in higher grades. We have the subject matter issue. If we ask her to teach in upper grades, she is not going to be able to because she is not going to know the material, the math objectives, the curriculum. (P4-Pr-INCL)

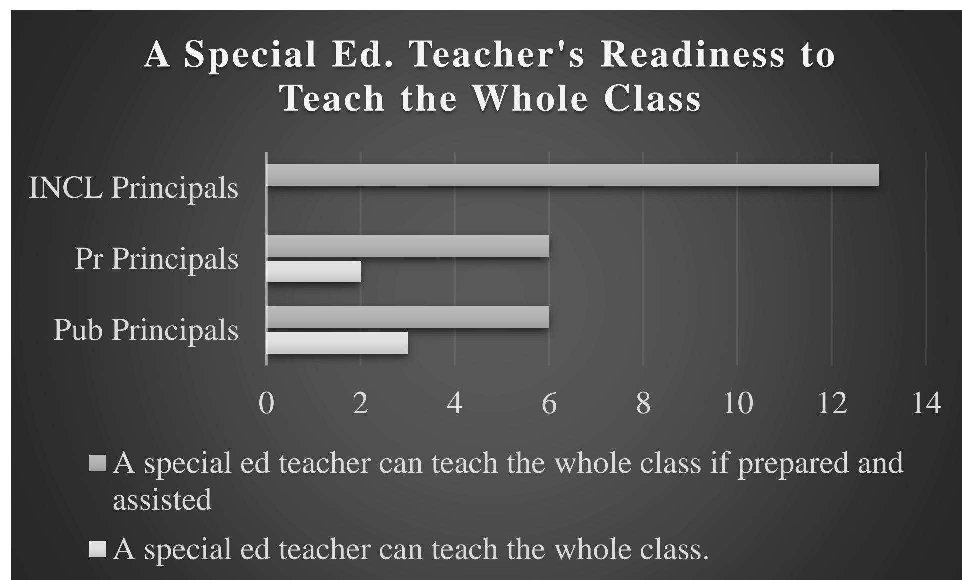

Figure 5.10. Visual representation of special ed. teacher's readiness to teach the whole class

Many principals (N=9) highlighted the need for assistance in the classroom. P23 clarified that when a teacher has several students with special needs, s/he needs lots of assistance to help with the kids. If there is one child with special needs in the classroom, the teacher needs a paraprofessional to help the class. She added that lots of people do not understand how much time and work it takes to care for one special needs child and the whole class.

Others emphasized the need for training and class size: "They must be trained to do that. There needs to be a limit on the number of students in a class and allow more time for inclusion or co-teaching in all subjects, not just reading and math"

(P17-Pr-INCL). One other principal echoed this idea: "Their needs are so diversified; it is hard for one person to do all the work."

Impact of an SE teacher on the whole class. When asked if a SE teacher has a positive or negative impact on the whole class, the majority of principals (70%) indicated that s/he has a positive one, while 30% of the principals (4 Pr, & 4 Pub) were undecided and did not give a clear input because they had no idea about how things would go in the classroom (see Figure 5.11).

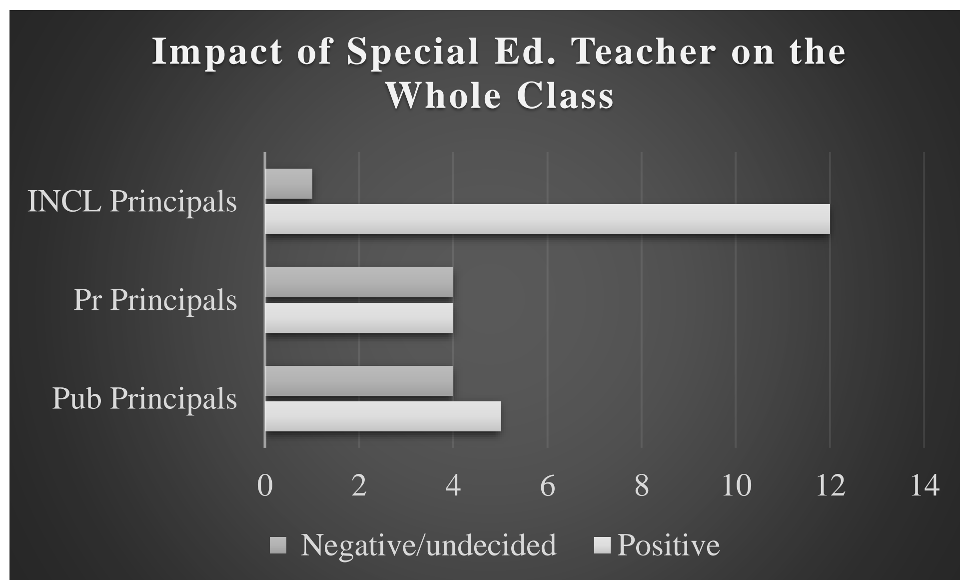

Figure 5.11. Visual representation of impact of special ed. teacher on the whole class

For instance, P1 (Pr-INCL) commented: "Yes, of course. In our school, also the special Ed teacher she replaces the regular Ed teacher if she is absent. So, she goes into the classroom, and she teaches the regular classroom with the students with special needs." P13 (Pr-INCL) echoed: "he has to have a positive effect, he has to have his approach and policies in order to give each student, and all teachers should have this." However, P18 (Pr-INCL) reported that the SE teacher has a positive effect on the SEN child but, a negative effect on the other students without SEN because they "become jealous of the one-to-one time given to students with special needs, and this causes them to act in such a way to gain attention."

While six Pub and four Pr principals asserted that the positive effect of a SE teacher on the whole class lies in having the specialty and the philosophy of accepting differences: “Definitely, he can be a role model in accepting differences, which will be transmitted to other students who are regular,” P26 (Pr) remarked.

> Of course, if the teacher has the ability to treat students with special needs and learning difficulties, of course this teacher will be able to teach students who don’t have these cases, because he/she specializes in this field, so the teacher should have an understanding of inclusion and be able to act upon the idea of IE. (P10-Pub)

Whereas P16, a male principal of a private school, with a BA/BS degree and three to five years of experience, who did not receive formal training, and is not aware of Law 220 stated a two-face impact, a positive one on the whole class but a negative effect on the other teachers who follow traditional teaching methods:

> Yes, he has a positive effect on everyone in the class, but a negative effect on his colleagues. Positive, if he is working with those that have special needs. So, of course, he is going to allow everyone to understand. He is going to put his colleagues, who are utilizing traditional ways of teaching, into a predicament because people are going to compare, they are going to see the difference, and they are going to say, why is everyone not like that? (P16-Pr)

Unlike P16, P12, a female principal of a public school, with a BA/BS degree and three to five years of experience, who has not received any IE relevant training and is not aware of Law 220, indicated the positive impact on both the whole class and the other teachers: “Not just on the rest of the class, but also on the other teachers.”

On the other hand, P5, a male principal of a private school, with a BA/BS degree and three to five years of experience, who has not received any IE relevant training and is not aware of Law 220, was not certain and implied that he had no idea about what impact there could be on the whole class due to the lack of knowledge about teacher preparation:

> I do not know if I have a definite answer for that, because I do not know what they take in SE as teachers. I think she can; it depends on the personality. Here we are talking about the teacher as a whole, not her degree nor her specialty, how much she is tolerant, how much she has the passion for helping others. I cannot give a specific answer to that. (P5-Pr)

Teachers' ability and willingness to collaborate. Principals were asked whether the GE teachers were able and willing to cater to the wide variety of learners in terms of collaboration with SE teachers. As illustrated in Figure 5.12, a total of 14 principals (47%) indicated that their GE teachers are able and willing.

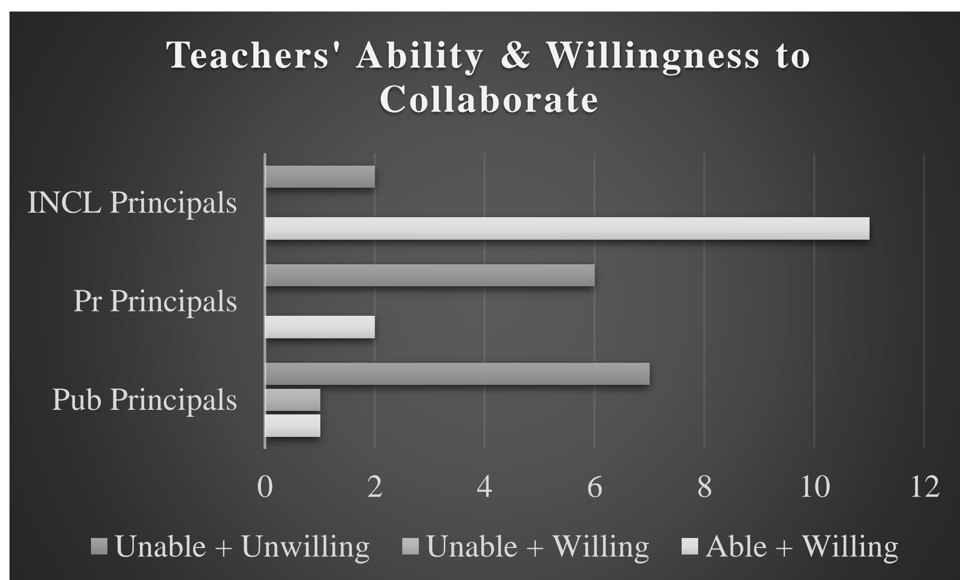

Figure 5.12. Visual representation of teachers' ability & willingness to collaborate

Throughout these conversations, school principals shared that collaboration requires teachers to take time together to review data, interpret and share student

data, and have knowledge of the curriculum and content. “Collaboration between general and SE teachers is a critical issue when children with disabilities are placed in regular classrooms and are expected to work alongside their regular peers. This way teachers ensure students receive effective learning experiences,” P23 (Pr-INCL) commented. Likewise, P18 (Pr-INCL) said, “Best practice for inclusive classrooms suggests that special and GE teachers share responsibility with the students’ family to make decisions related to the students’ curriculum, teaching and assessment modifications.” In addition to the benefits for the students learning and academic and social outcomes, P18 (Pr-INCL) suggested that networking with GE teachers would keep SE teachers motivated to stay in the workforce. A Pub principal declared that her teachers are willing to collaborate, but she was doubtful of their ability to do so, which implies that they are not prepared:

The majority of my teachers are willing to collaborate if IE is to be implemented in public schools. Are they able to do so? I am not sure. You know, the collaboration between teachers is a great learning tool, especially when we have a new teacher who brings a fresh idea to teaching. (P12-Pub)

While 50% of the principals implied the lack of collaboration between GE and SE teachers, either because of the school policy, reluctance of teachers, or lack of time. “There is cooperation between GE teachers through school programs, but there is no specific collaboration for SE. Even during the sports event, special needs students are being separated and being taken care of by their respective teachers,” P3 (Pr-INCL) remarked. “Collaboration takes time and is hard to schedule due to the lack of time in the daily schedule,” P1(Pr-INCL) complained. P25 principal (Pr) commented: “We do not have SEN students in our school. On top of that, teachers can barely collaborate during their meetings with the subject coordinators.” Other

principals articulated their concern that they had teachers who would say, 'This is not my responsibility,' so they would seek the help or wait for the help. The rest of the participating principals shared the lack of time to collaborate and the unwillingness of teachers to do so.

Teachers' ability and willingness to implement IEPs. When asked if their teachers were able and willing to implement SEN students' IEPs, 10 INCL principals indicated that their teachers are able and willing, one INCL, two Pr and two Pub principals denoted that the majority of their teachers are willing but unable, two INCL principals implied that some of their teachers are able but unwilling, while the other 13 principals (43%) were sure that their teachers are unable and unwilling. (See Figure 5.13)

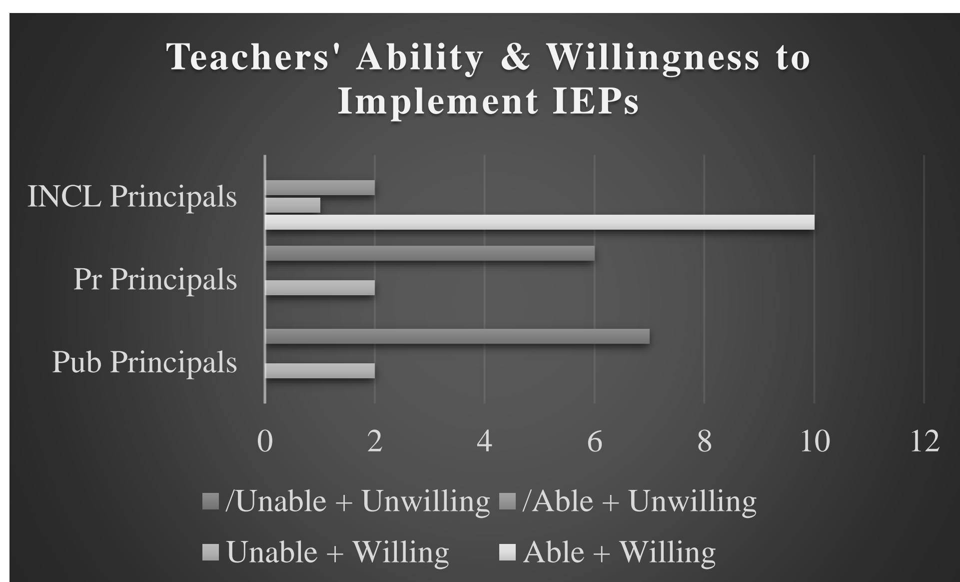

Figure 5.13. Visual representation of teachers' ability and willingness to implement IEPs

INCL Principals (N=10), who were positive of their teachers' ability and willingness to deal with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), articulated their conceptions of the importance of the IEP as a product of the collaboration between teachers, administrators, parents and when appropriate the child, in determining goals and objectives. "In our school, general and SE teachers sit together to write the

IEPs of SEN children. Definitely, they are able and motivated to prepare and implement with their students," P23 (Pr-INCL) remarked. P9 (Pr-INCL) suggested: "We have now very good teachers who plan for students who have learning difficulties."

Four principals stated that though some of their new teachers are willing to contribute, they are unable to do so due to their insufficient preparation and knowledge: "Not all of them. The new teachers are motivated to be helpful," P18 (Pr-INCL) said, ". . . they do not have enough training to do the things." "Of course, we are training them. It is not only having a child included; that is only a small portion of the battle," he added. P5 (Pr) stated that while his teachers are cooperative, sympathize with SEN students, and contribute to providing them with one-on-one instruction in their free time, they do not have the necessary knowledge to deal with an IEP.

Two INCL principals commented that some of their teachers are able but unwilling to deal with IEPs because they considered it time-consuming to plan and follow up. "I think they (teachers) are hesitant to implement individualized instruction . . . they come and complain about the lack of time and the pressure they have," P4 (INCL) explained.

Thirteen principals (6 Pr & 7 Pub) were sure that their teachers are unable and unwilling to deal with IEPs simply because they are not prepared, it takes much time, and it is not a requirement in their schools. "Not all of them, not all of them, because this is going to be extra work for them," P 29 (Pr) declared. Whereas P15 (Pub) laughed and said: "Not only they are unwilling to work on it, but they do not even know how to do so. It is not obligatory in our schools." Even some of the principals (N=8) had no idea about what an IEP is. Take, for example, this scenario:

Interviewer: “Are your teachers willing and able to implement the IEP?”

P25-Pr: “What is that?”

Interviewer: “This is an Individualized Education Plan for each SEN student based on his/her needs.”

P25-Pr: “Not yet. They need more time, training, and preparation.”

Ability and willingness of teachers to deal with technology. In response to the question on whether teachers were able and willing to deal with technology, 15 (10 INCL & 5 Pr) were positive: “They should be, of course, there are always programs and courses that are done to make using their teaching easier, and I don’t think it’s difficult, and everyone is prepared. Everyone has a background in technology,” P13 (Pr-INCL) remarked. P16 (Pr) said: “Of course every teacher in our school makes use of technology as a means to facilitate teaching.” (See Figure 5.14)

Whereas the other 15 (3 INCL, 3 Pr, & 9 Pub) reported that not all of them could deal with technology either because of the lack of training, lack of tools, or because of the old age of some teachers: “Well it depends, not all can make use of technology,” P16, a male principal of a private school, with a BA/BS degree and three to five years of experience, who did not receive formal training, and is not aware of Law 220, denoted.

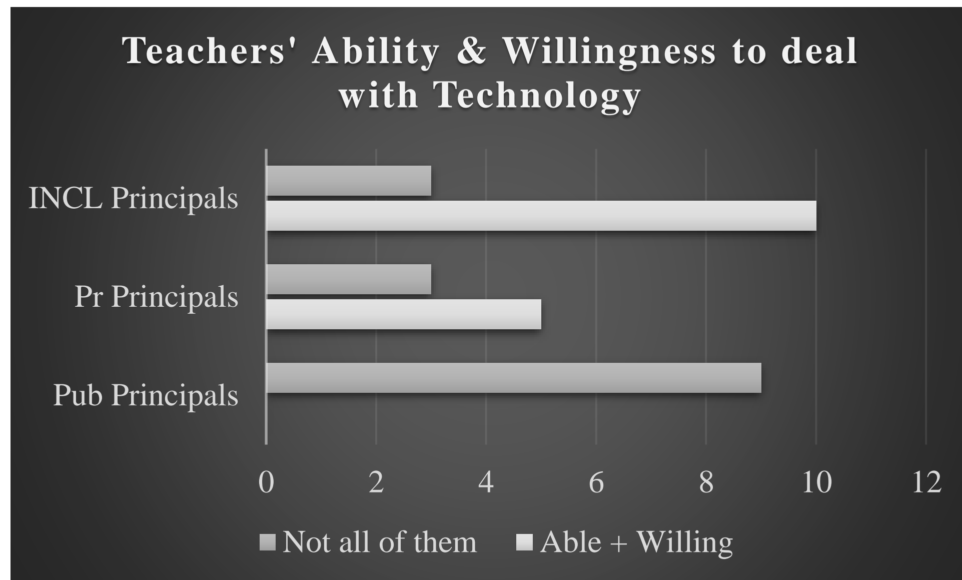

Figure 5.14. Visual representation of teachers' ability and willingness to deal with technology

P21 (Pub) replied: We have some old teachers who are not familiar with the technology."

While P11 declared:

> They like to develop themselves. We have an active board that they like to learn on how to use it, and they are doing a training course on it. However, it is not enough to do a course; they need to have continuous practice. (P11-Pub)

Comfort of teachers when dealing with SEN students. As illustrated in Figure 5.15, only nine INCL principals were positive in response to the question on teachers' comfort when dealing with SEN students: "Of course, because they are used to it, and we are always around to support in case of need," P13 (Pr-INCL) replied. While P7 (Pr-INCL) mentioned the atmosphere of collegiality and support that make her teachers comfortable to teach SEN kids: "The existence of a collegial atmosphere where teachers were comfortable asking colleagues and administrators for assistance, and the availability of in-class support personnel, specifically paraprofessionals or SE teachers."

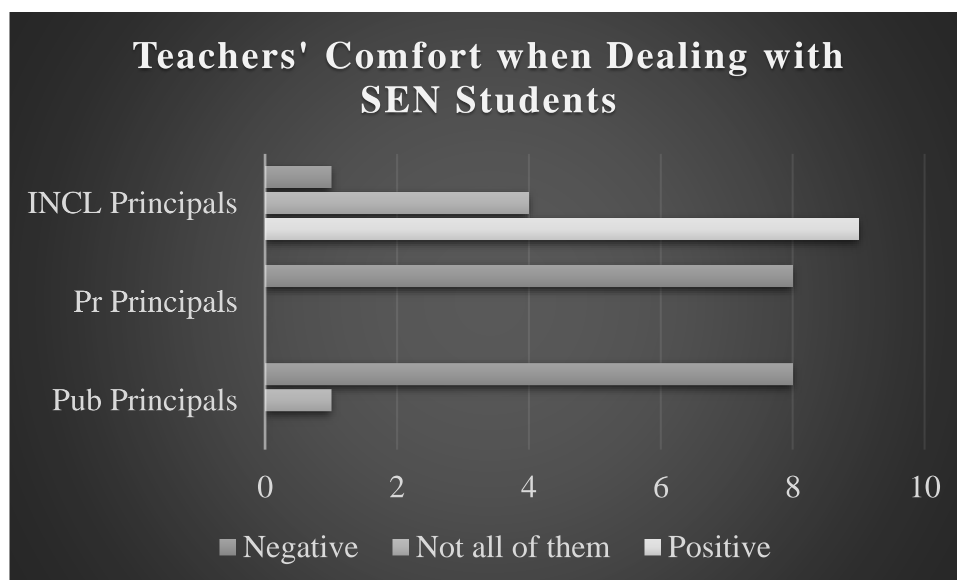

Figure 5.15. Visual representation of teachers' comfort when dealing with SEN students

However, four INCL and one Pub principals stated that not all of their teachers are comfortable when dealing with SEN children because of the lack of patience, classroom management skills, the fear of being watched, or their being novice. For instance, P6 commented:

> Some of our regular teachers are still not used to the idea that our school is inclusive. I see them coming out of their class stressed out. They need to be more patient and tolerant, and we are working on them. (P6-Pr-INCL)

P9 (Pr-INCL) noted: "Not all teachers are comfortable with, or even express happiness with having SE students in their classrooms. They frequently ask for assistance to help control the class or send out the disrupting SEN kid." P1 (Pr-INCL) indicated the fear of being watched and judged: "Some teachers are uncomfortable with having other adults in the classroom and worried that they would be watched or judged." Whereas P11 (Pub) said: "Some have patience and can deal with them, and some are not."

On the other hand, 57% of the principals (8 Pr, 8 Pub, & 1 INCL) confirmed that their teachers are uncomfortable to deal with SEN students without any

elaboration. For example, P26 (Pr) said: "I think that our regular teachers do not feel at ease when dealing with a special needs student." "The teachers will not be comfortable if we have a diversified classroom." P5 (Pr) commented. "Teachers are expected to refuse or to complain," P25 explained, "because they are not ready to deal with extra work and attention to SEN students." Going further, P21 (Pub) affirmed: "I am sure they will not be comfortable." While P8 (Pr-INCL) stated: "They [teachers] will not be comfortable as they should."

The following section presents the principals' IE challenges in response to the sixth research question.

Principals' IE Challenges – Exo, Meso, and Microsystem

The interview questions attempted to capture the principals' IE challenges. Principals were asked and probed: What are the challenges of implementing IE in mainstream schools? What are the possible factors that hinder its success? The collected data were subsequently coded into themes and sub-themes and arranged in descending order with the most to the least identified challenge as perceived by the participating principals (see Figure 5.16 & Table 5.1). Under the title of IE challenges, eight themes and 19 sub-themes emerged: (a) Teacher preparation, (b) SEN stigma, (c) inadequate resources, (c) lack of awareness, (d) rigid curriculum, (e) inefficient IE policy, (f) workload, and (g) academic standards.

Figure 5.16. Principals' IE Challenges

Table 5.1

Principals' Reported Challenges

IE Challenges	Pub Principals	Pr Principals	INCL Principals	Total	Percent	N
Inadequate Teacher Preparation					67	30
Education	9	6	10	25	83	30
Training	6	4	5	15	50	30
SEN Stigma					67	30
Teachers not accepting SEN students	4	4	3	11	37	30
Parents not accepting SEN	2	5	11	18	60	30

Typical students not accepting SEN peers	4	3	4	11	37	30
Inadequate Resources					58	30
Inadequate SE teachers & paraprofessional staff	8	6	2	16	53	30
Inadequate physical resources & instructional materials	7	3	1	11	37	30
Inappropriate infrastructure	9	7	7	23	77	30
Not enough funds	5	7	6	19	63	30
Lack of Awareness					55	30
SEN Awareness	3	4	11	18	60	30
IE Awareness	3	3	9	15	50	30
Rigid Curriculum					53	30
Inflexible & heavy	4	4	8	16	53	30
Inefficient IE Policy					38	30
Not Clear	2	4	2	8	27	30
Not Enforced	6	5	4	15	50	30
Workload					31	30
Increased Workload	3	5	2	10	33	30
Lack of Incentives	3	3	2	8	27	30
Class Size	4	5	2	10	33	30
Difficulty of maintaining discipline	0	0	3	3	10	30
Lack of time	2	4	3	9	30	30
Academic Standards					23	30
Decline of academic achievement of students without SEN	2	4	1	7	23	30
Decline of school academic standards	2	5	0	7	23	30

Inadequate Teacher Preparation

Findings from interviews indicated that the most alarming challenge to the majority of participating principals is the quality of teacher education and training (see Figure 5.17).

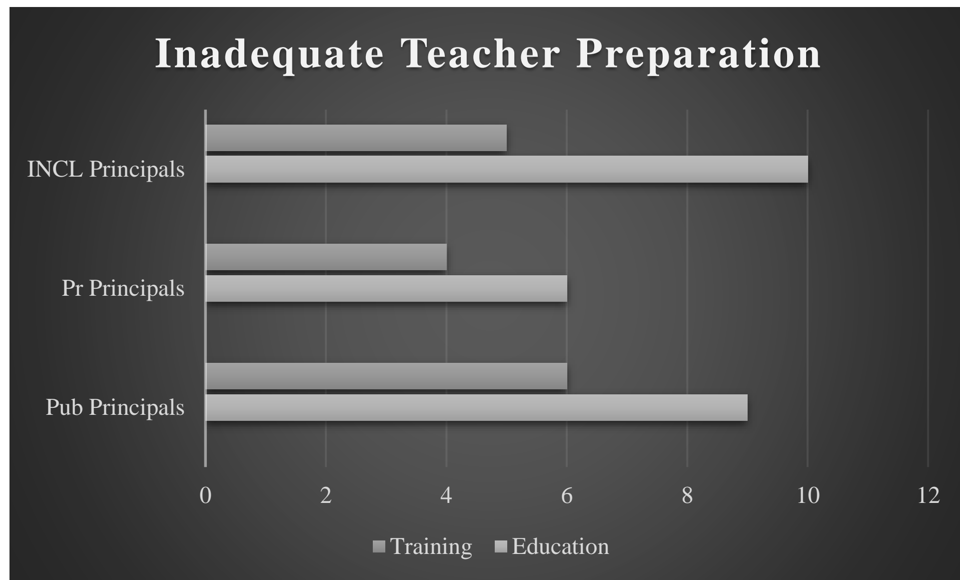

Figure 5.17. Visual representation of teacher preparation as an IE challenge

Eighty-three percent of the principals (10 INCL, 6 Pr, & 9 Pub) identified the lack of appropriate education for teachers while insisting that teacher preparation programs offered by universities to all student teachers should address IE as a major constituent of their curriculum irrespective of the specialty. In other words, not only SE teachers but also GE teachers should be prepared to deliver SEN services. Half the respondents (5 INCL, 4 Pr, & 6 Pub) specified the lack or inadequate training provided to teachers. For instance, P7 (Pr-INCL) was worried because of the scarcity of local workshops that deal with SE and provide hands-on experience and working strategies to improve teachers' SEN practices. P2 (Pr-INCL) indicated the problem they encounter with novice teachers: "We have the main challenge which is related to the newcomers [new teachers], and being able to prepare them properly so they can continue the mission you have prepared." She then continued to say that her other challenge is being up to date. P23 echoed the same concern and added: "This problem starts from universities that graduate teachers. They need training in classes as well." P17 (Pr-INCL) confirmed the need for differentiating instruction and for on-going IE related professional development and training so that all teachers are

prepared to handle some SEN cases in the mainstream classrooms. Whereas, P3 and P4 (Pr-INCL) brought up the challenge they face with teachers of advanced classes like grades eight and nine since their specialized teachers are not prepared for upper levels. Hence, they voiced their need for teachers who are prepared to teach SEN students of advanced grades.

Likewise, all participating Pub principals and almost half of the responding Pr principals asserted that teacher education and training are the main barriers to IE. Their view of this challenge can be summarized in what P26 (Pr) said:

All and above, you need to have teachers that are prepared and trained for IE. These teachers are rare. The problem is in the teacher programs provided by universities. I believe that all student teachers should be given courses related to special needs and highlighting the importance of inclusion. So, adequate teacher preparation and training is missing.

SEN Stigma

Results of interviews of participating principals revealed that the second most identified challenge communicated by the majority of participating principals is SEN stigma featured by the following: (a) Teachers not accepting SEN students, (b) parents not accepting SEN, and (c) typical students not accepting SEN peers (see Figure 5.18).

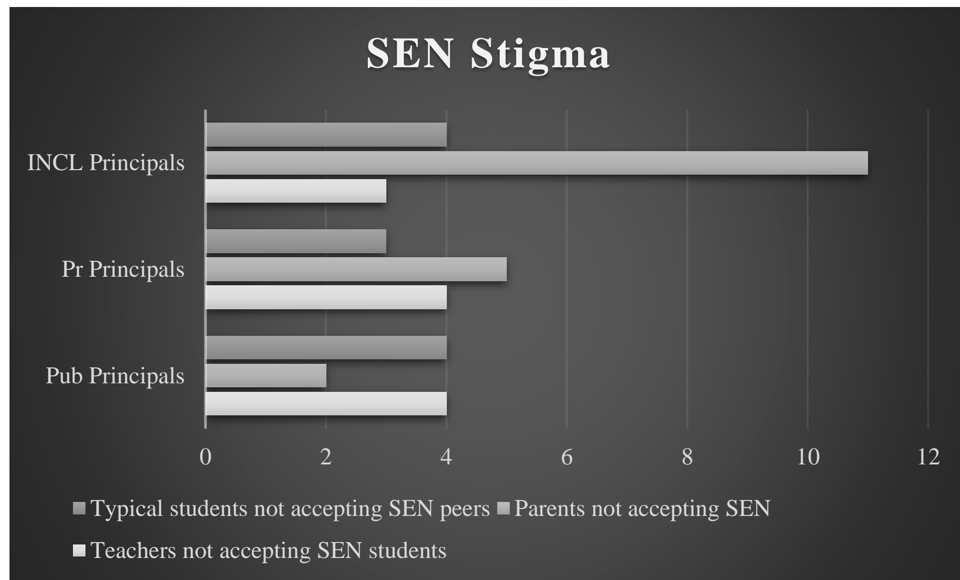

Figure 5.18. Visual representation of SEN stigma as an IE challenge

Teachers not accepting SEN students. Thirty-seven percent of the principals (4 Pub, 4 Pr, & 3 INCL) denoted the challenge of having teachers who do not accept SEN students. Teachers' acceptance of SEN students is very critical in maintaining a positive IE culture. Principals linked teachers' not accepting SEN students to old age, resisting responsibility to educate all students, or being unprepared. Most of the responding principals related to old age some teachers' judgment that SEN students are lazy or not trying hard enough. For example, P6 (Pr-INCL) commented: "My problem is mainly because of their age, they still have the mentality that this is laziness. We still cannot accept this." P6 went further to elaborate that they keep these teachers because: "they are an important attribute in their field, they prepare the students in a very effective way for the national exams." Similarly, P10 (Pub) articulated the same problem with her teachers who are: "advanced in age or are approaching retirement. Firstly, their interest in their job decreases; their activity while working decreases." Accordingly, they do not care for students with learning difficulties.

Parents not accepting SEN. Two categories of parents not accepting SEN due to stigma emerged: (a) Not accepting to have their typical child in the same class with SEN children and (b) parents in denial that their child has SENs.

Not accepting to have their typical child in the same class with SEN children. Some principals (4 INCL, 4 Pr, & 1 Pub) identified the challenge they go through when some parents of typical children refuse to have their child in an inclusive classroom. The parents worry that their child may be held back by the presence of an SEN peer. For instance, P18, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with an MA/MS degree and 16 to 20 years of experience, who has had IE training and is aware of Law 220, clarified:

> Some parents refuse to have their kids study in the same class with SEN kids. We still face this issue. Of course, we try to convince them of our philosophy, but if they insist we move the child to another section. After all, we need to satisfy them. (P18-Pr-INCL)

P26 (Pr) echoed: “I cannot deny the fact that some parents insist on changing the section of their child if placed in a class that has a special needs student. Still, many parents are sensitive to this idea.” In addition to the concern that “parents completely deny that their son has this problem [SEN],” P16 ironically commented: “Let us stop laughing at each other; if the teacher is not prepared to be patient with the child, we would have a big issue in the classroom.” P16 went further and gave an example of how he does not accept his typical son to be with an SEN student: “I do not want my child to be with someone disabled; he [his son] is not disabled!”

Parents in denial that their child has SENs. Seventeen principals (9 INCL, 5 Pr, & 3 Pub) out of 30 indicated parents' denial of their child's SEN. Once they are referred to the specialist for a diagnosis, they refuse. Two INCL principals narrated

the incidents of parents who were stunned by such news and showed overwhelming emotions of shock, disbelief, anxiety, fear, and despair, and shame. P13 (Pr-INCL) explained: "Some parents are difficult to convince that their child needs to be referred to a specialist for diagnosis. They refuse the idea of special needs." P23 went further to say: "In that case, we are obliged to reject the child simply because we cannot provide him with the needed service." "They [parents] need to change to get over the stigma of SEN or disability," P17 (INCL) commented." Whereas P2, a female principal of a private inclusive school, with a BA/BS degree and two years of experience, who has received formal training, and is not fully aware of Law 220, went on to elaborate that though some parents are educated and are easier to convince, "we still have a resistance mentality and here is where our challenge lays." Similarly, two Pub principals (P12 & P20) identified the same challenge.

Typical students not accepting SEN peers. Thirty-seven percent of the principals (4 INCL, 3 Pr, & 4 Pub) specified the challenge their schools encounter when typical students without SEN do not accept their SEN peers. "We know the kids who are seen as different become the target of bullying," P18 (INCL) suggested. P23 (INCL) echoed: "Some children may be reluctant to include their peers [SEN] in conversations or playground activities. A lack of understanding can result in hurtful remarks or bullying." Meanwhile, another INCL principal, P6, mentioned how their school, which has newly started IE, has taken action to minimize the feeling of stigma by having their SEN students courageously introduce themselves in public:

In the first few years, it was not easy. Some students could not accept other students that had learning difficulties. Even, those students that had difficulties used to feel embarrassed. We have got to a point where they have no problem, they stand, and they are proud to say 'I am an LS students' [Learning Support]. They do not feel

like it is unacceptable because our society used to see it as 'I am an LS student, so it must be unacceptable.' Now we have started to change this mentality. (P6-Pr-INCL)

The other Pr and Pub principals identified the same problem. As such, P28 (Pub) declared: "I think one problem that would worry me is the lack of acceptance from the other students." P10, P14, P16, P21, P25, and P30 echoed the same challenge

Inadequate Resources

The third most IE challenge the participating principals identified is the inadequacy of resources as a major challenge encountered when implementing IE. Table 5.17 and Figure 5.19 illustrate the four sub-themes that emerged under the theme of inadequate resources: (a) Inadequate SE teachers and paraprofessional staff; (b) inadequate physical resources and instructional materials; (c) inappropriate infrastructure; and (d) lack of funds.

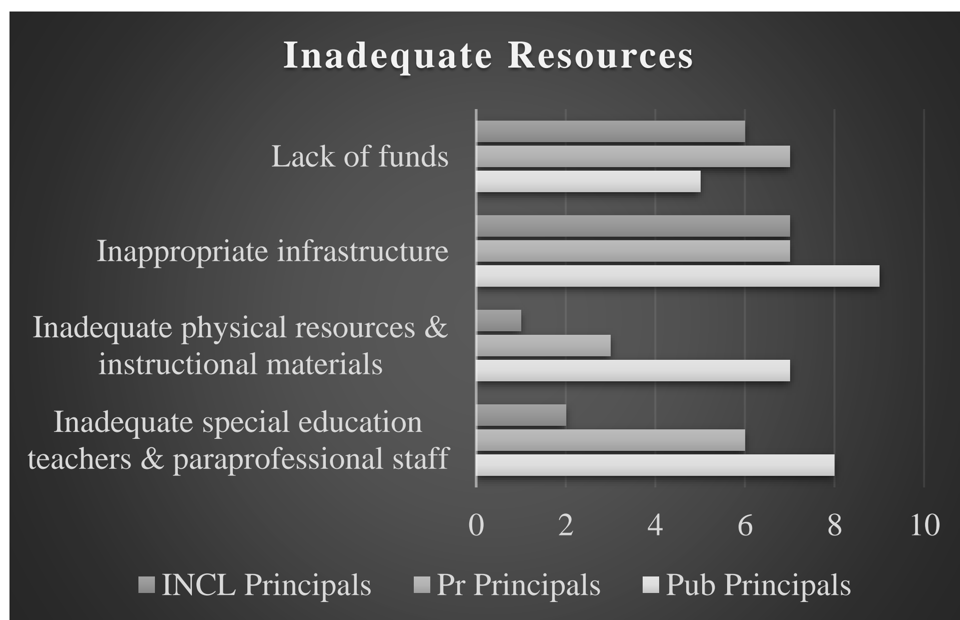

Figure 5.19. Visual representation of inadequate resources as an IE challenge

Inadequate SE teachers and paraprofessional staff. A total of 16 principals (53%) indicated the inadequacy of SE teachers and paraprofessional staff.

Most public (N=8) and private (N=6) school principals confirmed that the scarcity of qualified personnel in the field of SE is a significant issue. Among the needed personnel, they mentioned educational psychologists, SE teachers, and paraprofessionals, such as psychomotor and speech therapists. For instance, P7, an INCL principal complained about the lack of support to prepare the IEPs of SEN students expected of an educational psychologist: "What we lack is the support of the external factors, you know, the educational psychologist, the speech therapist, for example. We do not have, actually never had someone willing to work with us on IEPs."

The majority of Pub and Pr principals mentioned their need for specialized teachers and staff that are well prepared and trained. P24 (Pr) suggested: "it is teachers that are ready and trained to do so." P25 (Pr) echoed: "We need specialists or teachers whose education prepares them to handle SEN kids." Similarly, almost all Pub principals articulated the lack of specialized and trained personnel. P 14 (Pub) declared: "SE teachers, and psychologists, these are the basic things we need in order to work with the [SEN] students." Another Pub principal (P27-Pub), clearly motivated to have IE implemented in public schools, mentioned the lack of "specialists and psychologists to follow up on the subject matter with the [SEN] students," among other issues.

Inadequate physical resources. Some principals (7 Pub, 3 Pr, & 1 INCL) mentioned the lack of physical resources such as instructional tools and materials. The majority of Pub schools cited the deficiency of facilities, customized SEN books, instructional materials, computers, audiovisual tools, and information and communications technology (ICT). For instance, P10 (Pub) declared: "There needs to be technology, audiovisuals, . . . The teacher needs resources to use within the

classroom to be able to accommodate the [SEN] students.” P25 and P26 (Pr) echoed the same concern. Giving the example of their inability to cater for the needs of a blind student, P12 (Pub) stated: “If someone is partially blind, this can be dealt with, but if a student has extreme blindness, even if you put him in the first row, he still can’t see, there is a problem, he needs special help.” While P4 (Pr-INCL) and P11 (Pub) indicated the lack of a resources room: “We need sensory room; we do not have a sensory room, especially for the preschoolers. We are working hard; you are not going to be able to do everything at once.” (P4-Pr-INCL)

Accessibility/Inappropriate infrastructure. All Pub, seven Pr, and seven INCL school principals (77%) complained about the accessibility/inappropriate infrastructure of their schools. Under the encountered accessibility challenge, principals came across the inappropriate infrastructure of the school buildings due to the small size of classrooms, lack of elevators, ramps, and special needs friendly toilets. The following are some quotes extracted from the conversation:

P14-Pub: "The infrastructure, of course! We need construction work done on our buildings."

P26-Pr: "Let us not forget the building that needs to be suitable for special needs with ramps, elevators, and toilets. Another important factor is the class size."

P13-Pr-INCL: "Our school building is not ready yet to receive physical disabilities. We need ramps, bigger classes that can have an SEN child on a wheelchair, for example."

Lack of funds. Sixty-three percent of the principals (5 Pub, 7 Pr, & 6 INCL) identified the problem of not having enough funds to afford the costly expenses of resources, buildings, hiring SE teachers and paraprofessionals, in addition to the costs of professional development of teachers. Six INCL principals echoed the same

concern: "Another barrier is the lack of money," P13 clarified, "The fees are not enough, and parents cannot afford high fees. Also, I can add our inability to hire SE teachers. The school cannot afford more salaries. It [IE] is very costly" (P13-INCL). "We rely too much on contributions and donations; . . . There is a deficit, financial deficit" (P7-Pr-INCL). Seven Pr principals had the same financial issue, which is escalating with the inability of parents to cover the costs. For example, P16 (Pr) emphasized "the economic crisis," and that "no one is going to pay." P26 (Pr) echoed: "You need a big budget because the whole thing is costly. School fees are not enough." Likewise, five Pub principals indicated the lack of funds to cover the costs of resources, renovation of buildings and teachers' training: "We need someone to donate and provide these things," P11 (Pub) added.

Lack of Awareness

The findings of interviews showed that more than half of the participating principals identified the lack of awareness about IE and SEN students (see Figure 5.20). Principals asserted that cultural aspects and lack of awareness programs in the country still prevent SEN students from receiving the appropriate education services.

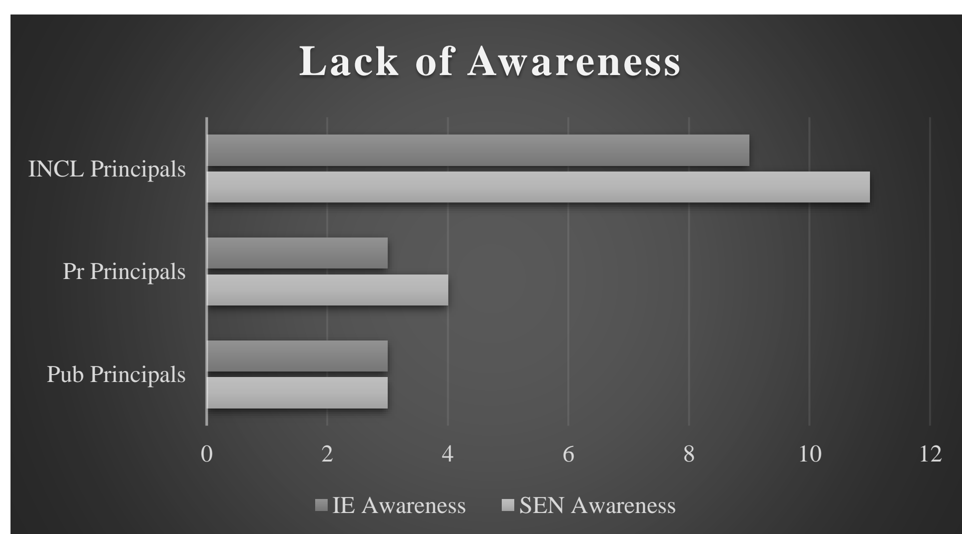

Figure 5.20. Visual representation of the lack of awareness as an IE challenge

SEN awareness. Sixty percent of the principals (11 INCL, 4 Pr, & 3 Pub) emphasized the lack of SEN awareness in all the country, including teachers, parents, and students. The majority of participating principals cited the importance of spreading awareness through media and social networks. P1 (INCL) indicated that the community needs to know more about special needs, accept SEN individuals, and respect them. She also emphasized the need to spread the awareness that SEN students are educable. P3 (INCL) mentioned the necessity to live in a society that accepts SEN individuals and prepare them for life without any discrimination. P17 (Pr-INCL) echoed the same challenge: ". . . we still need a kind of awareness on accepting and respecting SEN individuals." P4 (INCL) bitterly felt the need to change the culture and to "raise awareness, big time, especially in our country, in our region, not only in Lebanon." P18 (INCL) further added that we are all subject to an accident that may end up with a special need and that people should always remember that. P5, P16, P19, and P25 (Pr) identified the need to change peoples' attitudes towards SEN individuals; however, P25 (Pr) added the value of collaboration: ". . . we are dealing with the dilemma of willing to help." Four Pub principals as well emphasized the lack of awareness about SEN in the Lebanese communities. P25 ironically gave the example of how people in Lebanon are always in conflict: "We do not have that [SEN] awareness, like in all of Lebanon we are against each other."

IE awareness. Fifty percent of the principals (9 INCL, 3 Pr, & 3 Pub) denoted the lack of IE awareness as a challenge we face when implementing it in our schools. P2 and P22 (INCL) echoed their annoyance of how some schools reject or dismiss students simply because of their SENs. Instead, SEN students should be welcome in schools to be provided with the right education that prepares them to

survive in life like other children. Inspired by the words she heard from a British speaker at a conference she attended in London, P4 (INCL) said:

> In London, the first sentence, Mr. [speaker's name], when he started his lecture with us, he mentioned the vision of the British Kingdom to compete with nations: 'You need to educate all your people,' and this is how they start. So, the need is to find a way.

P4 eagerly explained that IE awareness is essential to spread if inclusion is to succeed in our schools. She narrated what she had heard from a British school coordinator of SEN students she had met at the conference. The school had a very qualified teacher for pull out sessions. P4 continued:

> When I asked her [coordinator] if the child [SEN student] does not get the objective or they could not make, she said, 'we will try again.' And I said, 'maybe they didn't;' she answered, 'try again.' Moreover, when I asked her, 'If you tried everything and they did not get it?' She said, 'it means I did not try everything, and I did not try enough!'

P4 concluded that we need to find the way and that there should be awareness to encourage welcoming SEN students in our schools because they have the right to learn.

Likewise, P6 (INCL) commented: "When you look at how international schools are working with these kids [SEN], you can only conclude that we are way behind. Three Pr and three Pub shared the same concern on the lack of IE awareness among people in general and school personnel in particular. One Pub principal showed more enthusiasm than the other participating principals and announced: "If we can create some awareness for both the parents and teachers, when the ministry

can provide us with specialists, then I can work on this topic because I am very affectionate with them" (P14-Pub).

Rigid Curriculum

Findings revealed that 53% of the responding principals (8 INCL, 4 Pr, & 4 Pub) pointed to the challenge of the rigid Lebanese curriculum (see Figure 5.21). To most of the principals, the academic journey of SEN students becomes more challenging as they approach the national Brevet exam.

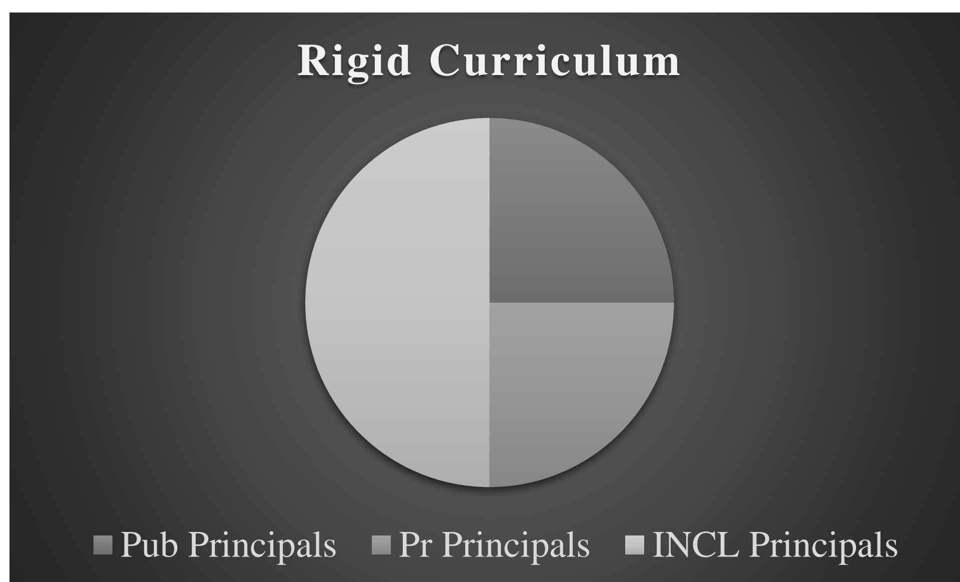

Figure 5.21. Visual representation of the rigid curriculum as an IE challenge

P1 and P4 (Pr-INCL) noted that her school can help an SEN child through the elementary years, but the case is not accurate when they reach the Brevet, which is grade nine from Cycle III. At this stage, the curriculum and assessment are very difficult to be modified to enable the SEN to sit for the exam. The only solution left is Brevet exemption, where the SEN student gets promoted to the first secondary if the parents and school provide the required validated documents as per the policy issued by MEHE. However, P6 (Pr-INCL) added that usually, students do not continue their secondary education simply because they get stuck on their way to grade 12, in the national Baccalaureate exam. "The curriculum is so huge," P7 (Pr-

INCL) complained, “even for a regular student. What about a Special Ed student?” The other Pr and Pub respondents echoed the same challenge that the curriculum is heavy and cannot be covered by SEN students. P10 (Pub) said: “It is extremely challenging to have SEN children with thirty others demanding attention and a teacher under pressure to cover the curricular ground in a limited time!”

Inefficient IE Policy

About half of the principals (N=15) voiced their concern regarding the need for a clear and enforced IE policy, noting that the majority of participating principals reported their lack of knowledge of the Lebanese law 220, which tackles the measurements to be taken concerning SEN students. As displayed in Figure 5.22, eight principals (2 INCL, 4 pr, & 2 Pub) affirmed the challenge of a clear IE policy regarding SEN students. P7 (Pr-INCL) commented: “There are no clear governmental policies for that [IE].”

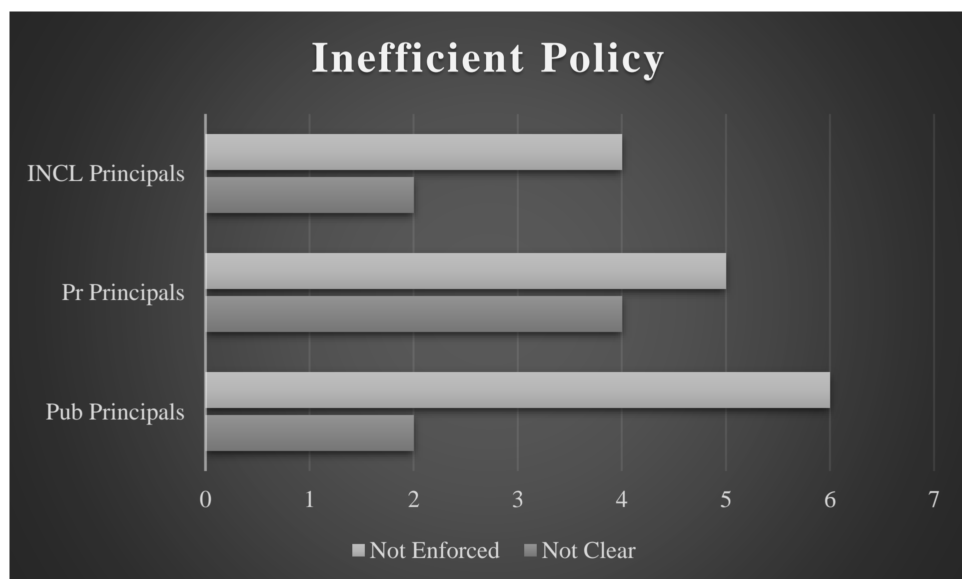

Figure 5.22. Visual representation of the inefficient policy as an IE challenge

Whilst fifteen (4 INCL, 5 Pr, & 6 Pub) out of thirty principals mentioned that the law is not enforced. For instance, P4 (INCL) said: “We need policies that change the attitude of people and a specific rule system forced by the government all over

Lebanon." P16 (Pr) declared the need for a clear and enforced law, which is currently looked at as an option:

> Today, if there is a clear law that forces, people will begin to think how to respect that law and will offer acceptable services. So, people are still dealing with it as a "plus" rather than a fundamental part of the educational program here at my school. . . If the there is a law, it should be implemented.

P 26 (Pr) echoed and stressed the cultural change that would result if the law is forced: If there is a law related to IE, I'm sure schools would be obliged to follow. This way the whole culture would be changed. Similarly, P15 (Pub) stated twice that she literally follows the law: "I follow the law. So, if the law tells me that the teachers have to teach special needs students with regular students, then the teachers have to follow this law; I follow the law!"

P14 (Pub), in addition to indicating the necessity of mandating the law, insisted on the need to believe in the content of the law, especially that there is a considerable number of SEN students in schools with a foreseen dim future:

> These children [SEN] have the right to learn, and what would make you believe even more is that you already have a group of children with special needs in your school; would you even be able to reject them, knowing their dim future?

Workload

Results of interviews revealed that some participating principals believed that the challenge of workload gets in the way of successfully implementing IE in mainstream schools. As summarized in Figure 5.23, under the theme of workload, four sub-themes surfaced: (a) Increased workload, (b) lack of incentives, and (c) the number of students per class, (d) difficulty of maintaining discipline, and (e) lack of time.

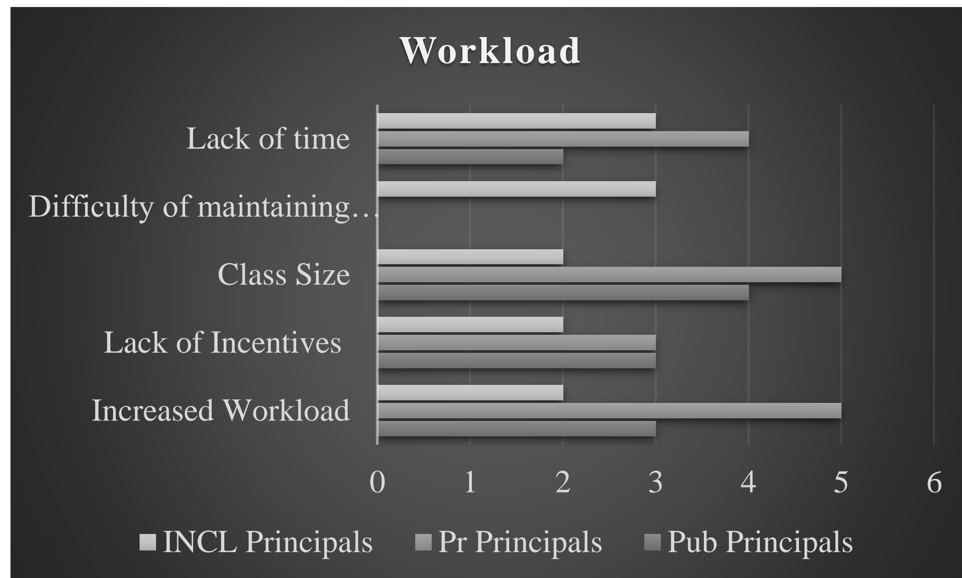

Figure 5.23. Visual representation of workload as an IE challenge

Increased workload. Ten responding principals (2 INCL, 5 Pr, & 3 Pub) out of 30 indicated the increased workload that teachers would complain of when delivering SEN services. P6 and P8 (INCL) mentioned that their teachers complained of the extra workload associated with SEN provisions. Of these provisions was the responsibility of differentiating instruction for SEN students and dealing with managing their disruptive behavior encountered during class time. Five Pr and three Pub principals mentioned that their teachers were not prepared to deal with extra work and attention to SEN students. For instance, P26 (Pr) stated: "Let us not forget that it needs extra work, extra preparation, and attention to such students. With the heavy load of dealing with several classes, most probably they [teachers] will complain." P29 (Pr) echoed the same problem and added that teachers would not comply "because it demands from them extra work to prepare extra sheets; no they [teachers] will not!"

A Pub school principal, P14, declared that half the number of teachers were on a contract basis and that they had very few permanent ones. She added that contract teachers would refuse to cooperate.

Lack of incentives. Two INCL, three Pr, and 3 Pub principals identified the issue they would face with teachers who would complain or refuse to provide SEN provisions due to the lack of incentives. P6 (Pr-INCL) reported that some teachers would complain and give them a hard time to abide. P26 (Pr) echoed the same inconveniency and narrated the incident of a teacher who refused to differentiate instruction to one of their students that was diagnosed with dyslexia if not paid. While P14 (Pub), as she was discussing the case of contract teachers, commented: "Why should they [teachers] spend the extra time that is not calculated [paid] with the student?"

Number of students per class. The participants (N=10) expressed frustration about the workload that resulted due to the class size. P1, one of the INCL participants, was explicit about class size: "Student teacher ratios are not favorable. We teach large numbers of students. Having in one class three to four SEN children is a real problem. It is tough to give equal attention to all students." P17 (Pr-INCL), echoing what P1 mentioned, went on to say:

> A few teachers, highly committed and keen to do their best for a large number of students, including those with special needs, left. They were unable to deal with the pressures of our curriculum, of testing, and the demands of 'difficult' children.

Similarly, five Pr and 4 Pub principals believed that large class sizes increased the teachers' workloads. "We have large classes; it is much work," P24 remarked, "teachers have to make sure that all children are catered for. This is not easy!" Meanwhile, P20 (Pub) complained: "It is extremely challenging to have SEN children with thirty others demanding attention and a teacher under pressure to cover the curricular ground in a limited period!" Hence, the responding principals

expressed concern about large class sizes and felt that including SEN learners in regular classrooms created more burdens for the teacher(s).

Difficulty of maintaining discipline. Three INCL principals revealed the challenge of maintaining classroom discipline in the presence of SEN children, especially those with emotional and behavioral disorders. Two principals (P4 & P17-Pr-INCL) voiced their concern regarding IE and emphasized the limitation of maintaining the discipline of the big number of students in a small classroom, along with a few SEN pupils are accompanied with a shadow teacher. While P22 (Pr-INCL) added the issue of uncooperative parents: “If the parents are not supportive and are not following the same behavioral management skills for these students, you will not be successful.”

Lack of time. A total of nine principals (3 INCL, 4 Pr, & 2 Pub) identified the obstacle of teachers’ lack of time when dealing with SEN students in terms of further preparation and extra attention in the presence of a heavy workload. “This will take time,” P8 (Pr-INCL) complained, while P21 (Pub) stated: “She [teacher] cannot help them [SEN students] because she does not have the time.”

Academic Standards

The least identified IE challenge is the academic standards. Findings of the interviews of participating principals in the current study report that some principals were worried about their academic standards associated with IE as displayed in Figure 5.24.

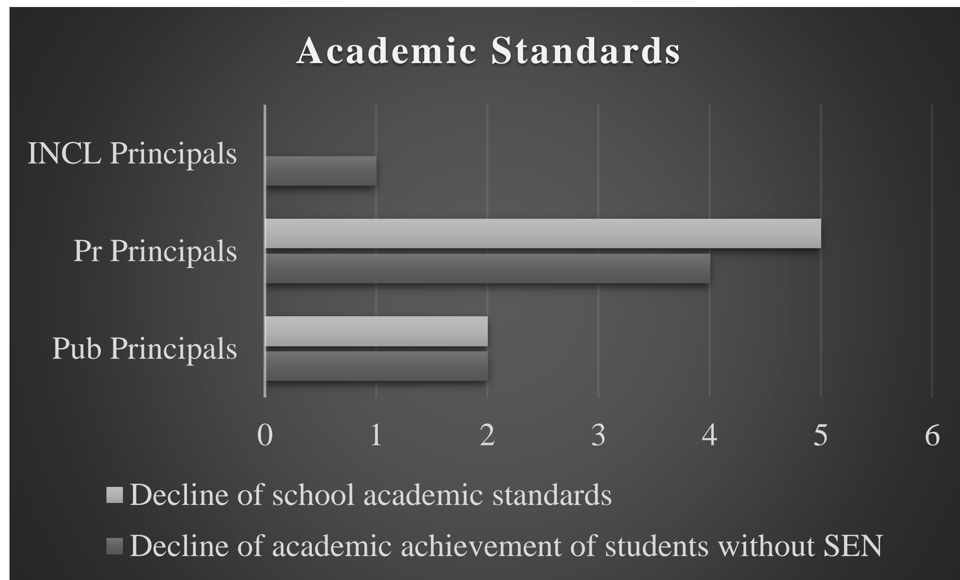

Figure 5.24. Visual representation of academic standards as an IE challenge

Decline of academic achievement of students without SEN. Six (4 Pr, 2 Pub, & 1 INCL) out of thirty principals mentioned the decline of academic achievement of students without SEN. One INCL principal indicated that they did pull-outs for SEN students so that their students without SEN would not be affected: "We are pulling them out for the basic, because you don't want the regular students to pay the price, when they have a special student in their classroom," P22 (Pr-INCL) stated. The other Pr and Pub principals shared the same concern. "The results will not be satisfactory. The other normal students will be affected. I mean normal students will be distracted from the presence of these students," P24 (Pr) said. P19 (Pr) echoed:

> The regular students may have experienced falling back in his concentration because, in regards to his focus and concentration with his teachers, maybe the child who has these differences, he may not be as controlled as his peers, which may result in his peers' slowing down.

Decline of school academic standards. Five principals (2 Pub & 5 Pr) identified the decline of school academic standards as a potential barrier due to the

distractions students without SEN might encounter in the presence of SEN students in the same class: "They may face some distractions in the classroom because of the issues that arise because of SEN kids especially if they have emotional or behavioral disturbance," P25 (Pr) declared. P24 (Pr) explained: "Our school is very well reputed for its high scores, so we cannot risk accepting students that would affect the class average." P19 and P26 (Pr) echoed: "The school results would be affected as well."

> At the intermediate level, we seldom allow such cases. You know these students affect the progress of the class and lower the final scores in the official exams. We cannot sacrifice the high rates our school gets in the Brevet and Bac II exams. This is very critical to the school board. (P26-Pr)

While a Pub principal complained:

> We have the idea that these two or three students are affecting the students academically, the level of the class, and because they are not able to adapt to the lessons or respond to the teachers or the students who are maybe going at a faster pace mentally in a subject. (P27-Pub)

Summary of Principals' IE Conceptions and Challenges

The data presented earlier highlighted the varying IE conceptions and challenges in the eyes of 30 principals of different schools in Beirut Capital in an attempt to answer the fifth and sixth research questions. The range of IE conceptions spanned from a belief that inclusion involved SEN students being welcomed into their mainstream school in a regular class with their peers to the complete ignorance of what inclusion could mean. Other IE related conceptions of principal's support to implement IE, school SEN practices, and teacher's role were explored. Besides, the principals communicated different perceived IE challenges, with the most anticipated challenges to be those of SEN stigma and inadequate teacher preparation, followed

by inadequate resources, lack of awareness, rigid curriculum, inefficient IE policy, workload, and academic standards respectively. Below is a rundown on principals' IE conceptions and challenges.

When articulating their understanding of IE, all INCL principals (N=13), unlike Pub and Pr principals, were able to provide a thorough definition of IE which touched on the natural academic, social and safe school setting that received and served all students regardless of their abilities. Meanwhile 40% of the principals (9 INCL, 2 Pr, & 1 Pub) who considered it beneficial to all students with and without SEN indicated full IE advocacy, 23% of the principals (4 INCL, 2 Pub, & 1 Pr) implied conditional IE advocacy on the belief that it is beneficial when considering mild SEN cases. It was noted that most INCL principals emphasized the social and emotional benefits of IE rather than the academic ones. The highlighted benefits included meaningful friendships, respect, better appreciation and understanding of individual differences, and being prepared for adult life in a diverse society. An interesting finding was indicated by a principal of an inclusive school who did not reveal a solid understanding of what IE means by simply referring to it as a mere physical placement of SEN students in a regular school for the sake of social interaction. Another noteworthy conception revealed the difficulty of providing SEN services to cycles three and four of basic education, regardless of the availability of resources.

Conversely, resistance to IE was indicated by 37% of the principals who did not consider it beneficial to students and called for the segregation of the intellectually challenged and others with physical disabilities in special schools. Albeit some others held the feeling of pity towards SEN children, they asserted that the benefit goes to the SEN children, unlike the typically growing, who though may

learn to accept differences, will be subject to distraction and hindered academic progress. A compelling refutation of IE resistance was relayed to our culture that rejects SEN.

Principals' conceptions of the needed support to implement IE were explored as well. Almost 53% of the participating principals, the majority of whom were from INCL schools articulated various responses. Two Pub, about four Pr, and 13 INCL school principals shared their conceptions when prompted, whereas the rest opted not to answer this question since they had not experienced IE in their schools. Collaboration, differentiated instruction, resources, technology, training, and the most helpful support were the major sub-themes tracked throughout principals' responses.

A total of 15 principals (50%) revealed the theme of collaboration as an element of support to facilitate IE. Though all INCL principals (N=13) indicated that they encouraged their teachers to meet formally and informally to follow up on the progress of their SEN children, one of them showed his concern about the collaboration between the part-time teachers and staff in his school. Though their schools are not inclusive, two Pr principals indicated the importance of collaboration. While one Pr principal hinted to the idea that the presence of SEN specialists at the school could encourage the GE teachers to depend on them.

Another theme shared by 50% of the principals is differentiating instruction as a means of IE support and carried out by: Segmenting the learning outcomes, computer-assisted instruction, one-to-one instruction or pull-out sessions, modifying instructional materials and exams (eg. font size, length & level of difficulty of the exam, duration of the task, or having an assistant to read/write for the SEN student). While some indicated its convenience for mild SEN children, differentiating

instruction, to others, requires intensive follow up. Further, one Pr principal encouraged SEN differentiated instruction in assessment, such as customizing the exam layout (e.g., font size & question technique) or grading rubric, while another promoted the use of technology in the classroom. A Pub principal helped SEN students by providing extra time on the exam.

The convenience of resources is the third theme that surfaced under IE support in principals' interviews. Fifty percent of the principals asserted the importance of having sufficient resources. Eleven out of 13 INCL principals elicited the availability of the following human and physical resources: SENs educators, assistant teachers, psychologists, counselors, speech, occupational, and psychomotor therapists, accessible school building, ramps, toilets for SEN students, elevators, wheelchair, computer lab, interactive boards, attractive classroom setting, resources room with various books, audiovisuals, and sensory objects suitable for SEN students. However, two INCL principals complained about the lack of elevators in their small and old school building; in the case of an SEN student with motor disability, they have to move the whole class to the ground floor. Though two Pr principals emphasized the necessity of sufficient resources to serve SEN students, it was difficult for them to afford the costs.

Of equal importance to 63% of the principals (13 Pr-INCL & 5 Pr) is the use of technology. The principals stated the value of having available technological tools for the sake of facilitating instruction to all students in general and SEN students in particular such as computers, LCD projectors, interactive boards, and Ipads. Regretfully, one Pub principal complained about their old and inefficient computers.

When prompted to clarify if they provided SEN related training to their teachers and staff, 57% of the principals (2 pub, 2 Pr, & 13 INCL) confirmed they

have training in-house or outside the school. Some others had some of their teachers or department heads register online courses or travel abroad in case of an IE related workshop or conference after which they share with the rest of schoolteachers. In addition, to 11 INCL principals, training is mandatory as a part of the school policy. Conversely, most Pr principals do not provide their teachers with training for they do not cater for SEN students, and most Pub principals affirmed that teachers did not receive formal training. However, two Pub principals reported that an NGO trained a teacher or two of their staff who in turn are referred to as resources teachers in their schools. Upon prompting them to mention the most helpful support to implement IE, the majority of principals highlighted the value of teacher training and professional development. Others recommended SEN related awareness and the proper use of computer-assisted instruction. An interesting comment revealed that the most helpful support is never one-sided but a complete interrelated process: "It is like a package, all together, it can make a change" (P7-Pr-INCL).

Another theme explored is principals' conceptions of the school SEN practices to implement IE along with the following sub-themes: Identifying SEN students, IEP, and parental involvement. About 67% of the participating principals (2 Pub, 5 Pr, & 13 INCL) shared their thoughts, whereas the rest chose not to answer this question since they had not experienced IE in their schools.

Some principals reported having a department dedicated to detect, screen, diagnose, and follow up the progress of SEN students, and others indicated that it was through outsourcing or simple referral to a qualified specialist that provided the recommended intervention to be executed by the school. While some INCL principals (N=10) brought up the factor of SEN student ratio per class, the level of SEN severity, and the convenience of resources as criteria for accepting them, others

noted that they only accepted mild SEN students. Some of the Pr principals (N=5), though their schools did not have a clear IE policy nor a professional intervention, contributed by detecting SEN students. However, they were concerned about parents' denial.

As for IEPs, it was anticipated to receive input from INCL principals only merely because it was not applicable at the other private or public schools. All INCL school principals mentioned having a SE department that takes care of all SEN services, including the IEPs. Emphasizing teamwork, the counselor, general and SE teacher, and parents worked collaboratively in a small or an extended team, depending on the complexity of the student's needs. Besides, they indicated considering the IEP as a documented plan to summarize and record the individualized education program of an SEN student. They emphasized that the individualized goals linked to the student's assessed special needs, short term objectives, as well as the teaching strategies to be used. Some stated that the IEP encapsulate adaptations in the regular curriculum, the required human and physical resources, and the recommended setting and conditions such as the in-class or pull-out environment.

The last sub-theme under principals' conceptions of school practices was parental involvement. Sixty-seven percent of the responding principals (13 INCL, 5 Pr, & 2 Pub) denoted its importance throughout their conversation. It was well understood that all INCL principals recognized the significance of family involvement to serve SEN students better. Most INCL principals expressed that parents' awareness, acceptance of their child's SENs, and contribution to drafting the IEP are essential, yet it could be an obstacle if they displayed a negative attitude. Whilst five Pr principals indicated the value of parental involvement as a

responsibility to find a solution to their SEN child since their school does not provide this service. Similarly, two Pub principals touched on some parents who notify them of their SEN child (e.g., case and medication) and other parents who keep it confidential for the feel of expelling their SEN child.

Principals' IE conceptions of teacher's role were explored and resulted in a number of themes: (1) GE teacher's view of IE, (2) GE teacher's readiness for SEN services, (3) GE teacher's acceptance or refusal to teach SEN students, (4) SE teacher's readiness to teach the whole class, (5) impact of SE teacher on the whole class, (6) teacher's ability and willingness to collaborate, (7) teacher's ability and willingness to deal with IEPs, (8) teacher's ability and willingness to deal with technology, and (9) comfort of teachers when dealing with SEN students.

Meanwhile, 23% of the principals (7 INCL) indicated that their GE teachers positively viewed IE, 63% (7 Pub, 6 Pr, & 6 INCL) said the opposite, and four principals stated that they had no idea. Because it is part of the school policy and philosophy, the INCL noted that their teachers are used to it. INCL Principals who reported their teachers' negative views justified that it was due to their indulgence in traditional teaching, feelings of frustration and guilt, and the extra work and time that is required. While thirteen Pub and Pr principal transparently said that their teachers complain about SEN students.

The second theme had to do with the GE teacher's readiness for SEN service where only 27% of the principals (3 INCL, 3 Pr, & 2 Pub) confirmed that a GE teacher can deliver SEN services, while 73% (10 INCL, 5 Pr, & 7 Pub) indicated that they cannot. It was reported that their readiness was due to their passion for teaching, good education, and awareness of job responsibilities. Whilst the rest of the

principals echoed that GE teachers cannot deliver SEN services unless they receive formal education and training and assistance.

When principals were asked if the GE teachers refuse to teach an SEN child, 43% (2 INCL, 4 Pr, & 7 Pub) replied that it is acceptable if they refuse, while 57% insisted that they cannot. Some justified their tolerance to teachers' refusal and referred it to the lack of knowledge, specialty, and training or to the right to accept or reject. Two Pub principals declared their abidance by the law. Whilst the majority of NCL principals asserted that teachers cannot refuse simply because it was part of their school mission, policy, and recruitment contract sheet.

As for a SE teacher's readiness to teach the whole class, 17% of the principals (2 Pr, & 6 Pub) were positive, whereas the majority of respondents (83%) assured that a SE teacher should be prepared and assisted to be able to teach the whole class. All INCL principals declared that the SE teacher can teach the whole class in lower grade levels like cycle I and II, but that this becomes difficult for cycle III, especially that the subject matters become more demanding.

When asked if a SE teacher has a positive or negative impact on the whole class, the majority of principals (70%) indicated that s/he has a positive one, while 30% of the principals (4 Pr, & 4 Pub) were undecided and did not give a clear input because they had no idea about how things would go in the classroom. Two interesting mixed responses were reported. One INCL principal indicated that the positive effect is on the SEN child, while the adverse effect is on the other typically developing children who get jealous. Surprisingly, a Pr principal stressed a positive impact on the whole class but a negative one on the other teachers who follow traditional teaching methods.

Teachers' ability and willingness to collaborate was another sub-theme of principals' conceptions of the teacher's role. Findings revealed that 47% of the principals (11 INCL, 2 Pr, & 1 Pub) believed that their GE teachers are able and willing to collaborate while highlighting its value on students' learning and social outcomes. Conversely, 50% of the principals implied the lack of collaboration between GE and SE teachers, either because of the school policy, reluctance of teachers, or lack of time. Whereas a Pub principal declared that though her teachers are willing to collaborate, they are not prepared to do so successfully.

The seventh sub-theme was teachers' ability and willingness to implement IEPs. Thirty-three percent of the principals (10 INCL) indicated that their teachers are able and willing, 17% (2 Pub, 2 Pr, & 1 INCL) stated they are willing but unable, two INCL principals implied that some of their teachers are able but unwilling, while the other 13 principals (43%) were sure that their teachers are unable and unwilling.

About teachers' ability and willingness to deal with technology, half of the participating principals reported that our 21st century is molded with technology. The other principals (N=15), complained that not all of their teachers could deal with technology because of the lack of training, lack of tools, or the old age of some teachers.

The last sub-theme under principals' IE conceptions of the teacher's role was the comfort of teachers when dealing with SEN students. Only nine INCL principals (30%) were positive and referred this to the support and collegial atmosphere of the school, while 17% of the principals (4 INCL & 1 Pub) stated that not all of their teachers are comfortable when dealing with SEN children because of the lack of patience, classroom management skills, the fear of being watched and judged, or their being novice. On the other hand, 57% (8 Pr, 8 Pub, & 1 INCL) asserted that

their teachers were uncomfortable to deal with SEN students without any elaboration.

In regards to the perceived challenges when IE is implemented in their schools, the two most alarming challenges to the majority of participating principals are SEN stigma and inadequate teacher preparation.

Principals highly emphasized the challenge of SEN stigma that is prevalent in our schools amongst teachers, students, and parents. Some principals denoted the challenge of having teachers who do not accept SEN students and linked it to teachers' prejudice and judgment that SEN students are unintelligent, lazy, or not trying hard enough. Other principals related it to teachers' old age, negative attitude, or lack of preparation and training. Further, two categories of parents not accepting SEN due to stigma emerged: Not accepting to have their typical child in the same class with SEN children and parents in denial that their child has SENs. Parents in denial that their child has SENs is another subtheme, where seventeen principals (9 INCL, 5 Pr, & 3Pub) out of 30 indicated parents' denial of their child's SEN. Once they are referred to the specialist for a diagnosis, they refuse stunned by such news and show overwhelming emotions of shock, disbelief, anxiety, fear, and despair, and shame. The third sub-theme under SEN stigma was the challenge of having typical students not accepting SEN peers, which resulted in labeling or bullying.

An equally alarming IE challenge to SEN stigma is the inadequate teacher preparation, as indicated in the responding principals. Eighty-three percent of the principals (10 INCL, 6 Pr, & 9 Pub) identified the lack of appropriate education for teachers while insisting that teacher preparation programs offered by universities to all student teachers should address IE as a major constituent of their curriculum irrespective of the specialty. In addition, half the respondents (5 INCL, 4 Pr, & 6

Pub) specified the lack or inadequate training provided to teachers. Likewise, all participating Pub principals and almost half of the responding Pr principals asserted that teacher education and training are the main barriers to IE.

The third IE challenge the participating principals identified is the inadequacy of resources represented by (1) Inadequate SE teachers and paraprofessional staff; (2) inadequate physical resources and instructional materials; (3) inappropriate infrastructure; and (4) lack of funds. A total of 16 principals (53%) indicated the inadequacy of SE teachers and paraprofessional staff. Among the needed personnel, they mentioned educational psychologists, SE teachers, and paraprofessionals, such as psychomotor and speech therapists. Also, some principals mentioned the lack of physical resources such as instructional tools, and materials, and resources room. The majority of Pub schools cited the deficiency of facilities, customized SEN books, and instructional materials, computers, audiovisual tools, and information and communications technology (ICT). The challenge of serving SEN students with sensory impairments was highlighted by the principals, as well. About 77% of the principals (9 Pub, 7 Pr, & 7 INCL) complained about the accessibility/inappropriate infrastructure of their schools. Principals complained about the inappropriate infrastructure of the school buildings due to the small size of classrooms, lack of elevators, ramps, and special needs friendly toilets. The fourth sub-theme under the challenge of inadequate resources is the lack of funds as 63% of the principals (5 Pub, 7 Pr, & 6 INCL) indicated, an issue that prevents them from reimbursing the costly expenses of resources, buildings, hiring SE teachers and paraprofessionals, in addition to teacher professional development.

Another IE challenge reported by more than half of the participating principals is the lack of SEN and IE awareness in all the country, including teachers,

parents, and students. Principals asserted that cultural aspects and lack of awareness programs in the country still prevent SEN students from receiving the appropriate education services. Besides, they cited the importance of spreading awareness about SENs, acceptance of SEN children, and the importance of IE through media and social networks.

The fifth IE challenge 53% of the principals indicated is the rigid and heavy Lebanese curriculum that gets more challenging to SEN students approaching the national Brevet exam. Some even mentioned the difficulty of finishing secondary education simply because they get stuck on their way to grade 12, in the national Baccalaureate exam.

Further, about half of the principals voiced their concern about the need for a clear and enforced IE policy. Surprisingly, it was found that out of the thirty participating principals, only nine know Law 220, nine are not fully aware of it, while 12 do not have a clue about it. This is an interesting finding but a point of discussion. Most INCL principals recommended having clear local IE related policies and mechanisms, which will change the attitudes of people toward SEN and IE if enforced rather than being an option.

The increased workload, lack of incentives, number of students per class, difficulty of maintaining discipline, and lack of time were the sub-themes of workload as an IE challenge as indicated by the principals. Ten principals (2 INCL, 5 Pr, & 3 Pub) out of 30 reported that teachers would complain of the increased workload when delivering SEN services, such as differentiating instruction for SEN students and managing their disruptive behavior encountered during class time. Moreover, the lack of incentives was another issue they face with teachers who complain or refuse to provide SEN provisions. The student-teacher ratio, as well,

was a sub-theme of concern to some principals who mentioned the large number of students per class, a matter that makes it hard to give equal attention to all students. An extension of this issue is the difficulty of maintaining the discipline of SEN children in the classroom, especially those with emotional and behavioral disorders. Likewise, some principals shared the obstacle of teachers' lack of time when dealing with SEN students in terms of further preparation and extra attention in the presence of a heavy workload.

The least identified IE challenge in the eyes of the responding principals was the academic standards of students without SEN and of the school as a whole. Six (4 Pr, 2 Pub, & 1 INCL) out of thirty principals mentioned the decline of academic achievement of students without SEN on the belief that they will be distracted from the presence and extra attention given to SEN students. Further, five principals (2 Pub & 5 Pr) identified the decline of school academic standards as a potential barrier, especially that they care a lot for their reputation and academic ranking.

Therefore, the findings on principals' IE conceptions and challenges have answered the fifth and sixth questions of the current study. In the following chapter, the author will expose the findings of decision-makers' IE conceptions and challenges.

CHAPTER SIX

Results: Decision-makers' Conceptions and Challenges

The current study attempted to investigate the conceptions and challenges related to IE (IE) through the eyes of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers. This chapter presents the findings related to decision-makers' IE conceptions and challenges. The results answer the seventh and eighth research questions that follow:

(7) What are the decision-makers' IE conceptions?

(8) What are the decision-makers' perspectives on the challenges they face when implementing IE?

All the results in this chapter are based on the constant comparative analysis of the participating decision-makers' interviews (N=15). The findings were established by reviewing the interview transcripts and researcher's notes, organizing the data, looking for patterns that emerged from the data, and cross-validating the data obtained for accuracy. This procedure allowed the researcher to carefully analyze the data for recurring regularities that were eventually sorted into themes. The researcher made careful decisions about what was significant in the data. Also, the coding process included recording the frequency of each emerging theme. The researcher opted for including all the concepts that emerged irrespective of their frequency count. The priority was to capture perspectives and notes the participants mentioned, hence, reflecting a comprehensive account that sums all of the respondents' views. As illustrated in the treemap below (Figure 6.1), themes and sub-themes have arranged the results under the headings of IE conceptions and IE challenges. Five themes and 22 sub-themes under IE conceptions and eight themes

and 19 sub-themes under IE challenges. The acronym DM, which stands for Decision Maker, is followed by a number from 1 to 15.

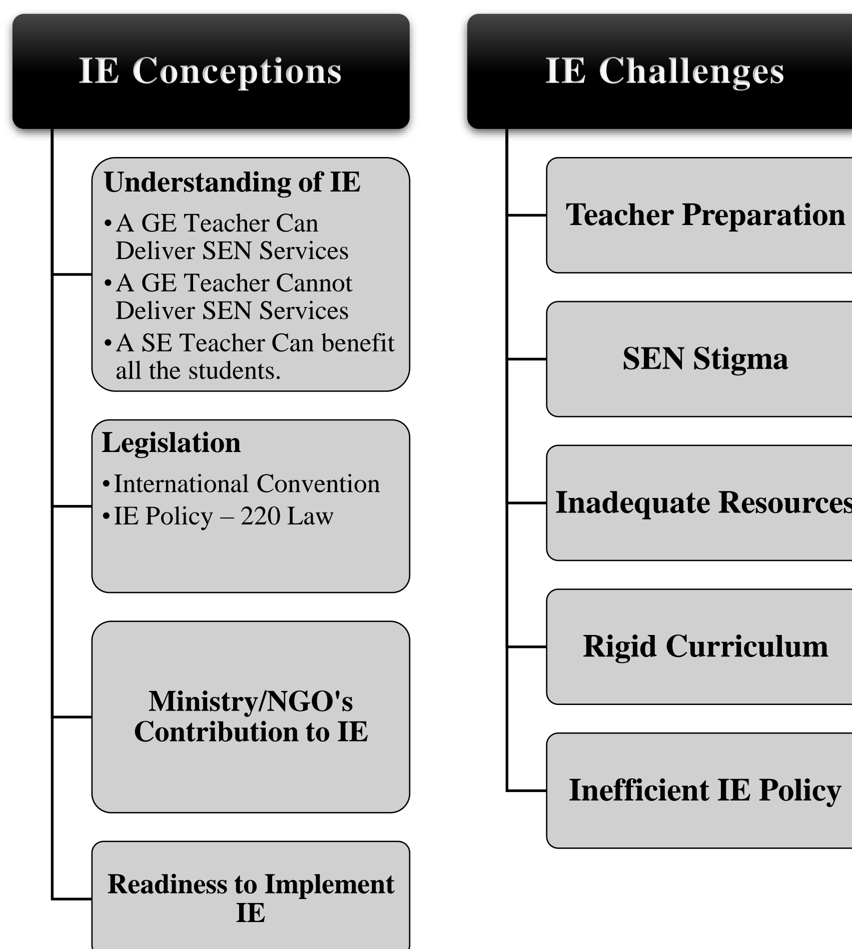

Figure 6.1. Decision-makers' interview themes treemap

The findings are presented in two sections: The first section reports decision-makers' IE conceptions, while the second presents their IE challenges.

Decision-makers' IE Conceptions – Exosystem

The interview questions attempted to capture the decision-makers' IE conceptions. As displayed in Figure 6.2, the data collected were subsequently coded into themes and sub-themes. Under the title of IE conceptions, four themes and ten sub-themes emerged: (a) Understanding of IE, (b) legislation; (c) ministry/NGO's contribution to IE, and (d) public and private schools' readiness to implement IE. In

the following section, the findings will be presented thematically.

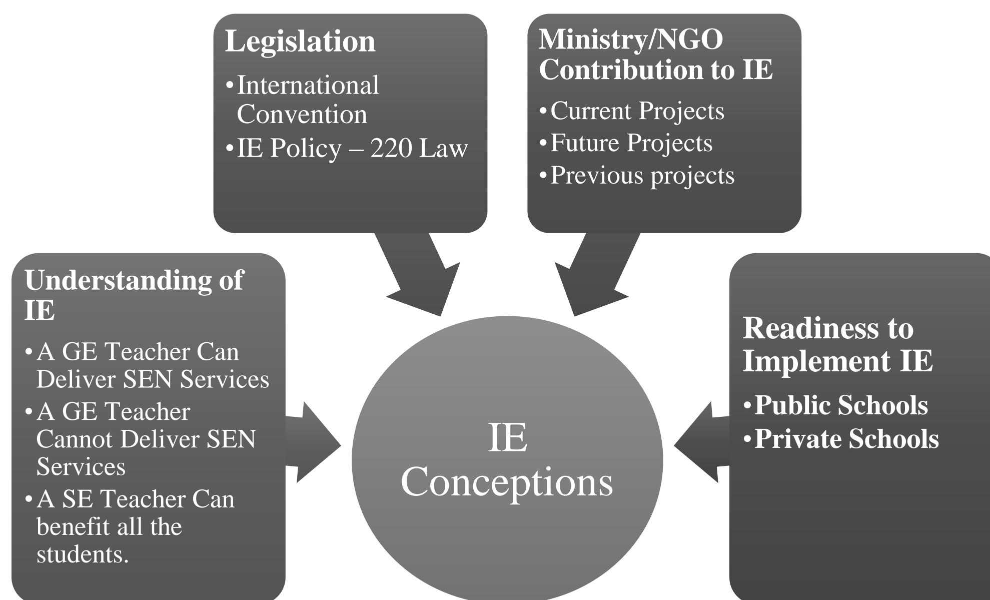

Figure 6.2. Visual representation of decision-makers' IE conceptions

Understanding of IE

Participants were asked: What is your understanding of IE? Can you define it? Do you think IE is beneficial to all students with and without SEN in mainstream schools? What is the impact of a SE teacher on the whole class? Most of the decision-makers tried to define and reflect on their interpretation of IE. Table 6.1 and Figure 6.3 present a count of decision-makers' responses during their interviews.

Table 6.1

Decision-makers' Count Responses on their Understanding of IE

IE Conceptions/Understanding of IE	Total DMs	Percent	N
IE Definition	15	100	15
A General Education Teacher Can Deliver SEN Services.	12	80	15
A General Education Teacher Cannot Deliver SEN Services.	3	20	15
Impact of a Special Education Teacher on the whole class.	15	100	15

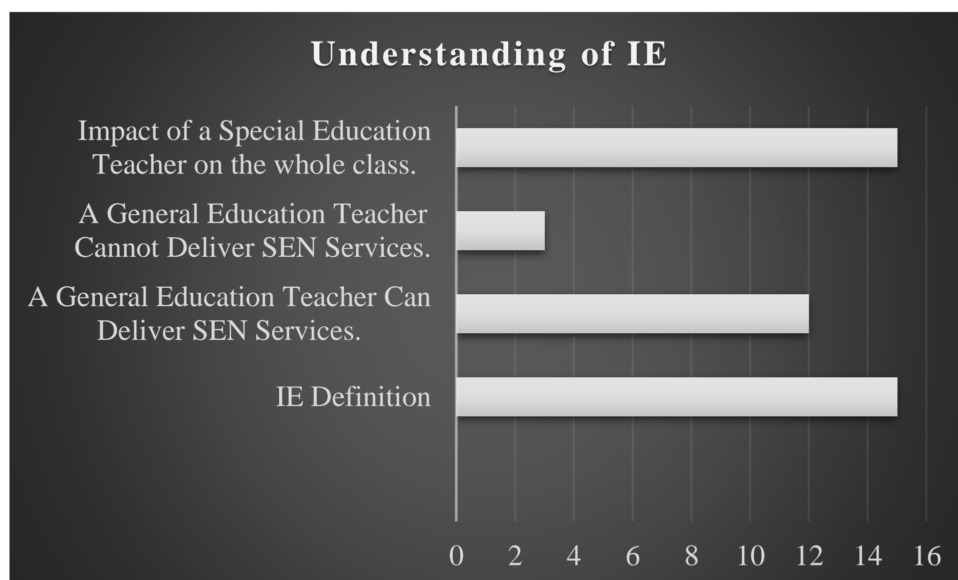

Figure 6.3. Visual representation of decision-makers' understanding of IE

Findings from interviews revealed that almost all the participating decision-makers defined IE as an educational system that welcomes all students where SEN students receive the right education that is customized to their needs.

In an attempt to clarify his understanding of IE, DM1, a former MEHE minister, reported that it is to the advantage of the students to be part of an IE system that allows them to be part of a typical class rather than segregated. Though "they will need more attention," he added, "they will certainly benefit much, much more than treating them on their own." Considering IE as global, DM1 resentfully stated that Lebanon is just late in implementing it and that it is such a shame to hurt our children and community. He elaborated, "but in a country where there is no accountability, everything is possible."

DM2, a former General Director of MOSA, defined IE as teaching an SEN child with typical students without SENs during all stages of their education even if it was at a slow pace. Though SEN children are slower than their peers, all the subjects should be provided so that they understand and absorb as much as they could with the help and support of their teachers and peers without SENs.

Having served as an SEN specialist, a university educator, and as a director of an NGO that provides SEN services, DM3 elaborately reflected on what IE is and is not. DM3 explained that IE is not to have a separate unit that receives an SEN child whenever he/she has a problem. The respondent was not sure if we do have real inclusive schools in Lebanon though IE is the best education if we do it the right way, especially that SEN individuals are part of the society and have to be part of every school and every work environment. DM3 added that we have to work on developing the right program not only in schools but also at home and work, wishing that one day, our specialized schools would cease to exist except for complicated SEN cases.

To DM4, a MEHE representative, IE is a complete academic system where every student with whatever SENs is provided with the right education believing that in the long run, IE has to be enforced in every school. Similarly, DM5, an activist in civil society, asserted that IE should be mandatory and not an option, provided that all the teachers and school community are well prepared to implement it. Clarifying the difference between integration and inclusion, DM6, an activist in civil society, indicated that integration is like fixing something to fit, while inclusion is to fix the location and the environment so that the SEN child fits in. Thus, IE occurs when we modify the setting and environment rather than the SEN student. Nevertheless, DM6 emphasized that we need not deny the fact that specialized schools might be the only option for some SEN cases.

A GE teacher can deliver SEN services. Twelve out of fifteen decision-makers (80%) agreed that a GE teacher can deliver SEN services provided that they are trained and prepared. "They must be trained," DM3 (Activist in civil society) commented. "They definitely need training; they need awareness about it," echoed

DM6 (activist in civil society). While DM2 from MOSA, who shared the same opinion about the priority of training teachers, complained: "This is something that the Ministry of Education is not providing sufficiently."

A SE teacher can benefit all students. Almost all DMs indicated that the SE teacher can help all kids in an inclusive classroom, not just SE students. “The journey to growing an inclusive school may be hard at times, yet this journey can sustain a school population and benefit all kids,” DM12 (activist in civil society) believed. DM10 (activist in civil society) remarked that educating SEN students with their peers without SEN produces an environment of harmony and compassion that better equips students of all abilities to fit in the world beyond school.

DM6, (activist in civil society) however, emphasized that GE teachers, with some awareness and with some training, can do better than a SE teacher.

Legislation

A significant element of commitment to the right of every SEN child to IE can be secured through legal reform and IE policy that maintains proper service delivery. Results of participants’ interviews incorporated their responses in relevance to the Lebanese IE Policy, Law 220, and the international convention.

International convention. The majority of decision-makers (80%) highlighted the necessity of the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that Lebanon signed back in 2007, but it “is far from being implemented,” DM8, a university professor on wheelchair, a member of the National Council on Disability (NCOD), and an activist in the civil society remarked. The participants confirmed that this convention is more powerful than a local law due to its being an international treaty. DM6 acknowledged that “in Lebanon, they are scared of international disgrace,” highlighting the necessity of

providing the periodic parallel report or shadow report. DM6 clarified that if the CRPD is ratified, the state is obligated to modify the local laws.

IE Policy – Law 220. The findings of the interviews indicated that all participants were familiar with Law 220. DM2 (a former General Director of MOSA) proudly stated that being behind the issuing of that law: "I was the captain of the boat." Due to a personal motive and interest in defending individuals with special needs and due to the efforts of lobbying with activists in the civil society and with the associations of the disabled individuals, DM2 recounted how, after extensive negotiations and persistence, Law 220 saw the light in 2000. When asked if Law 220 commits IE, DM2 asserted:

> When this law was issued, it was split into sections, and each section was sent to the concerned ministry. For example, the health section was sent to the Ministry of Health; the finance section was sent to the Ministry of Finance. Unfortunately, all concerned ministries considered that this law is the sole responsibility of the MOSA. How can the MOSA be responsible for education and labor? This is the conflict.

DM1, a former minister of MEHE, spoke positively of Law 220 but raised the question about whether the proper implementation is taking place: "The law might have very good coverage of the do's, don'ts, and the approach, but how that is transferring into the implementation phase is a different story." Whilst DM9, an activist, stressed the need to move from separate IE initiatives by members of civil society and non-governmental organizations to policies and a legal framework that will ensure inclusion is mandatory and not simply a choice in private and public schools.

Contribution to IE

When asked about their ministry or NGO's contribution to IE, decision-makers provided various inputs.

A former General Director of MOSA, indicated that in addition to being a pioneer in the process of issuing Law 220, DM2 contributed to having SEN students who had sensory disabilities (specifically the deaf students) sit for the official exams for the first time.

DM1, a former MEHE minister, stated that, during his time, training was provided to public schools in collaboration with CERD and the school of pedagogy of the Lebanese University. The other contribution was achieved through funding from NGOs that dealt with SE through providing a public school with the necessary accessibility facilities and equipment to help SEN students, who were physically challenged.

DM4 reported MEHE's contribution in collaboration with NGOs in 104 schools of the different governorates of Lebanon by training two teachers from every school on differentiated instruction to work with students having learning difficulties outside the classroom or by welcoming other SEN cases in their centers in the afternoon for speech or psychomotor sessions.

While DM7, a former CERD representative, bitterly expressed disappointment for not executing the National Plan for IE proposed back in 2012 due to the lack of funds, DM4 stated that MEHE would initiate the IE pilot project in 30 public schools in 2018 to extend it to 60 public schools in the subsequent year. To implement the plan, MEHE needs to hire 30 full-time special educators to be distributed to the 30 schools in the different governorates of Lebanon. The target age groups to work with are cycle I and II. The special educators' role will be to train

schoolteachers on co-teaching, and to employ extra activities such as multisensory ones for the students who have learning difficulties inside their classrooms. There will also be resource rooms in each school, not specifically for pull-out sessions. The ministry plans to allocate to every governorate five schools to be served by a paraprofessional team composed of the psychomotor and speech therapists; maybe there will be a senior special educator as well as a psychiatrist. So, each member of the paraprofessionals will have to go to a specific school once a week. Thus, a full-fledge team will serve the school. DM4 went on to denote that MEHE depends on funders like UNICEF and the British Council to implement this pilot project. As for SEN provisions, DM4 said that the ministry is willing to utilize multisensory tools inside the classroom in addition to assessment modification, such as changing font, using precise and action verbs, and a bit of extra exam time. However, they do not interfere with the learning outcomes of the exam. Going further, DM4 confirmed that the rehabilitated public schools are compelled to allow SEN student admission except for the blind, who are referred to MOSA since MEHE does have the paraprofessionals nor the needed platforms to educate them. They do provide them with the necessary accommodations to sit for the official exams like time, a suitable environment, breaks while doing their exams, as well as having someone to write on their behalf if needed, and laptop programs to help them.

The heads of NGOs serving SEN students shared with the researcher how their institution contributed to IE. DM3 remarked that her institution had developed a consultancy program to support schools in dealing with SEN children through teacher training, modeling, and mentoring in the class. DM5 stated that their association provides a computer program and other facilities for the blind students to use in their mainstream classrooms. DM9 and DM12 explained how their association

provided support programs for students with learning difficulties at some public schools, after obtaining the consent of MEHE. DM9 went further to point to their contribution to national marathons in addition to workshops and seminars held in different schools in celebration of the National Day for Kids with Learning Difficulties, 22 April. Whereas DM15 indicated that, in 2013, their association signed a 10-year protocol with MEHE committing to fund the establishment of 200 learning support classes in 200 public schools spread across Lebanon during the first five years, and continuing training and technical support for ten years. This protocol is currently under execution. DM15 mentioned a collaboration mechanism between their association and MEHE to provide a free diagnosis of SEN students who will be taking their Brevet exams, in order to determine whether special measures or procedures need to be taken for the student when sitting for the official exams.

Readiness to Implement IE

Results of decision-makers' interviews revealed participants' conceptions of public schools and private schools' readiness to implement IE.

Public schools' readiness to implement IE. Almost all participants considered that in terms of the physical aspects, curriculum, and teacher preparation, public schools do not have a safe environment to accommodate and educate SEN students. For instance, DM2 declared: "There has to be a rehabilitation of the buildings and people." DM3 recommended that schools should be provided with facilities that enhance accessibility and flexibility for SEN students. To DM5, teachers are not prepared for IE and need intensive training and monitoring.

Private schools' readiness to implement IE. When asked whether private schools are ready to implement IE, the majority of DMs (80%) said that a few private schools are already inclusive, some others have the potentials to implement

IE, while the rest opt not to consider it due to the high costs it entails. DM2 gave the example of a middle-class family that has four children with one SEN child. Because the education cost of the SEN child is as much, or more than the fees of the other three children, DM2 remarked that the parents would say: 'Nothing will come out as a result of this child, so the special needs child is not worthy. Let us educate the other three children.' Hence, a situation of favoritism arises. According to DM2, the government should take action.

Decision-makers' IE Challenges – Exosystem

The interview questions attempted to capture decision-makers' IE challenges. Decision-makers were asked and probed: What are the challenges of implementing IE in mainstream schools? What are the possible factors that hinder its success? The collected data were subsequently coded into themes and sub-themes, as displayed in Figure 6.4. Five significant challenges were identified: (a) Teacher preparation, (b) SEN stigma, (c) inadequate resources, (d) rigid curriculum, and (e) inefficient IE policy.

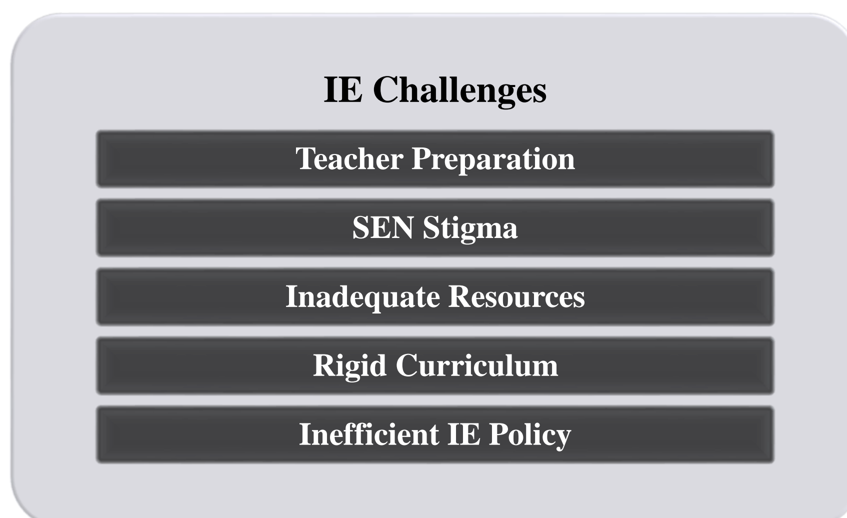

Figure 6.4: Visual representation of decision-makers' IE challenges

Teacher Preparation

Findings from interviews indicated that the most alarming challenge to all of participating DMs (N=15) is teacher preparation encompassing their appropriate education and training. They emphasized the urgency of modifying teacher education programs to be aligned to IE where teachers are equipped with the pedagogical competencies necessary to serve diversity work in the classroom in line with restructured curricula. Further, DMs complained about the lack of in-service teacher training, and DM2 and DM5 accused the MEHE of this shortcoming.

SEN Stigma

Results of interviews revealed that the second most identified challenge communicated by the majority of participating decision-makers is SEN stigma featured by the following: (a) Parents not accepting SEN, (b) teachers not accepting SEN students, and (c) decision-makers not convinced of IE (See Table 6.2 & Figure 6.5).

Table 6.2

Decision-makers' Count Responses on SEN Stigma

IE Challenges/SEN Stigma	Total DMs	Percent	N
Parents not accepting SEN	14	93	15
Principals/Teachers not accepting SEN students	12	80	15
Decision makers not convinced of IE	7	47	15

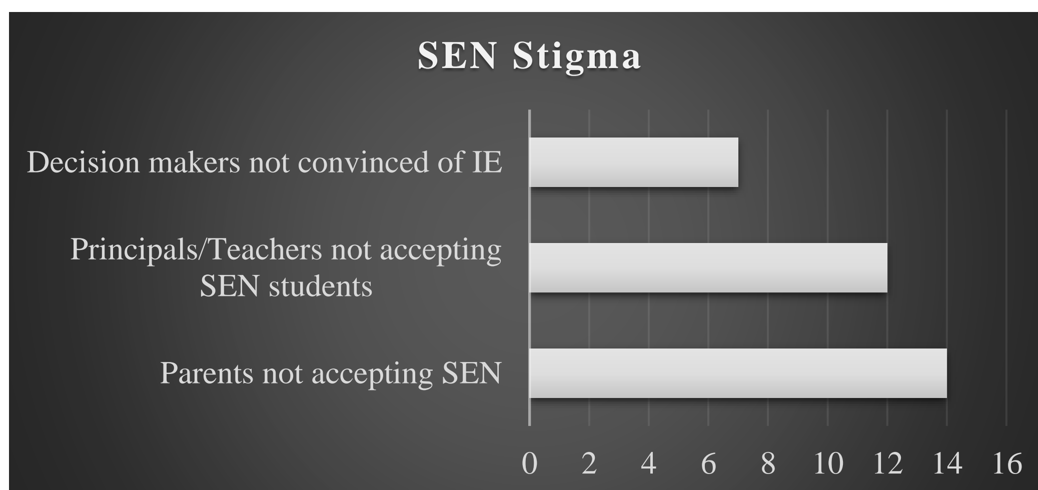

Figure 6.5: Visual representation of SEN stigma as an IE challenge

Parents not accepting SEN. Almost all DMs identified the challenge of parents not accepting SEN when it is related to their kids or their children's peers. As an example, DM3 (an SEN specialist, a university educator, and as a director of an NGO that provides SEN services) bitterly narrated an incident she had with the parents of a Down's syndrome child, who did not want the other siblings to know of their sister's SENs. Besides, DM4, a MEHE personnel, stressed that many parents do not commit to either the therapy session or to the recommended follow up at home with their children.

Principals/Teachers not accepting SEN students. Twelve DMs pointed to the challenge of the principals or teachers not accepting SEN. To provide inclusive practices, participants denoted the need to change the vision of the school, from the school principal to the teachers to the therapists to everybody who is working, since the acceptance issue should be obvious. For instance, DM4 identified the challenge of some public schoolteachers who lack the dedication to implement IE. While DM3 emphasized the importance of SEN acceptance from the side of some who claim to be advocates of IE: "One of them said, 'I do not want the Mongol [referring to Down's syndrome students] in my school."

Decision-makers not convinced of IE. A total of seven DMs indicated that those in power need to have acceptance for the SEN, to admit their right to education, and to implement the IE law. Accordingly, awareness of those in charge, of those in the front line is a prerequisite to making our community aware. For example, to DM2, any person is subject to any disability throughout his/her lifetime, a matter that necessitates the culture of inclusion, and thus:

> The minister and the general director in every ministry should be convinced about the implementation of this law or should feel compelled to do it so that they do the mechanism of inclusion. The education center should agree with me on this, and all the education administrators should cooperate, until they apply what is related to inclusion, in an educational matter. (DM2)

Inadequate Resources

The findings of decision-makers' interviews revealed the third perceived IE challenge to be the inadequacy of resources. Under inadequate resources, the sub-themes of not enough funds, transportation, inappropriate infrastructure, inadequate SE teachers, and inadequate physical resources emerged (seeTable 6.3 & Figure 6.6).

Table 6.3

Decision-makers' Count Responses on Inadequate Resources

IE Challenges/ Inadequate Resources	Total DMs	Percent	N
Lack of funds	12	80	15
Transportation	10	67	15
Inappropriate infrastructure	10	67	15
Inadequate special education teachers	8	53	15
Inadequate physical resources	7	47	15

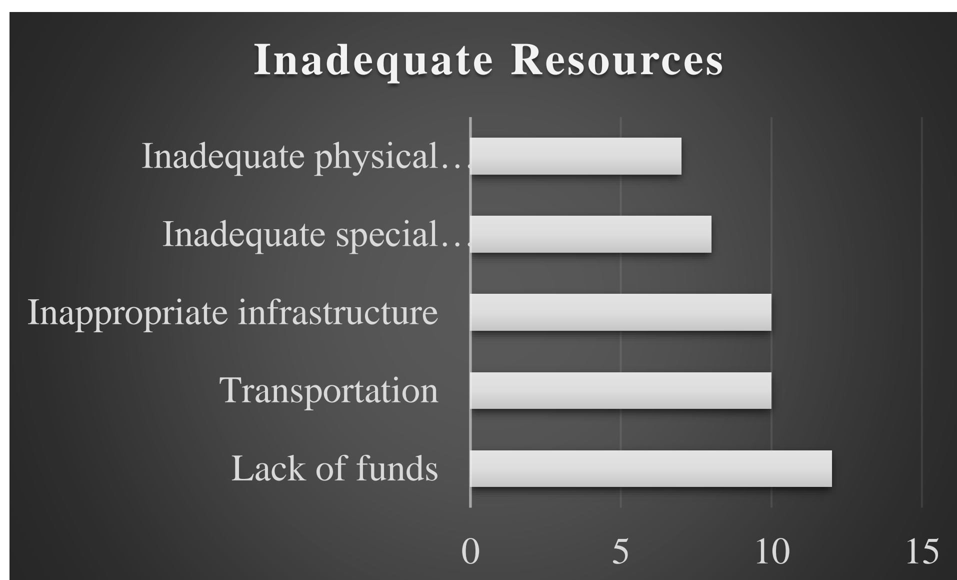

Figure 6.6. Visual representation of inadequate resources as an IE Challenge

Lack of funds. Twelve out of 15 DMs identified financial funding as a major challenge in the face of implementing IE. DM7, a former CERD representative explained that they could not put into action the 2012 National Plan of IE because the government officials said that the plan was costly, and they did not have money for it. DM4 from MEHE, however, indicated that funding is available but that the challenge lies in the sustainability of funds: "If the funding stops, how can we continue?" DM4 added: "It is very costly to get professionals to public schools all over Lebanon, it could be an issue."

Transportation. A total of 10 DMs identified the challenge of transportation to and from the schools. The lack of accessible public transport was stressed, such as an SEN friendly bus, or passageway to the school building. DM6 elaborated:

> If someone in a wheelchair wants to go to school, he would need to take a taxi, and can you imagine how much this taxi will cost? If you have a child in a wheelchair that wants to go on the school bus, how will that child go on the school bus? (DM6)

Inappropriate infrastructure. Ten DMs identified the challenge of having an accessible infrastructure and SEN friendly facilities in school foundations like the bathrooms, the library, the laboratories, the ramps, elevators, and toilets.

Inadequate SE teachers. Eight out of 15 DMs pointed to the shortage of special educators. To DM4, a MEHE representative, human resources is a significant challenge, due to the absence of the position of special educators in the administrative and recruitment regime of MEHE: "There is nothing called 'special educator' in the ministry of education; it does not exist. So, we have to contract with special educators so they can work in schools." DM4 added that MEHE took the initiative to deal with students who have learning difficulties in collaboration with several NGOs. DM4 clarified that in public schools there are no shadow teachers to write on behalf of SEN students: "due to its being costly, and also we believe it is not sustainable," DM5, an activist in civil society, echoed "What they [MEHE] have is a school teacher, a supervisor and the principal, but they don't have a SE teacher. That is why they cannot hire a specialist in the public school."

Inadequate physical resources. Seven DMs identified the shortage of physical resources such as instructional materials and assistive technology that facilitates SEN education. For instance, DM6 emphasized the lack of access to assistive technology and considered it as the foundation of IE because assistive technology is expensive in the third world; poor SEN students cannot afford it. DM11, an activist, communicated the same challenge and added that assistive technology needs to be embedded within quality instruction that enables SEN children to be educated. DM6, an activist with visual impairment, bitterly commented on the lack of access to obtain information, to reach the internet and to communicate with the surrounding environment.

Rigid Curriculum

Eight DMs identified the challenge of having a rigid curriculum designed for typical students without SEN.

The Lebanese curriculum does not accommodate SEN students, and thus, needs modification. For instance, DM3 looks at the Lebanese curriculum as:

> One of the very challenging curriculums that needs many adaptions. We have three languages, Arabic, English, and French. We have this stress on the scientific subject matter, and we do not look into arts and other extra-curricular activities as aids to improve concentration and learning. (DM3)

To DM7, a former CERD representative: "They [SEN students] are not learning because the curriculum does not accommodate them, it is designed for regular pupils." Whilst DM4 from MEHE considers the Lebanese curriculum "a big issue" because it does not cater to moderate or severe SEN students: " That is why we are not able to accept them; they are to be directed to the Ministry of [Social] Affairs."

Inefficient IE Policy

A total of eight DMs identified the challenge of inefficient IE policy that needs several modifications. Law 220, as perceived by the participating decision-makers, has some shortcomings. DM7, a former representative from CERD expressed dissatisfaction with the law because of the lack of implementation mechanism and resentfully commented: “What has been implemented is an embarrassment for us as a nation, especially that we consider ourselves quite advanced in teaching” (DM7).

To DM1 (former MEHE Minister), the problem is in the implementation of the law, in the feedback loop, monitoring, and censorship: "Who is monitoring? The

gap is in the feedback loop, like all the laws in the country. There is no censorship." DM1 gave an example of how he boosted up the number of personnel of the Department of Orientation and Guidance (DOPS) from 20 to about 400 people to train teachers, but that was insufficient when talking about inspecting approximately 60,000 employees in the education sector. Then DM1 rationalized that even if they discover a weakness that reached the director-general through the hierarchical channel, "there are all sorts of inhibitors and bottlenecks which, put a brake on progress." DM1 bitterly hinted to political networking that hinders the process.

DM6, an educator with visual impairment, and a member of the NCOD echoed the same limitation of Law 220 and referred its failure to the lack of "a bunch of decrees," and elaborated: “The law stated that every person has the right to engage or obtain an education through the mainstream system but does not say how, or what the measures are to do this (DM6). DM6 wondered if the current law needs to be modified or replaced by a new one, mainly that it was prescribed integration "in parallel to welfare."

Going further, the majority of participants implied that the education committee at the National Council on Disability (NCOD) is not operational. For instance, DM6, stated: "The system is wrong. The national committee is the decision-maker, or it should be, but it is not; no power, no money, no budget, no staff, nothing." While DM4 emphasized that because of the absence of a special educator position, MEHE cannot hire an SEN paraprofessional but that MOSA can do.

Summary of Decision-makers’ IE Conceptions and Challenges

The results presented earlier in this chapter emphasized the IE conceptions and challenges through the eyes of 15 decision-makers from MEHE, CERD, MOSA,

and NGOs. The findings answered the seventh and eighth research questions in two sections: The first reported decision-makers' IE conceptions, while the second section presented decision-makers' IE challenges.

Under the title of IE conceptions, four themes and ten sub-themes emerged: (a) Understanding of IE, (b) legislation; (c) ministry/NGO's contribution to IE, and (d) public and private schools' readiness to implement IE.

When reflecting on their understanding of IE, all the decision-makers agreed that IE is a complete academic system where every student with whatever SENs is provided with the right customized education that has to be enforced in every school instead of being an option. Some asserted that unlike integration, where individuals work on fixing something to fit, inclusion is fixing the location and the environment so that the target fits in. Thus, IE is when you modify the setting and environment and not the SEN student. Besides, most of the participants were in consensus that specialized schools might be the only option for some SEN cases.

The majority of the decision-makers (80%) communicated that a GE teacher can deliver SEN services provided that they are trained and prepared. Some even hinted that MEHE is not providing the need for training and professional development. Almost all decision-makers indicated that the SE teacher can help all kids in an inclusive classroom, not just SEN students. Some went further to emphasize that GE teachers, with some awareness, preparation, and training, can do better than a SE teacher.

In terms of legislation, the majority of participants (80%) asserted the necessity of ratifying the CRPD that Lebanon signed in 2007. Once ratified, Lebanon is obligated to modify the local laws. As for the local IE related policy, all participants indicated their familiarity with Law 220. Whilst some decision-makers

talked positively about Law 220; they revealed their concern about its proper implementation especially that the responsibility of providing the needed provisions, the including academic ones, to SEN persons are primarily allocated to MOSA. Thus, an implementation gap is what causes Law 220 to fail.

When asked about their ministry's contribution to IE, decision-makers provided various inputs. A former CERD representative who reported publishing a guidebook about the different SEN categories in addition to an index of inclusive schools in Lebanon, bitterly expressed her disappointment for not executing the National Plan for IE proposed by CERD back in 2012 due to the lack of funds. Besides, governmental decision-makers shared how their ministries took part in issuing Law 220 and paved the way for students with sensory SENs to sit for official exams. Others from MEHE talked about: (a) Providing training to public schools, (b) getting more funds to help SEN students in public schools, (c) making arrangements with NGOs on how to provide support sessions to SEN students outside the classroom or in their centers in the afternoon in addition to pull-out programs in some public schools, (d) planning to hire 30 special educators in order to initiate the IE pilot project in 30 public schools a plan to extend it to 60 public schools in the subsequent year, and (e) launching the pilot project with the support from UNICEF and the British Council. As for SEN provisions, MEHE has a specialized examination center, computers, exam sheets in different formats, human and technological assistance during exams, extra time, breaks, exemption from Grade 9 exams, in addition to catering to the needs of hospital-bound students. However, there will be no interference with the intended learning outcomes. Further, it was assured that the public schools going through rehabilitation are compelled to allow SEN admission to their school. Except for the necessary accommodations to sit for

the official exams, visually impaired students are still referred to MOSA since MEHE does not have the paraprofessionals nor the needed platforms to educate them.

Likewise, heads of NGOs shared with the researcher how their institutions contributed to IE by Providing SEN students with transportation to and from school and equipping them with the needed assistive tools. Some organizations have agreed-upon protocols with MEHE to provide consultancy programs to support some public schools in dealing with SEN children in addition to teacher training, modeling, and mentoring in the class. Others got involved in national marathons in addition to workshops and seminars held in different schools in celebration of the National Day for Kids with Learning Difficulties, 22 April. In addition, some mentioned a collaboration mechanism between their association and MEHE to provide a free diagnosis of SEN students who will be taking their Brevet exams, in order to determine whether special measures need to be taken so that SEN students sit for the official exams.

Results of decision-makers' interviews revealed participants' conceptions of public and private schools' readiness to implement IE. While almost all participants considered that, in terms of the physical aspects, curriculum, and teacher preparation, public schools do not have a safe environment to accommodate and educate SEN students, the majority of decision-makers (80%) said that a few private schools are already inclusive, some others have the potentials to implement IE, while the rest opt not to consider it due to the high costs it entails.

In addition to their IE conception, decision-makers' IE challenges were identified and included: (a) Teacher preparation, (b) SEN stigma, (c) inadequate resources, (d) rigid curriculum, and (e) inefficient IE policy. The most alarming

challenge to all of participating decision-makers is teacher preparation encompassing the deficient appropriate education and training. SEN stigma featured by parents, teachers, and principals not accepting SEN children, as well as decision-makers who are not convinced of IE. To provide inclusive practices, participants denoted the need to change the philosophy, vision, and mission of the school, including the principal, teachers, therapists, and staff, since the acceptance issue should prevail. Further, it was conveyed that those in power need to have SEN acceptance, to admit their right to education, and to implement the IE law. Accordingly, awareness of those in the front line is a requirement for making our community aware. The third perceived IE challenge is the inadequacy of physical and human resources. The lack of funds, inaccessible transportation and infrastructure, inadequate SE teachers, and inadequate physical resources were highlighted. The rigid Lebanese curriculum designed for typically developing students is another challenge identified. The last barrier participants pointed to is the inefficient IE related law that needs several amendments and decrees to render it doable, especially that the National Council on Disability (NCOD) is not operational Accordingly, feedback loop, monitoring, and censorship were emphasized. Some NGO decision-makers addressed the need to modify or replace Law 220, which prescribed integration in terms of welfare instead of inclusion.

In the following chapter, the researcher discusses the findings of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers' IE conceptions and challenges.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion and Conclusions

As established in the preceding chapters of this dissertation, the research is dedicated to exploring the conceptions of and challenges of IE in mainstream schools in Lebanon by schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers. Previous empirical and theoretical literature informed this research by identifying key features of IE, contextual conceptions, and challenges that may sway its enactment. The findings of this research appear to reflect the conceptions of IE as understood and alleged by a representative sample of change agents in Lebanon. Based on their IE conceptions, several IE challenges are perceived.

On the theoretical level, the researcher explored IE guided by the Human Rights-based Approach, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System (1979), and Ajzen's theory of Planned Behavior (1991). Realizing that IE is the product of reciprocal interactions between SEN children and the multiple layers of environment where their human-rights to accessible quality education is safeguarded in mainstream schools, the researcher's discussion, conclusions, and recommendations are in line with change agents' IE conceptions and challenges on the basis of the relationship between their background variables and their intended behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Using the blend of human rights-based approach, the ecological model and the planned behavior theory to investigate the inclusion of this population in mainstream education added depth to the presented findings. By applying the ecological model, the researcher has corroborated the significance of investigating the intersecting issues that cannot be disconnected from each other when researching IE. In addition, having explored that IE requires the collaboration of agents of change to challenge the prevailing situation and nurture social justice (Pantić & Florian, 2015), this

research, unlike the limited available literature, demonstrated the importance of looking at inclusion from different perspectives in different contexts pursuant to the human rights of SEN children and to SDG 4 on education which calls for inclusive and impartial quality education and lifetime learning chances for all by 2030.

This chapter aims to explore whether the following addressed RQs have been met and the contributions made by this dissertation:

1. What are the schoolteachers' IE conceptions?
2. What are the schoolteachers' perspectives on the concerns they face when implementing IE?
3. Is there a relationship between teachers' IE conceptions and concerns?
4. To what extent do teachers' age, educational background, job, and school category, training, experience, contact with SEN, and knowledge of Law 220 contribute to their IE conceptions and concerns?
5. What are the school principals' IE conceptions?
6. What are the school principals' perspectives on the challenges they face when implementing IE?
7. What are decision-makers' IE conceptions?
8. What are the decision-makers' perspectives on the challenges they face when implementing IE?

Summary of Findings: Schoolteachers, Principals, and Decision-makers

IE conceptions and challenges through the eyes of school teachers, principals, and decision-makers were investigated. In chapter four, findings of 600 surveys, 212 anecdotes, and five FGDS involving schoolteachers of public, private, and inclusive schools answered RQs one, two, three, and four. Chapter five presented the data of

the interviews of 30 principals to answer the fifth and sixth research questions. Whilst the interviews of 15 decision-makers from MEHE, CERD, MOSA, and NGOs answered the seventh and eighth RQs in chapter six.

Since they serve in the microsystem, teachers hold a key role in successful inclusion, and thus, their readiness to teach inclusively or exclusively is depicted. Teachers' IE conceptions and concerns are related to changes and developments in the exosystem and the macrosystem of the Lebanese society where values, ideologies, and all the major sectors of the society are represented. Hence, they serve as agents between the state, various stakeholders in education, parents, legislation, and the students; they are responsible for implementing inclusion principles in the classroom. When the goal is IE, teachers need to be competent, willing to work with SEN children, and well informed of the critical principles of IE.

The response to the first RQ showed that the majority (75%) of the Lebanese teachers encourage IE due to their relatively average IE conceptions ($M = 3.24$; $SD = 1.42$). Even though the participants generally conceded that SE and GE teachers can work collaboratively with SEN students, are the key to realize change in their schools and build an inclusive environment, and are willing to deliver SEN provisions to SEN students, teachers had the lowest score when asked about the social and academic benefits to both students with and without SENs. According to their written anedotes, some teachers doubted the opportunity of teaching intellectually challenged SEN students and those with aggressive behavior.

When responding to the second RQ about their IE challenges, schoolteachers proved to have an average level of IE concern ($M = 2.55$; $SD = 0.57$). They were the most concerned about the lack of resources followed by the lack of acceptance of SEN students, followed by decline in academic standard of the classrooms and

increased workload. Results from FGDs confirmed the survey findings and traced the challenges of inadequate teachers' education and collaboration and the difficulty of teaching visually impaired and mobility SEN learners. Some additional challenges were drawn from teachers' anecdotes, like SEN students' reliance on their typical peers for support, difficulty of serving SEN learners in advanced classes, parents' resistence, and the academic evaluation of SEN children.

The third RQ investigated the relationship between teachers' IE conceptions and concerns. A significant negative correlation ($\beta \hat{=} - 0.099$, $p<.05$) between teachers' IE conceptions and concerns indicated that teachers who have higher IE conceptions are likely to have a lower degree of IE concerns and vice versa.

In response to the fourth RQ, which examined the effect of teachers' background variables on their IE conceptions and concerns, findings of OLR estimated that teachers of general education job category, young teachers below the age of 25, and teachers with teaching experience between 16 and 20 have lower IE conceptions. In contrast, SE teachers of inclusive schools, who are aware of Law 220 have higher IE conceptions. In addition, as teachers grow older than 25 years, their IE conceptions improve. Further, GE teachers of public schools have higher concerns than those of private schools; while young teachers have higher concerns than older ones. On the other hand, experience special education training reduces teachers concerns. In FGDs, schoolteachers of private schools indicated the highest level of challenge, followed by the teachers of the public schools; whereas private inclusive schoolteachers indicated the lowest level of IE challenge. Further, both public and private schoolteachers reported a low level of perceived success if including the SEN children in their classrooms, unlike private inclusive schoolteachers who proclaimed perceiving a higher level of success.

The fifth and sixth RQs investigated IE conceptions and challenges of participating principals. Principals, as frontline administrators, are in a unique position to lead their schools. Assuming overlapping positions in mainstream schools in Lebanon, principals find themselves in the exosystem (due to their relationship with the school board and decision-makers), in the mesosystem (due to their relationship with teachers and staff), and in the child's microsystem (due to their direct connections with the child and parents) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Findings varied from a view that inclusion meant welcoming SEN students in regular classes of mainstream schools to the full confusion of what inclusion could mean. INCL principals (N=13), unlike Pub and Pr principals, provided a precise definition of IE which encountered the academic, social and safe school environment that received and served all students regardless of their abilities. Meanwhile, 40% of the principals who considered it beneficial to all students with and without SEN indicated full IE advocacy, 23% of the principals implied conditional IE advocacy on the belief that it is beneficial when considering mild SEN cases. Most INCL principals emphasized the social and emotional benefits of IE rather than the academic ones. While some others affirmed the difficulty of providing SEN services to cycles three and four of basic education, irrespective of the availability of support. Conversely, 37% of the principals did not consider it beneficial to all students.

Principals' IE conceptions of the needed support to implement IE were explored as well. Almost 53% of the participating principals, the majority of whom were from INCL schools articulated various responses. Collaboration, differentiated instruction, resources, technology, training, and the most helpful support were the major sub-themes tracked throughout principals' responses. Another theme explored was principals' conceptions of the school SEN practices to implement IE in relevance

to identifying SEN students, IEP schemes, and parental involvement. Some principals described having a department assigned to detect, screen, diagnose, and follow up the progress of SEN students, and others indicated that it was through outsourcing or simple referral to a qualified specialist. While some INCL principals brought up the factor of SEN student ratio per class, the level of SEN severity, and the convenience of resources as criteria for accepting them, others noted that they only accepted mild SEN students. As for IEPs, input from INCL principals only was anticipated because it was not applicable at the other private or public schools. All INCL school principals mentioned having a SE department that takes care of all SEN services, including the IEPs. In addition, 67% of the responding principals signified the importance of parental involvement. Most INCL principals communicated that parents' awareness, acceptance of their child's SENs, and contribution to drafting the IEP are essential, yet it could be an obstacle if they displayed a negative attitude.

Principals' IE conceptions of teacher's role and revealed that 63% of the respondents indicated their GE teachers positively viewed IE due to their indulgence in traditional teaching, feelings of frustration and guilt, and the extra work and time required. While 73% of the principals indicated that their GE teachers could not deliver SEN services unless they receive formal education, training, and assistance. The majority of INCL principals asserted that their teachers could not refuse teaching an SEN child because it was part of their school mission, policy, and recruitment contract sheet, while others justified their tolerance to teachers' resistance and referred it to the lack of knowledge. All INCL principals declared that the SE teacher can teach the whole class in lower grade levels like cycle I and II, but that this becomes difficult for cycle III, especially that the subject matters become more demanding.

Though the majority of principals (70%) pointed out that a SE benefits the whole class, 50% of the principals implied the lack of collaboration between GE and SE teachers, either because of the school policy, reluctance of teachers, or lack of time. Others stated that their teachers are able and willing to collaborate if successfully prepared to do so. On the other hand, the majority of the participating principals asserted that their teachers were uncomfortable to deal with SEN students because of the lack of patience, classroom management skills, the fear of being watched and judged, or their being novice.

In response to the sixth RQ, principals' IE challenges were explored. The two most alarming challenges to the majority of participating principals are SEN stigma amongst teachers, students, and parents in addition to inadequate teacher preparation. Further, principals identified the inadequacy of physical and human resources, lack of SEN and IE awareness, rigid and heavy Lebanese curriculum, need for a clear and enforced IE policy, as well as the academic standards of students and school.

Findings that answered the seventh and eighth RQs elucidated the IE conceptions and challenges of participating decision-makers. Situated at the exosystem, governmental and nongovernmental representatives are in charge of general or IE related educational policies (Ruppar et al., 2017). By the virtue of their position, they are expected to endorse IE, issue, mandate, and implement IE legislation (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The IE conceptions and challenges of decision-makers about the inclusion of SEN children strongly impact the process of IE (Jordan et al., 2009). Decision-makers that represent MEHE, MOSA and the civil society make decisions that affect the local educational system. Hence, IE in Lebanon is influenced by the exosystem of his policies and plans.

IE in the eyes of decision-makers is a complete academic system where every student is provided with the right customized education. Some asserted that IE meant modifying the setting and environment and not the SEN student. Besides, most of the participants were in consensus that specialized schools might be the only option for some SEN cases.

The majority of the decision-makers (80%) communicated that a GE teacher can deliver SEN services provided that they are trained and prepared. Some even warned that MEHE is not providing the necessary training and professional development. Almost all decision-makers indicated that the SE teacher can help all kids in an inclusive classroom, not just SEN students. Some emphasize that GE teachers, with some awareness, preparation, and training, can do better than a SE teacher.

As for legislation, the majority of participants (80%) asserted the necessity of ratifying the CRPD that Lebanon signed in 2007. As for the local IE related policy, all participants indicated their familiarity with Law 220, yet they unveiled their concern about its proper execution. Thus, an implementation gap is what causes Law 220 to fail.

Decision-makers explained their ministry's contribution to IE, provided various inputs. A retired CERD representative, who reported publishing a handbook about SEN categories in addition to an index of inclusive schools in Lebanon, bitterly expressed regret for not administering the National Plan for IE CERD proposed back in 2012. Additionally, governmental decision-makers shared how their ministries took part in issuing Law 220 and paved the way for students with sensory SENs to sit for official exams. Others from MEHE talked about providing training to public schools, getting more funds to support SEN students in public

schools, arranging with NGOs support provisions to SEN students outside the classroom or in their centers, planning to hire 30 special educators to initiate the IE pilot project in 30 public schools, a plan to extend to 60 public schools in the subsequent year, and starting the pilot project backed by UNICEF and the British Council. Further, MEHE has a specialized examination center, computers, exam sheets in different formats, human and technological assistance during exams, extra time, breaks, exemption from Grade 9 exams, in addition to catering to the needs of hospital-bound students. Still, there will be no intervention with the intended learning outcomes. Moreover, it was promised that the public schools going through rehabilitation are enforced to allow SEN admission to their school. Excluding the necessary adjustments to sit for the official exams, visually impaired students are still assigned to MOSA since MEHE does not have the paraprofessionals nor the required programs to educate them.

Heads of NGOs elaborated on how their institutions contributed to IE by Providing SEN students with transportation to and from school and equipping them with the needed assistive tools. Some organizations have agreed-upon contracts with MEHE to provide consultancy programs to support some public schools in dealing with SEN children in addition to teacher training, modeling, and mentoring in the class. Others got involved in national marathons in addition to workshops and seminars held in different schools in celebration of the National Day for Kids with Learning Difficulties, 22 April. In addition, some mentioned a collaboration mechanism between their association and MEHE to provide a free diagnosis of SEN students who will be taking their Brevet exams, in order to determine whether special measures need to be taken so that SEN students sit for the official exams.

Results of decision-makers' interviews revealed participants' conceptions of public and private schools' readiness to implement IE. While almost all participants considered that, in terms of the physical aspects, curriculum, and teacher preparation, public schools do not have a safe environment to accommodate and educate SEN students, the majority of decision-makers (80%) said that a few private schools are already inclusive, some others have the potentials to implement IE, while the rest opt not to consider it due to the high costs it entails.

In response to the last RQ, decision-makers' IE challenges were identified and included teacher preparation, SEN stigma, inadequate resources, rigid curriculum, and inefficient IE policy. The most alarming challenge to all of participating decision-makers is teacher preparation encompassing the deficient appropriate education and training. SEN stigma featured by parents, teachers, and principals not accepting SEN children, as well as decision-makers, who are not convinced of IE. To provide inclusive practices, participants denoted the need to change the philosophy, vision, and mission of the school, including the principal, teachers, therapists, and staff, since the acceptance issue should prevail. Further, it was conveyed that those in power need to have SEN acceptance, to admit their right to education, and to implement the IE law. Accordingly, awareness of those in the front line is a requirement for making our community aware. The third perceived IE challenge is the inadequacy of physical and human resources. The lack of funds, inaccessible transportation and infrastructure, inadequate SE teachers, and inadequate physical resources were highlighted. The rigid Lebanese curriculum designed for typically developing students is another challenge identified. The last barrier participants pointed to is the inefficient IE related law that needs several amendments and decrees to render it doable, especially that the National Council on

Disability (NCOD) is not operational Accordingly, feedback loop, monitoring, and censorship were emphasized. Some NGO decision-makers addressed the need to modify or replace Law 220, which prescribed integration in terms of welfare instead of inclusion.

The following sections discuss the findings that emerged and draw conclusions depicted from the perspectives of the research participants and related to previous studies in the reviewed literature. A theoretical discussion is then provided on the importance of realizing human rights, social justice, and SDG4 of the latest 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015).

IE Conceptions

This section synthesizes and discusses the IE conceptions of schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers. Findings of the current dissertation allowed for an in-depth understanding of the responding change agents' IE conceptions as will be discussed in the proceeding sections under seven headings: (a) Understanding IE, (b) teachers' role, (c) teacher's comfort, (d) school practices, (e) principals' support to implement IE, (f) decision-makers' contribution to IE, (g) public versus private schools' readiness to implement IE, and (h) IE legislation.

Understanding Inclusive Education

The results showed a little discrepancy amongst the teachers, principals, and decision-makers' conceptions of IE; some were noted in topics related to their understanding of IE,

Unlike the schoolteachers, who had low conceptions of SEN inclusion, most of the principals and all the decision-makers confirmed that IE is a complete academic system where every student with whatever SENs is provided with the right customized education that has to be enforced in every school instead of being an

option. However, the chronicles of some principals revealed some confusion as to what is meant by IE. While all agreed that it refers to teaching all students within a single school, there were differences as to whether it is unconditional, based on sufficient resources and support, full or part-time provisions, and whether all students identified as having mild to severe SENs will be located in regular classes or resources rooms. Whilst SEN children's participation necessitates their learning and active engagement alongside their peers (Anderson et al., 2014; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). This result resonates with multiple studies (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2014; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; de Boer et al., 2011; Rakap & Kaczmarek, 2010; Sukumaran et al., 2015; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009).

Since conceptions are undoubtedly shaped by experience (Bradshaw & Mundia, 2006), we can assume that teachers and principals who are exclusionists or resistant to IE could have experienced inclusion as having unfavorable outcomes for their students. Teachers' reluctance to include every SEN child is justified in the findings from the FGDs and anecdotes when teachers denied the possibility of educating those who were intellectually challenged and other children with aggressive behavior or visual impairment.

Further, teachers in the current dissertation had the lowest score when asked if IE has educational benefits to both students with and without SENs. Teachers who are inclusionists or IE advocates asserted that inclusion prepares SEN children to live a healthy life in the 'real world,' and others reported that the typical children learned to be more caring and sensitive towards others. This found echoes in the universal aim of the Child Rights Convention (UN, 1989) on the belief that social inclusion starts with school inclusion and that students without SEN will learn respect and nondiscriminatory attitude from their SEN peers.

On the other hand, all INCL principals, unlike Pub and Pr principals, agreed that IE provided the social and safe school setting that received and served all students regardless of their abilities. Full IE advocacy was indicated by the principals who considered it beneficial to all students with and without SEN, while few others implied conditional IE advocacy on the belief that it is beneficial when considering mild SEN cases. It was noted that most INCL principals emphasized the social and emotional benefits of IE rather than the academic ones. The highlighted benefits included respect, better understanding, and appreciation of individual differences, meaningful friendships, and readiness for adult life in a diverse society. This resonates Praisner's (2003) findings that a school principal's attitude was affected by past positive or negative experiences with disabled students, noting that principals with positive attitudes towards IE are more likely to place disabled students in inclusive settings, whereas principals with negative attitudes towards IE are more likely to include them in more segregated environments.

Further, revealing the feeling of pity towards SEN children, several principals asserted that the benefit goes to the SEN children, unlike the typically growing ones, who though may learn to accept differences, will be subject to distraction and hindered academic progress. Research indicated that the inclusion of SEN students does not interfere with the academic achievement of typical students (Kalambouka et al., 2007; Rujis, 2017; Ruijs et al., 2010).

Conversely, the principals, who did not consider it beneficial to students and called for the segregation of the intellectually challenged and others with physical disabilities in special schools, indicated resistance to IE. Further, a compelling refutation of IE resistance was relayed to our culture that rejects SEN. Such results are consistent with some studies which found that principals had slightly negative IE

perceptions and encouraged including students with moderate rather than severe disabilities (Ball & Green, 2014; Conrad & Brown, 2011; Gous et al., 2014; Kuyini & Desai, 2007). Idol (2006) found a perceived lack of administrative support as the primary reason why teachers negatively view inclusion. This is where such administrators and future administrators fall short, for they do not have the big picture of social justice and inclusion; they do not have the right vision as long as they do not notice all the many decisions, policies, and actions they implement that do not support local vision of their school and the global inclusive vision of social justice.

In addition, aligned with the reviewed literature (Ainscow, 2005; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Hodkinson & Deverokonda, 2011; Jordan et al., 2009; Kershner, 2009; Slee, 2008; Slee & Allan, 2005; UNESCO, 1994, 2009, 2015), some decision-makers asserted that, unlike integration where you work on fixing something to fit, inclusion is when you fix the location and the environment so that the SEN learner fits in. Thus, IE is when you modify the setting and environment and not the SEN student. Still, most of the responding decision-makers were in consensus that specialized schools might be the only option for some SEN cases, which is consistent with the literature (Lauchlan & Greig, 2015; Vlachou, 1997 UNESCO, 2005).

Teacher's Role

General and SE teachers of the current dissertation had average IE conceptions of the teacher's role as an overall interpretation of the findings. Having in mind that not all the participating teachers work in inclusive schools, one may admit that the participating teachers are supportive of IE as an educational philosophy. While the majority of teachers and principals confirmed that GE teachers

cannot deliver SEN services in a mainstream class, some principals and all decision-makers declared a conditional consent that GE teachers need to have the knowledge, skills, training, and assistance to meet their diverse needs. Regretfully, the majority of principals lamented that their GE teachers cannot cater for SEN students because they lack the formal education, training, and assistance. The other principals confirmed that a GE teacher with a passion for teaching, good education, and awareness of job responsibilities can deliver SEN services.

Unlike most of the teachers who agreed that if a classroom teacher does not want to teach a particular child with an IEP, the class placement should change to another teacher who is willing to teach the child, most principals insisted that they cannot refuse, especially if it is part of their contract. To some participating principals, it is acceptable if they refuse, and they justified their tolerance to teachers' refusal as due to the lack of knowledge, specialty, and training, or to the right to accept or reject. GE teachers are likely to accept or refuse to educate SEN students per the level of SEN severity and the grade level of their students. However, if teachers are to collaborate and adequately provide input in the production of the IEP, they need to thoroughly understand the IEP provisions, including its objectives and schemes concerning the SEN child, in addition to its method of development.

The Lebanese principals are aware that GE teachers preparing their students to national official exams are unwilling to make any significant changes to their curriculum to accommodate the SEN students because of the focus on standards. They indicated that making changes would hinder them from meeting curriculum objectives that their students would be responsible for during state testing. This is consistent with the negative conceptions teachers held due to the pressure of covering content for mandated assessments, a matter that decreased the amount of

differentiation and individual instruction SEN students received in the inclusive classroom (Nichols, J., Dowdy, & Nichols, A., 2010). Surprisingly, some Pr and Pub principals of mainstream schools highlighted that even if teachers hold high IE conceptions, in reality, they are uncooperative to adapt materials or differentiate instruction and blame the poor performance of these students to laziness and parents' negligence.

In addition, almost all DMs, the majority of the teachers and principals indicated that SE teachers should be prepared and assisted to teach the whole class. All INCL principals declared that the SE teacher can teach the whole class in lower grade levels like cycles I and II, but that this becomes difficult for cycle III, especially that the subject matters become more demanding. This finding echoes that of Nichols et al. (2010), who found that SE teachers consider instruction to be the responsibility of the GE teacher, while the SE teacher takes care of modifications, accommodations, and classroom management. The SE teacher is often perceived as an assistant or helper. However, the instructional responsibilities tend to be fair if GE and SE teachers cooperate and share planning and instructional duties. That noted, teacher preparation programs need to be upgraded to enable teachers to educate all students if we are to encourage the one class for all philosophy.

Diverse conceptions on whether the SE teacher has a positive or negative impact on the whole class appeared. The majority of teachers and principals indicated a positive impact of the SE teacher on all the students in an inclusive class. Other mixed views emerged from some principals like a positive effect on the whole class but a negative one on the other teachers who follow traditional teaching methods hinting that they would be compelled to assume the role of an IE teacher meanwhile they are indulged in their traditional teaching approaches.

Another view reported that the SE teacher has a positive effect on the SEN child but a negative one on the other students without SEN hinting the factor of jealousy of the one-to-one attention given to SEN kids.

These results echo the finding of Mulholland and O'Connor (2016), who found that though participants knew the value of IE, its implementation was aspirational due to a number of challenges relating to time constraints, ad hoc planning and limited professional development opportunities (Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016). Since successful implementation of inclusive practice is mostly dependent on teachers, general and SE teachers are expected to be skilled in inclusion and collaboration to meet accountability criteria for SEN students (Ainscow, 2005; Florian & Rouse, 2010; Gajewski, 2014; Jordan et al., 2009; Rouse, 2009; Turnbull et al., 2007; UNESCO, 2009). Not only do teachers need to have the appropriate skills, knowledge, and understanding, but also, they should have certain values and conceptions to work effectively in inclusive settings (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). Along the same line, how teachers perceive their roles and their co-workers' roles affects their ability to collaborate effectively and successfully implement practices like inclusion (Vlachou, 2006).

Teachers are more likely to succeed in IE provisions provided that they are properly prepared. Thus, the readiness of teachers for IE requires, on top of incorporating SE modules into teacher education programs, the understanding, knowledge, and hands-on practice that ensure teachers are confident in teaching SEN pupils.

Teacher's Comfort

Teachers' self-esteem represented by their abilities is the backbone of self-efficacy (Palmer, 2006). When asked if they are comfortable when SEN students are

included in an IE setting and if they are ready to deliver SEN services to SEN students, teachers' conceptions score was average but the highest of all IE conceptions. These results, in general, are supported by related results in the literature (Adedoyin & Okere, 2017; Boakye-Akomeah, 2015; Mohd Ali et al., 2006; Song, 2016; Yan & Sin, 2014). Findings of the survey in this dissertation revealed that most teachers: (a) feel comfortable to include SEN students in the GE classroom, (b) are adequately prepared to deliver instruction to a wide variety of learners using the GE curriculum as a base for instruction, (c) are willing to collaborate with other teachers, (d) are comfortable and able to supervise and support the staff assigned to their classes, and (e) are comfortable to use technology to support the instruction of a wide variety of learners.

Surprisingly, opposed to teachers' results, most principals stated that not all their teachers were comfortable if they have SEN learners in their mainstream classroom because of teachers' lack of patience, classroom management skills, fear of being watched and judged, or their being novice. While some asserted their teachers were uncomfortable to deal with SEN students without any elaboration, some other INCL principals were positive and referred this to the support and collegial atmosphere of the school.

Upon interpreting teachers' scores on their comfort and self-efficacy to IE, the researcher rationalizes the high self-efficacy score to be due to job protection, layoff risk, or a promising future IE readiness. The former two sound alarming. Firstly, on the assumption that not all the participating teachers work in an inclusive setting, teachers were required to provide responses that touch on their proficiency, comfort, and willingness to serve SEN students. The researcher rationalizes that not all the participating teachers gave honest responses for fear of having their responses

released to those in authority (administrators/principals), and consequently could be traced back to protecting self-esteem. The second interpretation could be that teachers were afraid of layoff in case their lack of IE preparedness, comfort, and self-efficacy were revealed to those in authority. The third possible and encouraging interpretation could indicate teachers' future willingness to implement IE practices in case an inclusive setting is maintained in mainstream schools of Lebanon.

However, because MMR research design helps to detect more in-depth data relevant to teachers' conceptions, analysis of anecdotal evidence and FGDs spontaneously uncovered some of their hidden IE conceptions on their level of success if including several SEN children. Both public and private GE schoolteachers reported having a rather low level of perceived success, unlike teachers of private inclusive schools who reported perceiving a higher level of success if including the SEN children in their mainstream classrooms (refer to Tables 4.28, 4.29 & 4.30). In particular, teachers perceived themselves having the highest level of success if a child with mobility impairment is included in their classroom, followed by communication and interaction needs, followed by behavior and emotional and social development needs, followed by learning difficulty. Whilst they perceived themselves to be the least successful if including a child with visual impairment.

Though Kustantini (1999) reported the positive attitudes towards the inclusion of SEN children into the regular school system, she argued that IE in Lebanon remains in its early stages and that educators lack adequate knowledge and understanding of SEN academic needs.

School Practices

Inclusive practice refers to the various actions and activities that professionals in schools and other educational settings do to give meaning to their understanding of IE (Florian, 2009). As clarified in Chapter II, SEN practices involve several microsystems, such as school staff, administrators, and parents, who interact in the mesosystem to develop a plan that features a student's access to the GE curriculum. Hence the SEN practices supported by the principal are to provide provisions to SEN students directly in the microsystem (e.g., teachers and related paraprofessionals work with the student at school, and parents work with the student at home).

Teachers' conceptions of their school practices were average. In fact, the majority of participating teachers in this study agreed that they are aware of their school's philosophy about including SEN students, that their school's administration would support teachers working together to include SEN students, that the staff in their school feel positive about including SEN students and that members in their school are encouraged to collaborate and support all students. This notable finding would indicate a welcoming school climate and is usually correlated to inclusive schools (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006; Booth & Ainscow, 2011). However, having in mind that only about 50% of the participating teachers work at inclusive schools, this result seems questionable. A possible implication could be the hesitation of participants in the study to provide honest responses, for fear of burn out, possibly providing skewed results of those who feel strongly about the topic and/or their school practices, one way or the other. The researcher, though, attempted to control this by assuring teachers of the confidentiality of the study as described earlier.

On the other hand, principals' conceptions of SEN practices to implement IE emerged under sub-themes: Identifying SEN students, IEP, and parental involvement.

Identifying SEN students. Ensuring that SEN children obtain adequate care starts with the proper identification of their needs, to figure out a diagnosis. Some principals of the current research reported having a department dedicated to detect, screen, diagnose, and follow up the progress of SEN students. Others utilizing outsourcing or simple referral to a qualified specialist that provided the recommended intervention to be executed by the school.

Commonly, SENs can emerge early in childhood and become progressively worse if not treated. Some teachers in the current study reported recognizing students' SENs and referring the child to the school counselor or specialist for diagnosis. No matter which means is used, operational screening and diagnostic systems to detect developmental disorders at the earliest possible stage is essential, especially that the chances of overcoming difficulties are significantly enhanced by early identification and intervention.

IEPs. The researcher anticipated receiving input about IEPs from INCL principals only because it did not apply to the other private or public schools. All INCL school principals mentioned having a SE department that takes care of all SEN services, including the IEPs. Emphasizing teamwork, the counselor, general and SE teacher, and parents worked collaboratively in a small or an enlarged team, depending on the complexity of the student's needs. Besides, they indicated considering the IEP as a documented plan to summarize and record the individualized education program of an SEN student. Some stated that the IEP encapsulate adaptations in the regular curriculum, the required human and physical

resources, and the recommended setting and conditions such as the in-class or pull-out environment.

IEPs plot short and long-term learning outcomes for SEN students, enabling teachers to consider how the mainstream curriculum might be adapted and personalized. The IEPs specify the pupils' needs and goals and detail the degree and type of adaptations to be made to the curriculum to evaluate their progress. Further, an IEP serves as a contract between parents, teachers, and other professionals.

Principals are more likely to support IE by frequently conducting meetings with teachers, searching for successful approaches to provide instruction to SEN students, providing teachers with the needed resources, and working with teachers when deciding on educational programs and services for their SEN students. That noted, principals with SE knowledge can support SE programs at the school site and provide a positive impact on the programs (Frost & Kersten, 2011; Wakeman et al., 2006). However, consistent with the findings of the current research, most principals lack IE vision, conceptions, and awareness needed to support SEN practices, especially in the areas of accommodating resources, IEPs, and parental involvement, and thus, most of our Lebanese principals fail to accomplish their role as agents of change expected to educate all learners on the basis of social justice and human rights.

Parental involvement. It was well understood that all INCL principals recognized the significance of family involvement to serve SEN students better and that parents' awareness, acceptance of their child's SENs, and contribution to drafting the IEP are essential; yet, it could be an obstacle if parents displayed defiance. The findings align with extant literature on parental involvement as an essential factor associated with better results in the instruction of young children

with and without SEN in inclusive schools (Al-Dababneh, 2018; Link, 2014; Sukys, Dumciene, & Lapeniene, 2015). Parental involvement can take many forms, including involvement in school activities, volunteering in the classroom, providing technical assistance on effective teaching at home, participating in IEP planning and assessments for their SEN child. Because parents are motivated to see their SEN child succeed, this makes them entitled to play an important role on the IEP team.

Principals' Support to Implement IE – Exo, Meso, and Microsystem

Principals' conceptions of the needed support to implement IE were categorized under: (a) Professional development, (b) collaboration, (c) differentiated instruction, (d) resources, and (e) technology. All of these services rest in the exosystem, the broader social context which affects the school practices, the teachers and peers, and which in turn, have an impact on the child's growth and performance.

Professional development. The majority of the principals highlighted the value of teacher training and professional development. Having recognized that almost all INCL schools provided SEN related training to teachers and staff as part of the school policy, it was not surprising to note that the other Pub and Pr schools do not offer their teachers with training for they do not cater for SEN students; alternatively, NGO support is sought to train a teacher or two of a Pub school. Hence, such administrators do not have sufficient knowledge of educational diversity and are not prepared to create and sustain inclusive provisions (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). However, investing time via sufficient specialized training and supervising of teachers is likely to result in their learning and applying targeted skills as indicated by many scholars (Ashby, 2012; Ainscow, 2005; Hamman, et al., 2013; Florian & Rouse, 2010; Forlin, 2010; Opertti & Brady, 2011; Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2012; Subramanian & Manickaraj, 2017; Vaz et al.,

2015; Villa & Thousand, 2005; UNESCO IBE, 2008). In order to increase educational opportunities for all learners, a number of inter-connected factors must be in place to support the work of teachers within IE. Therefore, principals should offer training opportunities, such as courses, mentoring, study groups, or workshop series that are ongoing in order to motivate staff to continue refining their skills and knowledge about IE.

Collaboration. The majority of the principals emphasized collaboration as a fundamental element of support to facilitate IE by encouraging their teachers to meet formally and informally to follow up on the progress of their SEN children. Literature indicates that inclusive practices are most likely to develop from collaborative performance amongst administration and teachers (Booth, 2003; Conrad & Brown, 2011; Florian & Linklater, 2010; Florian & Rouse, 2010; Loreman et al., 2013; Villa & Thousand, 2005), which reduces the distinction between SEN students and their peers without SEN (Hwang & Evans 2011; Solis et al. 2012). Collaboration has been beneficial to lessen teachers' concerns around inclusion (Forlin et al., 2008) once SE and GE teachers exchange expertise or co-teach with different education and expectations in the mainstream classrooms.

However, some principals raised two points of concern about the collaboration between the part-time and full-time teachers and the tendency of GE teachers to shift responsibilities to SEN specialists. This finding aligns with those reported by other studies (Mullick et al., 2012; Patterson et al., 2000; Sharma et al., 2012) which highlighted some limitations that hinder collaboration such as role ambiguity, limited shared time, inappropriate administrative support, and the lack of professional development. Other limitations mentioned include lack of training, communication, and problem-solving, and lack of willingness of educators to

collaborate with outside resources and programming (Copfer & Spekht, 2014). Likewise, Mulholland and O'Connor (2016) found that the implementation of collaboration was aspirational due to the challenges of time constraints, ad hoc planning, and limited professional development opportunities. That noted, the primary responsibility lies in teacher preparation programs and principals' support. Teacher preparation programs are likely to change teacher attitudes and skills about inclusion and collaboration, while principals are in charge of encouraging co-teaching along with providing crucial factors, such as time, resources, and ongoing professional development directed at IE that can mainly be attained through collaboration (Friend, 2008; Sharma et al., 2007; Solis et al., 2012; Walsh; 2012).

Even when teachers are trained to serve SEN children, they lack the confidence to do so, and, therefore, school administration, needs to commit to collaboration and encourage its practices while combining their values, expertise, and experiences to create a culture that fosters positive education for all.

Differentiating instruction. It is not a surprise why the participating principals of inclusive schools support their teachers to differentiate instruction. Having realized its value, these principals encouraged employing it in assessment and provided the needed support. This echoes the findings of Hertberg-Davis and Brighton (2006) who studied the characteristics of principals that impacted teachers' willingness and ability to differentiate instruction over three years. They found that principals who were most successful in encouraging their teachers to differentiate instruction were supportive, believed that change was possible, and understood that differentiation is a long-term process. Accordingly, principal support is key to teachers' willingness to differentiate instruction. Besides, differentiating instruction should be considered as a teaching philosophy rather than a strategy built on the idea

that students learn best when their teachers accommodate the differences when developing their essential skills (Dixon et al., 2014; Tomlinson, 2005). In addition, a school norm that supports differentiated instruction strongly encourages to implement the instructional practice (Goddard, Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky, 2010; Hertberg-Davis & Brighton, 2006, Kershner, 2009; Tomlinsone, 2005).

Resources. Half of the participating principals asserted the importance of having sufficient resources. Most of INCL principals elicited the availability of the following human and physical resources: SENs educators, assistant teachers, psychologists, counselors, speech, occupational, and psychomotor therapists, accessible school building, ramps, toilets for SEN students, elevators, wheelchair, computer lab, interactive boards, attractive classroom setting, resources room with various books, audiovisuals, and sensory objects suitable for SEN students. Regretfully the rest of the principals are in short of human and physical resources despite admitting their importance in the case of inclusive schools. This implies administrators' awareness of the necessity of providing resources and support. Placing SEN students in mainstream schools without considering their specific additional support needs should not be ignored (Adedoyin, & Okere 2017; Toppings, 2012). The research conducted by Ahmmed et al. (2013) found that perceived school support influenced teachers' intentions more than attitudes, teacher efficacy, teachers' age, and teaching experience. Though moving towards an inclusive school can be regarded as one way of attracting extra resources, recognizing the potential of providing a range of resources, networking and collaboration should strengthen the scope of the educational system to reach out to unprotected groups (Ainscow, 2014).

Therefore, administrators who establish an environment of support for their teachers build higher conceptions for their school and all stakeholders. Those

resources could include staff development, specialists, co-teachers, paraprofessionals, and other supports to facilitate the progress of teachers and students in the inclusive classroom.

Technology. Of equal importance to the majority of the principals is the use of technology. The principals stated the value of having available technological tools for the sake of facilitating instruction to all students in general and SEN students in particular such as computers, LCD projectors, interactive boards, and Ipads. Those principals who provided such tools are mindful that they facilitate access to the curriculum and to essential educational activities that take place daily in almost every classroom such as reading, writing, and testing. Literature on assistive technology (Ahmad, 2015; Dell & Newton, 2014; Goddard, 2004; Male, 2003; Philpott et al., 2010; WHO, 2009) has demonstrated its effectiveness for enabling many SEN students to demonstrate their understanding of academic subjects even if they cannot write legibly or speak intelligibly.

Regretfully, most Pub principals complained about their old and inefficient computers. Today’s reality is that primary technology devices are missing in most of our local low-income public schools. Few have computers and technology conditions at their schools are typically humble, a matter which makes us wonder why our national schools lag and wait for donations rather than funds.

Decision-makers’ Contribution to IE – Exosystem

When asked about their ministry/NGO’s contribution to IE, decision-makers provided various inputs.

Governmental contribution to IE. A former CERD representative who reported publishing a guidebook about the different SEN categories in addition to an index of inclusive schools in Lebanon, bitterly expressed her disappointment for not

executing the National Plan for IE proposed by CERD back in 2012 due to the lack of funds. Besides, governmental decision-makers shared how their ministries took part in issuing Law 220 and paved the way for students with sensory SENs to sit for official exams. Others from MEHE talked about: (a) Providing training to public schools, (b) getting more funds to help SEN students in public schools, (c) making arrangements with NGOs on how to provide support sessions to SEN students outside the classroom or in their centers in the afternoon in addition to pull-out programs in some public schools, (d) planning to hire 30 special educators in order to initiate the IE pilot project in 30 public schools, a plan to extend to 60 public schools in the subsequent year, and (e) launching the pilot project with the support from UNICEF and the British Council.

As for SEN provisions, MEHE has a special examination center, computers, exam sheets in different formats, human and technological assistance during exams, extra time, breaks, exemption from Grade 9 exams, in addition to catering to the needs of hospital-bound students. However, there will be no interference with the intended learning outcomes. Further, it was assured that the public schools going through rehabilitation are compelled to allow SEN admission to their school. Except for the necessary accommodations to sit for the official exams, visually impaired students are still referred to MOSA since MEHE does not have the paraprofessionals nor the needed platforms to educate them.

Primarily, local legislation across all public sectors should lead to the provision of services to enhance working towards IE. Upon examining the governmental contribution to IE, it is apparent that the progress of their responsibility in this area has been unbalanced. The commitment to IE must be specified in detail in the Lebanese legislation so that accountability and obligation

are explicit. Accordingly, the government would work towards a common goal and be held accountable for ensuring its implementation for every child. For example, provisions of accessibility, enrolment in mainstream schools, curriculum and assessment modification, providing resources, and inspection regimes are required.

NGO's contribution to IE. Heads of NGOs shared with the researcher how their institutions contributed to IE by providing SEN students with transport to and from school and equipping them with the needed assistive tools. Some organizations have agreed-upon protocols with MEHE to provide consultancy programs to support some public schools in dealing with SEN children in addition to teacher training, modeling, and mentoring in the class. Others got involved in national marathons in addition to workshops and seminars held in different schools in celebration of the National Day for Kids with Learning Difficulties, 22 April. In addition, some mentioned a collaboration mechanism between their association and MEHE to provide free diagnosis of SEN students who will be taking their Brevet exams, in order to determine whether special measures need to be taken so that SEN students sit for the official exams.

However, the liability of stakeholders requires a more productive commitment to IE. Whilst activists of the civil society, decision-makers of NGOs, shyly attempted to implement IE (Brousse- Chamichian, Murphy, Makarem & Marji, 2000; McBride, Dirani, & Mukalled, 1999; Rizic, 2007). The contribution of NGOs needs to further realize IE as a process that requires changes at both the level of the education system as well as the school level (UNESCO, 2005). In other words, change is correlated to augmenting their influential IE endorsement.

Public versus Private Schools' Readiness to Implement IE

Results of decision-makers' interviews revealed participants' conceptions of public and private schools' readiness to implement IE. While almost all participants considered that, in terms of the physical aspects, curriculum, and teacher preparation, public schools do not have a safe environment to accommodate and educate SEN students, the majority of decision-makers said that a few private schools are already inclusive, some others have the potentials to implement IE, while the rest opt not to consider it due to the high costs it entails. These findings echo those of principals and schoolteachers of this study as well as to others in the reviewed literature (Conrad & Brown, 2011; Khochen, 2017; Lai et al., 2017; Loreman et al., 2014; Slee, 2010; Watkins, & Ebersold, 2016; Wehbi, 2006).

Though some private schools in Lebanon are inclusive (Dirani, 2018; Nadjarian, 2009; Oweini & El-Zein, 2014), they enroll students with mild SENs. Besides, private inclusive schools are two to three times more expensive than the regular school for having to deal with the costs of various paraprofessionals, a matter that has added the burden on parents. Regretfully, SEN children whose parents cannot afford the fees are generally not accepted in private inclusive schools (Wehbi, 2006), and if they happen to be admitted to a public or private school, they are left to suffer or drop out.

IE Legislation – Exosystem

In terms of legislation, the majority of participants (80%) asserted the necessity of ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that Lebanon signed back in 2007. An agreement that is not ratified is not binding (Khochen, 2017). Once ratified, Lebanon is obligated to modify the local laws. While most principals were not aware (12/30) or not fully aware (9/30) of Law

220 except for eight INCL principals, all the responding decision-makers indicated their familiarity with Law 220. Unlike decision-makers, teachers' knowledge of the IE related policy, Law 220, was meager with the majority (80%) of the sample not aware of its existence. Whilst some decision-makers talked positively about Law 220; they revealed their concern about its proper implementation especially that the responsibility of providing the needed provisions to SEN persons, including the academic ones, are primarily allocated to MOSA. However, it is more sensible if the Ministry of Education (MEHE) takes this responsibility. Thus, an implementation gap is what causes Law 220 to fail. Further elaboration on legislation is provided in the IE challenges section of this chapter.

IE Challenges

Various challenges were tracked along the findings of teachers, principals, and decision-makers and resulted in seven challenges: (a) Inefficient IE policy (b) inadequate teacher preparation, (c) SEN stigma, (d) inadequate resources, (e) rigid and heavy curriculum, (e) decline of academic standards, and (f) increased workload.

Inefficient IE Policy

Unlike the responding decision-makers who indicated their familiarity with Law 220, the majority of teachers (80%) and most principals (21/30) were not aware or not fully aware of Law 220. This is an exciting finding but a point of discussion. Most INCL principals recommended having clear local IE related policies and mechanisms, which will change the attitudes of people toward SEN and IE if enforced rather than being an option. McLaughlin (2009) indicated three related characteristics for success as being the knowledge of policies and laws on SEN education, maintaining a positive culture, and the facilitation of participation in assessment and GE activities. Principals and administrators are expected to exhibit a

solid understanding of the legislation and procedures related to IE through the careful and efficient supervision of the educational program for SEN students (Power, 2007). However, most school administrators lack the knowledge, conceptions, and awareness needed to implement IE, especially in the areas of legal issues, IEPs, and academic achievement for SEN students (Burdette, 2010; Frost & Kersten, 2011).

According to the responding decision-makers, the IE related policy, Law 220, needs several amendments and decrees to render it doable, especially that the National Council on Disability (NCOD) is not operational. The feedback loop, monitoring, and censorship were emphasized. The lack of monitoring of the provisions and effectiveness of IE is very critical, as Watkins and Ebersold (2016) confirmed. Besides, consistent with the reports of UNESCO (2009) and UN (2017), some NGO decision-makers addressed the need to modify or replace Law 220, which prescribes integration in terms of welfare instead of inclusion.

Primarily, as was elaborated in previous sections, the Lebanese Law 220 is incompatible with IE standards and lacks implementation mechanisms (Al-Hroub, 2015; Damaj, 2008). That noted, Law 220 needs major amendments to help make IE a reality in all Lebanese schools. Further, there is the concern of reviewing and modifying the national law to include the conceptions of inclusion, as Al-Hroub (2015) asserted. The term, ‘inclusion’/ ‘Damej,’ was cited once in the introduction of Law 220. Inclusion has never been mentioned in section seven of the Law on the right of the disabled individuals to education. There was no mention, as well, of diagnosis, evaluation, or early intervention for SEN children (Al-Hroub, 2015). All and above, the compulsory national policy that should be promoted and implemented

has to reflect the signed and ratified international conventions, not to overlook ratifying CRPD (2006).

Therefore, decision-makers in the exosystem should strive to realize IE that is built on human rights and social justice principles. For this to come true, the Lebanese IE policy should consider the key features of equity, access, and/or on the removal of factors that exclude or marginalize through enforcing, monitoring, and enacting measures for those who violate.

Inadequate Teacher Preparation

Albeit the majority of the participating teachers in the current study are university degree holders (refer to Table 4.5 in Chapter V), most of them are not ready to teach inclusive classrooms. Regretfully, an alarming percentage of teachers (94%) revealed their concern about their lack of IE knowledge and skills, as per the survey results. FGDs and anecdotal evidence confirmed their lack of IE readiness and the need for professional development in terms of teaching practices and maintaining discipline.

Likewise, the majority of principals identified the lack of appropriate education for teachers while insisting that teacher preparation programs offered by universities to all student teachers should address IE as a major constituent of their curriculum irrespective of the specialty. In addition, principals specified the lack or inadequate training provided to teachers.

Similar to the principals' findings in the current research, the most distressing challenge to all of participating decision-makers is teacher preparation encompassing the deficient appropriate education and training. To provide inclusive practices, participants denoted the need to change the philosophy, vision and mission of the

school, including the principal, teachers, therapists, and staff, since the acceptance issue should prevail.

In multiple studies teachers have revealed their lack of knowledge and the need for more training before being placed in an inclusion classroom (e.g. Agbenyega, 2007; Beres, 2001; Bhatnagar & Das, 2013; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Forlin et al., 2008; Gökdere, 2012; Horne & Timmons, 2009; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Sharma, 2001; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). Earlier studies conducted in Lebanon (D-RASATI II, 2016; Khochen & Radford, 2012; MEHE, 2010) echo the shortage of qualified and trained IE professionals in public mainstream primary schools in addition to the low achievement levels of students in Lebanon in comparison to their international peers (MEHE, 2012a). This confirms that the lack of IE knowledge and training often leads to teachers feeling underprepared to work with SEN students. More specifically, teachers' actions in the classrooms are greatly influenced by their knowledge of the learning characteristics of their students and by their knowledge about available SEN support services.

The education programs of universities in Lebanon focus on subject-specific courses and allow for greater depth and breadth of content-specific knowledge in the GE classroom, and, thus, the general educator is the expert in the content and is usually responsible for only one subject area. Whilst most SE teachers in inclusive classrooms serve SEN students in a variety of different content areas.

Moreover, the responding GE teachers considered the inclusion of SEN students, especially those with emotional and behavioral disorders, as producing difficulties in classroom management. The researcher expected this result because of the inadequate teacher preparation programs that enable student teachers to master the subject matter irrespective of SENs. However, GE teachers are now teaching

classes that include SEN students with emotional and behavioral disorders, and, hence, perceive them as difficult to manage while teaching required content standards. Whereas SE teachers, during their teacher education programs, are required to take courses in classroom management and approaches to behavior management of SEN students, such as conducting practical behavioral assessments and analysis and making behavior intervention plans. They do not have mastery of the various subject matters, which is why they cannot provide services to advanced classes beyond the primary grade levels.

Put in different words, teachers' readiness for IE requires, incorporating mandatory SE courses into teacher education programs, whereby student teachers are educated and trained on IE pedagogies and on modifying school subjects as well as their teaching methodologies to confidently serve SEN students. Furthermore, the success of IE can come true if both higher education and personnel development programs share the commitment to helping to train and educate our prospect and current GE teachers. Nevertheless, this does not negate the significance of paraprofessionals to assist in handling the SEN child's academics, behaviors, personal care, gathering student information, and smoothing social interactions between their peers.

Therefore, until GE teachers in Lebanon receive the needed knowledge about SEN, related teaching methods, training in classroom management, and ongoing professional development for the inclusive classroom, IE challenges will likely persist.

SEN Stigma

The participants of this study highly emphasized the challenge of SEN stigma that is prevalent in our schools amongst teachers, students, and parents

(microsystem). They described SEN stigma as the direct impetus of the status quo, uncooperative staff, and parental resistance. The ideal basis for IE is SEN acceptance, nourishing and regard (Tomlinson, 2005), it is essential to consider the wide differences among students in a classroom, recognizing each student's strengths while strengthening their shortcomings (Guild, 2001). Under the challenge of SEN stigma, some sub-themes will be discussed in the subsequent sections: Non-acceptance by teachers, non-acceptance by parents and peers, and the lack of SEN and IE awareness.

Non-acceptance by teachers. Some principals denoted the challenge of having teachers who did not accept SEN students and linked it to teachers' prejudice and judgment that SEN students are unintelligent, lazy, or not trying hard enough. Other principals related it to teachers' old age, negative attitude, or lack of preparation and training. This finding resonates with other studies (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010; Peters, 2009, Nagata, 2008; Sharma et al., 2017; Sukumaran et al., 2015) which revealed the different causes behind the exclusion of SEN students as based on disability stigma, pervasive negative perceptions and beliefs, poverty, and lack of access to education. The principals' expectations of their teachers' negative convictions could also be the result of a school culture of negative perceptions of inclusion. Most principals and schoolteachers reported having little or no SE training or experience. This lack of practice and training leaves administrators with few skills to help teachers with the day-to-day difficulties in the inclusive classroom.

Several studies from the reviewed literature support the findings of this research (De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert 2010, 2011; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Kuyini & Mangope, 2011; Shah, 2005; Shah et al., 2016).

Non-acceptance by parents and peers. Though an inclusive classroom requires a genuine acceptance of all children in their variety and diversity of needs and difficulties, principals and teachers are apprehensive about the non-acceptance of SEN students by parents and typical peers.

Teachers' revealed their worries of the attitude of parents who resist seeking support to their SEN child on the belief that nothing is going to change, and that they would rather invest in their typically developing children instead of having their money go down the drain on the extremely costly expenses of IE in Lebanon. Once they are referred to the specialist for a diagnosis, stunned by such news, they refuse and show overwhelming emotions of shock, disbelief, anxiety, fear, despair, and shame. First, parents could be ashamed of having an SEN child, and, thus, deny or hide it. Second, parents, often, cannot afford the expense of IE education is reserved for the affluent people. Participants also hinted to parents not accepting to have their typical child in the same class with SEN children. Other researches echo this finding (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010; Albuquerque, Pinto, & Ferrari, 2018; Conrad & Brown, 2011; De Boer et al., 2011; Glazzard, 2011; Kavelashvili, 2017; Main et al., 2016; Mullick et al., 2012; Pijl & Frissen, 2009).

Further, teachers and principals identified the challenge of having typical students not accepting SEN peers which resulted in labeling or bullying. This corroborates the findings of some former studies (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Jahnukainen, 2015; Kuyini & Mangope, 2011; Shah, 2005; Shah et al., 2016) employing CIES (Sharma & Desai, 2002), which indicated the non-acceptance of SEN students by their typical peers.

Generally, children develop attitudes they are exposed to and most often adopt the attitudes of their parents. In other words, parents' attitudes and behavior

influence those of their children. That said, parents who do not support IE might negatively influence the formation of their child's attitudes and behavior. Accordingly, intervention studies need to improve their attitudes towards SEN students.

Lack of SEN and IE awareness. Another IE challenge reported by more than half of the participating principals is the lack of SEN and IE awareness in all the country, including teachers, parents, and students. In consistence with some studies (Gökdere, 2012; Kavelashvili, 2017; Mitiku et al., 2014), principals asserted that cultural aspects and lack of awareness programs in the country still prevent SEN students from receiving the appropriate education services. Besides, they cited the importance of spreading awareness about SENs, acceptance of SEN children, and the importance of IE through media and social networks. Article 24 of the CRPD (UN, 2006), which Lebanon signed but not ratified, stated that professionals and staff in schools must be trained while incorporating disability awareness in addition to interventions that support SEN persons.

Featured by parents, teachers, and principals not accepting SEN children, as well as decision-makers who are not convinced of IE, SEN stigma is another perceived IE challenge. Further, it was conveyed that those in power need to have SEN acceptance, to admit their right to education, and to implement the IE law. Thus, the awareness of those in charge, of those in the front line is a prerequisite to making our community aware.

Stigma can hinder IE and attempts to minimize this are important to the human experience of growth and development and social justice. However, knowledge and awareness may decrease stigmatized beliefs about the SENs and, therefore, generate positive mindsets towards IE. Research has shown that providing

individuals with knowledge reduces stigma towards disability or disorder. Additionally, the culture of the community and school reinforces the values needed by all parents and students to thrive educationally in a stigma-free and society. Hence, attitudinal changes and SEN awareness are critical to combat stigma and to implement IE.

Inadequate Resources

Data derived from the participating teachers, principals, and decision-makers confirmed the IE challenge of inadequate resources. It was apparent that teachers are fully conscious of and concerned about the scarcity of resources in their schools. It was one of the highest concerns teachers identified in the current study, especially when schools do not have resources to support the learning of all children. Though the participants are generally supportive of IE, they feel hindered to implement it in regular classrooms due to concerns about resources.

Similar to the findings of this study, the lack of resources as an obstacle to including SEN students has been the highest concern in all of the reviewed literature on this topic and has been echoed by many scholars (e.g. Agbenyega, 2007; Adedoyin, & Okere 2017; Bhatnagar & Das, 2013; Clough & Garner, 2003; Glazzard, 2011; Horne & Timmons, 2009; Idol, 2006; Kuyini & Mangope, 2011; Mullick, Deppeler & Sharma, 2012; Pantic & Florian, 2015; Park et al., 2018; Shah et al., 2016; Sharma, 2001; Sharma et al., 2007, 2008; Thompson et al., 2015; Toppings, 2012). Therefore, placing SEN students in mainstream schools without considering their specific additional support needs and resources should not be overlooked.

Different types of resources identified in the study are discussed in the following sections: Lack of human resources, lack of physical resources, and inadequate infrastructure.

Lack of human resources. All participants voiced their concern about the inadequate availability of educational psychologists, SE teachers, and paraprofessionals, such as psychomotor and speech therapists. This finding resonates the what has been cited in literature (Brotherson et al., 2001; Ciyer, 2010; Chhabra et al., 2010; Conrad & Brown, 2011; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Kim Fong Poon-McBrayer, 2017; Ira, 2015; Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012; Mullick et al., 2012; Poon-McBrayer & Wong, 2013). That noted, such a shortcoming can only be resolved by the proper teacher education programs, training, and ongoing professional development.

In order to prepare SEN students to become independent and productive, teachers, and educators must share the responsibility. Considering that general classroom teachers are unwilling and most often not equipped to deal with SEN students (Gerber, 2012), paraprofessionals are needed to assist in the mainstream classrooms. Not only do they provide SEN students with emotional, physical, and motivational support, paraprofessionals can ease effective inclusion by managing the child's academics, behaviors, personal care, gathering student information, and smoothing social interactions between their peers.

The last resources concern most of the teachers reported is the inadequate administrative support and poor collaboration, an issue that has been echoed in many studies (Ahmmed et al., 2013; Bhatnagar & Das, 2013; Opertti & Brady, 2011; Sharma et al., 2012). As adequate support enables SEN children to learn together in mainstream classrooms (UNESCO, 2015, 2005), teachers' actions in the classrooms

are greatly influenced by available support services (Pinar & Sucuoglu, 2011), especially in the case of big size classes.

In Lebanon, class sizes are relatively large, with an ordinary classroom of about 30 students. In most circumstances, the large class size makes it tough for the individual teacher to adequately support SEN students. The need for administrative support and teaching assistants or paraprofessionals who are trained in supporting SEN students is essential in schools where students with SEN are enrolled. However, it may not be convenient in Lebanon's context to employ these professionals due to the shortage of funds, and because not all teacher preparation programs and professional development courses teach these skills. Thus, Lebanon has an acute shortage of well-trained professionals (including teachers, paraprofessionals, and teaching assistants) to support classroom teachers when teaching SEN students. That noted, MEHE needs to take into consideration the concern of practicing teachers and resolve such issues mainly that negative mindsets are rooted in the lack of knowledge and skills of meeting the learning needs of SEN students in regular classrooms.

Lack of physical resources and instructional materials. The inadequacy of resources is another barrier to IE, as most of the participants indicated. Physical resources are very fundamental for the proper provisions of IE. These resources include teaching materials, IT equipment, computer-assisted instruction. The majority of public schools cited the deficiency of facilities, customized SEN books and instructional materials, computers, audiovisual tools, and information and communications technology (ICT). The challenge of serving SEN students with sensory impairments was highlighted by the principals, as well. This lack of

instructional materials and technology integration in the national curriculum has previously been emphasized by MEHE (2012a).

Reviewed literature stressed the inadequacy of physical resources and instructional materials as one of the IE challenges encountered (e.g. Adedoyin, & Okere 2017; Ahmmed et al., 2013; Brotherson et al., 2001; Ciyer, 2010; Chhabra et al., 2010; Conrad & Brown, 2011; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Glazzard, 2011; Ira, 2015; Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012; Mullick et al., 2012; Poon-McBrayer & Wong, 2013; Round et al., 2016; Toppings, 2012).

However, education should be served to children with and without SEN. That said, a barrier-free environment should be sought, where SEN children live and learn within social justice and a state mandate where laws protect their rights. Adequate physical resources would have to be allocated to help these children learn. Along the same line, instructional materials can build learning environments that reduce, or eliminate barriers to information for SEN students. While IE may help attain this goal, the inclusion of SEN students in mainstream schools requires more considerable attention.

According to some studies in developed and developing countries (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010; Bhatnagar & Das, 2013; Horne & Timmons, 2009; Idol 2006; Round et al., 2016; Shah et al., 2016; Sharma, 2001; Sharma et al., 2007, 2008; Thompson et al., 2015), though teachers are generally supportive of an inclusive approach, they feel hindered to teach children with diverse needs in regular classrooms due to concerns about the lack of physical resources. Still, IE in not satisfactorily implemented in most developing countries (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002), as is the case of Lebanon. For example, the visually impaired students, who attempt the national level examinations in grades nine and twelve, are usually expected to

answer the same questions set for all students in all subjects, such as mathematics, science, and geography. This is a clear clue that there is a requirement within the Lebanese education system as a whole and within the school, in particular, to look into the appropriateness and relevance of curricula for SEN students. From the researcher's experience, some schools provide full support by making some adjustments like allocating extra time for students during examinations and supplying large print materials for visually impaired students. However, the practical part of the problem remains with the relevancy of questions specifically for students with visual impairment, which is linked to the substance of the curriculum.

Therefore, schools are expected to provide utilities and learning materials with accessible SEN friendly formats customized for individual differences.

Inadequate Infrastructure. IE demands accessible infrastructure and school facilities to cater for students with physical disabilities. Most of the teachers and principals lamented about the inappropriate infrastructure of their schools, including the small size of classrooms, lack of elevators, ramps, and special needs friendly toilets. Thus, most school premises in Lebanon are not disability friendly, and the inadequate infrastructure has deprived people with disability to blend into mainstream schools (Council for Development and Reconstruction 2005; MEHE, 2012a; Wehbi 2006). This IE challenge reported by teachers and principals of the current research aligns with earlier studies (Bhatnagar & Das, 2013; Brotherson et al., 2001; Ciyer, 2010; Conrad & Brown, 2011; Kavelashvili, 2017; Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012; Mullick et al., 2012; Pijl & Frissen, 2009; Shah, 2005; Shah et al., 2016; Vashishtha & Priya, 2013). Though article 33 of Law 220 states that every disabled person has the right of accessibility to all buildings, public, and private accommodations, neither MOSA nor MEHE have been able to enforce this law.

The subsequent level of concern the majority of teachers had was about the inappropriate infrastructure. Similar findings were reported in the reviewed research (Ciyer, 2010; Kavelashvili 2017; Mullick, Deppeler & Sharma, 2012;). Though article 33 of Law 220 states that every disabled person has the right of accessibility to all buildings, public, and private accommodations while taking into consideration infrastructure aspects, regretfully, most public and private mainstream schools do not provide an accessible environment for all learners (Council for Development and Reconstruction 2005; D-RASATI II, 2016; Wehbi 2006; UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2017) nor do they have the required resources to meet the various educational needs for technology and Internet connectivity (MEHE, 2012a). Literature suggests that removing barriers to education for all is usually the starting point towards inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). This necessitates making sure school facilities are accessible, including the lifts, toilet facilities, classroom mobility, and ramps. According to the researcher's experience as an educator and teacher trainer, not only do we lack accessible transportation to and from schools, our infrastructure, both public and private, is not SEN-friendly. For example, not all schools (even if categorized as inclusive) have ramps for wheelchair users. The chairs supplied to schools are ordinary chairs which are not appropriate for some SEN children. Hence, these issues act as barriers to IE.

Moving around in the cities of Lebanon is not easy for SEN persons. Even in rural regions, many schools are located far away from children's homes, and most of the schools are located on slopes and mountains due to the mountainous topography of Lebanon. That said, not all SEN persons in Lebanon have accessible transportation nor afford to buy special devices and equipment to support them. Because of poor accessibility, we may not see many SEN people on the streets or

public places. A Survey conducted by LPHU (as cited in Alef, Act for human rights, 2015) to assess the accessibility of 70% of official high schools in Beirut showed that only 0.04% of them were equipped to receive SEN students.

However, looking at the bright side, reports by D-RASATI (2011& 2016), USAID (2016) and CDR (2016) confirmed that by the end of the USAID-funded project some considerable accomplishments were reached including the reconstruction of 183 public schools and 6 training centers, field survey for the infrastructure of 1282 public schools, furnishing scientific laboratories of 238 secondary public schools and 6 training centers, and launching of the National Educational Technology Strategic Plan (ICT). While the convenience of special facilities and support from experts is necessary to accommodate the varying needs of children with SEN, progress for Lebanon at removing such barriers is at a snail pace. Lebanon is yet to make public and private schools quite accessible for these students. Conversely, serious detriments are anticipated because of the lack of special facilities and support for SEN students. Several SEN students are likely to drop out of school, not to mention that some SEN children have never been to school. What renders this unpleasant situation worse is the reluctance of local authorities to implement the laws. Thus, the issues, as mentioned earlier, need to be addressed for the successful promotion of IE.

Lack of funds. The majority of teachers, principals, and decision-makers are concerned about the lack of funds, an issue that prevents them from reimbursing the expenses of resources, buildings, hiring SE teachers and paraprofessionals, in addition to teacher professional development. Several studies in the reviewed literature resonate with this finding (Ajodhia-Andrews & Frankel, 2010; Brotherson

et al., 2001; Chhabra et al., 2010; Glazzard, 2011; Ira, 2015; MEHE, 2012a; Sharma et al., 2017).

IE is very costly for parents, schools, and even for governments, and financial limitations are not new. National and international funds are often restricted, and support from charity donors and NGOs is frequently pursued. Even if funding is available, the challenge lies in the sustainability of funds, especially that Lebanon depends on charity funds from foreign countries and huge loans from the World Bank. That is why IE is not a priority within the government's budget.

Rigid and Heavy Curriculum

All participants identified the rigid and heavy curriculum, designed for typically developing students, as an IE challenge. The Lebanese curriculum is inflexible and dense; it gets more challenging as SEN students approach the national Brevet and Baccalaureate exams. Albeit CERD (2012) issued a decree that exempts SEN students in grade nine from the Brevet official examinations, some principals mentioned the difficulty of finishing the secondary education simply because they get stuck on their way to grade 12, in the national Baccalaureate exam. Thus, making the curriculum flexible and SEN customized it is yet to be considered.

Similarly, literature (Kuyini & Desai, 2007; Patterson et al., 2000) has indicated the issue of inflexible curricula that educators encounter, especially when demanding special education students to participate in official testing and accountability programs. Whilst an IE mandates that all children receive quality education when provided equal access to a single accessible curriculum that gives teachers the flexibility to make suitable adaptations or modifications, so as to reach all children with and without SENs (EFA, 2005; Ferguson, 2008; Howell, 2016; Mitchell, 2014; Patterson et al., 2000; UNESCO, 2009). Therefore, such a challenge

can be resolved via a curriculum flexible enough to modify and customize while catering for the individual needs and abilities of each student.

Decline in Academic Standards

General policies that focus on competition between schools adopt an approach to raise standards, and care for measurable achievements and outcomes more than the conditions, represent a system that runs against inclusion (Booth, 2003). Regretfully, this applies to Lebanon, whose educational system emphasizes the competition between schools based on measurable attainments. Maintaining the academic standards of typical students was the least identified IE challenge in the eyes of some responding principals and the third factor of concern in the eyes of most participating teachers.

Concerned about the decline of the academic achievement of students without SEN, the decline of school academic standard, and the decline of their performance, participating teachers believed that it is difficult to divide attention if including SEN students requiring assistance in self-help skills.

Many studies in the reviewed literature corroborate the findings of this research. As is the case in Lebanon, the Australian educational system is based on the academic achievement scores of students, which is why Sharma et al. (2018) indicates that Australian teachers revealed a higher level of concern about academic standards than their Italian counterparts. Similar to the Lebanese and Australian academic benchmarks, in India, Yadav et al. (2015) elaborated that because teachers in private schools are under increased pressure and inspection to prepare students for hard competitive exams leading to careers in engineering or science-related domains, their highest level of concerns was the academic achievement. This result was

consistent with the findings of other researchers (e.g., Bhatnagar, 2006; Glazzard, 2011; Shah, 2005).

Similarly, a few principals (6/30) mentioned the decline of academic achievement of students without SEN on the belief that they will be distracted from the presence and extra attention given to SEN students. However, recent studies (Dessemontet & Bless, 2013, Kalambouka et al. 2007) explored the impact of including intellectually challenged children in GE classrooms on the academic achievement of their peers. Results showed no significant difference in the progress of these students. Another study (Ruijs et al., 2010) on a sample of 27,745 primary school students examined whether typically developing students were affected by IE. Researchers used linguistic, numerical, and IQ tests for the assessment of students throughout the project. Analysis of the results showed that there was no difference in the performance of students.

Whilst other principals (5/30) identified the decline of school academic standards as a potential barrier, especially that they care a lot for their reputation and academic ranking. This is due to GE policies that run counter to inclusion in their emphasis on competition between schools.

Exclusionists claim that the quality of education is at stake in the case of IE. They argue that the standard of achievement and assessment of learning outcomes at the national and international levels are negatively affected. Negative mindsets are also presented in terms of the outcomes of the IE for students with and without SENs (Lambe & Bones 2007; Savolainen et al. 2012). Similarly, teachers of the current study denied the possibility of educating SEN students, especially those who were intellectually challenged. Some even expressed their annoyance because of SEN students’ reliance on their typical peers for support.

Thus, the Lebanese teachers are worried about the likelihood of adverse effects SEN children inclusion on the academic achievement of students without SEN as well as on the academic standards of their school. The reason behind this fear is the fact that schools in Lebanon are ranked on how well they perform academically. Nevertheless, if we are to encourage IE, schools are not only to be ranked on how well they perform academically but also on how well they include SEN learners.

Increased Workload

Most responding teachers and principals confirmed that the lack of time, lack of incentives, number of students per class, and difficulty of maintaining discipline contributed to their perceived challenge of workload in case of including SEN students in mainstream classrooms. Because of the emotional, mental and organizational stress associated with the teacher's role in an inclusive classroom (Sharma, 2002; Shea, 2010), teachers are worried about the workload to be added on their shoulders. These are matters related to the increased stress, additional paperwork, curricular adaptation, interruption of support personnel, collaboration, conducting IEP meetings, and having to deal with the diverse circumstances of SEN students in an inclusive setting. Other studies support this finding (Agbenyega, 2007; Ahsan et al., 2012; Chhabra et al., 2010; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Kuyinin & Mangope, 2011; Round et al., 2016; Sukumaran et al., 2015).

Lack of time**.** The current study revealed that most of the teachers are concerned about the lack of time. The reviewed literature supports this finding (Beres, 2001; Horne & Timmons, 2009; Idol, 2006; Jordan et al., 2009; Lambe & Bones, 2006 Sharma et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2015). Jordan and colleagues (2009) explained that one of the most persistent concerns towards successful IE is

that the time offered for students without SEN is taken up by those with SEN. Yet, for inclusion to work well, enough time should be allocated, such as teacher assistant time, planning time, material modification, and meetings (Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998; Brotherson et al., 2001; Horne & Timmons, 2009; Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016; Philpott et al., 2010; Toppings, 2012; Villa & Thousand, 2005; Walsh, 2012; Williams & Gersch, 2004).

Difficulty to maintain discipline. The majority of the teachers in this study indicated their concern about the difficulty to maintain discipline. Further, teachers affirmed their anxiety when having to deal with children who displayed aggressive behavior. This finding is echoed in research conducted by Main et al. (2016) who reported concerns about dealing with the challenging, disruptive behavior of SEN students. Some previous research studies support this finding (Forlin et al., 2008; Khochen & Radford, 2012; Yada & Savolainen, 2017).

The successful implementation of an ideal inclusion necessitates articulating clear policies for addressing discipline and behavior management issues (Ainscow & Miles, 2009; Guzman, 1997; Rouse, 2009). Whilst Thus, because general classroom teachers are unwilling and most often not equipped to deal with SEN students, Gerber (2012) suggests allocating paraprofessionals to assist in the mainstream classrooms. However, SEN children may have behavioral issues, including moodiness and restlessness. They may also exhibit problems like a short attention span or an inability to understand what is being taught. That said, teachers have to learn how to manage such cases and take appropriate disciplinary measures.

Teachers in Lebanon are also more reluctant to include students with IEPs, as well as students with behavioral problems on the belief that such new SEN tasks encroach their time during and after the regular working hours. In most cases,

teachers reported that they do not have enough time to give extra attention to SEN students because of the already large number of students in their class.

Besides, one is not to forget the further requirements on top of their heavy teaching schedule. Teachers in Lebanon usually take additional responsibilities at the school such as extra-curricular activities and periodical meetings; in most schools, teachers take rotations to oversee students during recess and dismissal times but are still required to teach on that day. Another concern outlined by teachers is that of time pressures to complete the syllabi on time along with assessment and exam preparation and correction, which are an integral part of the Lebanese education system. Teachers in this study were of the view that they already have much work, and handling SEN students in their class adds more workload for them.

Not only teacher student ratio is a problem to some principals and teachers, but also the large number of students per class, a matter that makes it hard to give equal attention to all students. An extension to this issue is the difficulty of maintaining discipline of SEN children in the classroom, especially those with emotional and behavioral disorders. Similarly, previous studies reported the challenge of dealing with the disruptive behaviors of SEN students in mainstream classrooms (DE Matthews, 2015; Forlin et al., 2008; Khochen, 2017; Main et al. 2016).

It can, therefore, be concluded that teachers' workload should be considered when they have students with SEN in their class. To counter such concerns and minimize teacher burnout, principals of schools need to allocate realistic duties to teachers along with adequate support in an inclusive setting.

Relationship between Teachers' IE Conceptions and Concerns

In terms of the third research question, the current study demonstrates relationships between teachers' IE conceptions and concerns in the direction that is consistent with Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991) and with past research. Findings of the current research have proved that the theory was successful in predicting teachers' intention towards IE through measuring their IE conceptions. Further, the reviewed literature in Chapter Two indicates that teachers who hold positive views about SEN students tend to be less concerned about including them in mainstream classrooms (Ahsan, 2014; Avramidis et al., 2000; Changpinit et al., 2007; Chhabra et al., 2010; Gökdere, 2012; Jordan et al., 2009; Kuyini & Desai, 2007; Mahat, 2008; Main et al., 2016; Randoll, 2008; Round et al., 2016; Sharma & Sokal, 2016; Sharma et al., 2008, 2012; Srivasatava et al., 2015; Subramanian & Manickaraj, 2017; Yan & Sin, 2014). Other researchers have also concluded that there is a positive correlation between positive teacher attitudes and enhanced performance by SEN students in IE settings (Ahsan et al. 2013; Shah 2005). Teachers who had relatively positive attitudes towards IE were likely to have a lower degree of concern about it or vice versa.

The most exciting results in this research are found concerning teachers' conceptions scores and their concerns scores. A significant negative correlation exists between teachers' IE conceptions and concerns (see Table 4.13, 4.14, & 4.15). The finding suggests that teachers who have high IE conceptions are likely to have lower IE concerns, and the opposite is exact. Interestingly, teachers who are inclusionists or IE advocates are significantly less concerned about resources, SEN acceptance, academic standards, and increased workload. This implies that teachers who revealed high conceptions SEN inclusion, teacher's role, school practices, and are confident

of their abilities to deal with SEN children perceive the positive effects of such practices on all students, with and without SEN. It may be possible that such conceptions develop as a result of teachers noticing that inclusive practices help both students with and without disabilities. Rather than a decline in academic standards, most students, with and without SEN, do well both academically and socially in inclusive classrooms (Kalambouka et al. 2005; Ruijs et al., 2010). It is also evident from their average conceptions that inclusionists know that instruction in inclusive classrooms does not result in extra work in comparison to teaching in any other classroom, especially if they have adequate support.

Exclusionists, on the other hand, have a low level of IE conceptions and higher levels of concern due to what Ajzen (2014, p. 2) posited: “events occurring between assessment of intentions and observation of behavior can produce changes in intentions, and unanticipated obstacles can prevent people from carrying out their intentions.” Therefore, it can be noted that teachers’ concerns are mainly due to their IE conceptions and subjective norms, which will impact the implementation of IE.

Relationship between Predictors of Teachers’ Background Factors and IE Conceptions and Concerns

The fourth research question investigated the effect of teachers' background variables on their IE conceptions and concerns. Three types of variables seem to leave an impact on inclusion: teacher-related variables, school-related variables, and child-related variables. Teacher related variables include teacher education, training, teaching experience, and knowledge of Law 220. School-related variables include school category (general or inclusive), job category of staff job (general or SE). Whilst contact with SEN children is a child-related variable.

Specifically, teachers in the general education job category, young teachers below the age of 25, and teachers with teaching experience between 16 and 20 have a negative impact on IE Conceptions. In contrast, teachers in inclusive schools, SE job category, and aware of Law 220 have higher IE conceptions than those who do not. In addition, as teachers grow older than 25 years, their IE conceptions improve (refer to Table 4.19).

Further, teachers in public schools have higher concerns than those in private schools. Lack of Special Education also adds up to teachers' concerns. On a further note, age has a significant and positive impact on teachers' concerns, but what is worth noting is that the intensity of this impact lessens as teachers grow older. On the other hand, experienced teachers with SE training working in the SE job category have lower concerns (refer to Table 4.22).

To start with, since inclusion is dependent upon teachers' knowing about theoretical, practical, policy and legislative issues (Rouse, 2009), the researcher anticipated that teachers' knowledge of the IE related law, training in SE, teaching experience, SE job category, and inclusive school category would increase their IE conceptions. The researcher also anticipated that trained and experienced INCL teachers would perceive less IE concerns.

Primarily, article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) emphasized the necessity of providing professionals and staff in schools with adequate training to support SEN persons. Further, the reviewed literature indicated the importance of teacher education, training, and professional development in relevance to IE (Ainscow, 2003; Forlin, 2010a; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Opertti & Brady, 2011; Peters & Reid, 2009; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009; UNESCO IBE, 2008). Teachers who reported having undertaken

training in SE were found to hold more positive perceptions about implementing IE (Forlin et al., 2015; Loreman et al., 2007; Loreman et al., 2015; Sharma, 2007; Subban & Sharma, 2006; Vaz et al., 2015). To Hodkinson and Devarakonda (2009), inclusion has been most successful in schools where levels of training are high and ones in which the ethos is positive and supportive of this important educational initiative. Another study (Kurniawati et al., 2017) found that a training program had a significant positive effect on the attitudes and knowledge about IE of regular in-service primary school teachers.

On the other hand, even when teachers are trained explicitly for helping SEN children, they lack the confidence to do so and need relevant ongoing professional development focused on IE (Sharma et al., 2007) as is the case of the teachers of the current study. Multiple studies (Hodkinson, 2005, 2006; Lee et al., 2014; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009) had findings that are consistent with the findings of the research. Hodkinson (2005) investigated the understanding of 80 newly graduated teachers and noticed that trainees had a solid understanding of the theory of inclusion but that their familiarity with the efficient delivery of IE was limited. A year later, a subsequent follow-up study (Hodkinson, 2006) revealed that even though novice teachers indicated their satisfaction with their undergraduate IE training, they experienced barriers related to the implementation of their intended practices. It appeared that they adopted a rather pessimistic, less confident view regarding their ability to put to action inclusion practices in their classrooms after being in the field for a short time.

Assuming that teachers in SE are usually expected to be more accepting of IE, other studies (Lee et al., 2014; Savolainen et al., 2012; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009) investigated trained primary teachers' IE readiness and found out that

increasing teachers' knowledge through training were not sufficient to increase teachers' advocacy of IE. Similarly, in the current study, the most experienced and trained teachers who are familiar with Law 220 are the least accepting of IE. Savolainen et al. (2012) indicated that as educators gained experience in teaching, they became less accepting of IE. Though trained and experienced, the quality of training and teachers' dedication to turning it into practice is to be questioned. Understanding this fundamental teacher's need should provide obvious insight for school administrators for future professional development programs. Besides, this is critical for school administrators to understand. If teachers are becoming increasingly negative toward IE as they get trained, and gain years of experience, precautions must be taken to support these teachers in order to minimize the negative impact on IE evident with age, teaching experience, and knowledge of the law. Another possibility would be that these teachers lack the necessary resources and school support to have better IE conceptions and fewer concerns. Thus, administrators must be cognizant of the circumstances teachers are placed in when IE is to be maintained.

To better promote IE, a better legislation mechanism is needed to implement it. The majority of teachers were not aware of the IE related Law 220. This is a great challenge as far as the implementation of IE is concerned. A serious point of discussion is the general context of Law 220, which is supposed to be the IE related law in Lebanon. Based on the shift from welfare and charity to rights, and from marginalization and isolation to integration, a closer and critical view of the law proves the opposite. (Details are presented in Chapter one under the section: IE-Related Lebanese Policy: Law 220/2000). Damaj (2008) studied the Lebanese social policy and practices related to SEN children and attempted to investigate the inclusionary versus exclusionary nature of policy and practice, the availability of

mechanisms that enabled SEN children's participation in such setting, and the impact of these practices on the self-identities of these children. The researcher concludes that without implementation mechanisms, rights-based legislation, alone, cannot result in inclusive contexts, a fact that renders practices exclusionary and children into disabled identities. Nevertheless, what is the context of the Lebanese IE legislation?

In a critical reading of Law 220, to Al Hroub (2015), highlighted that except for one time, in the introduction, 'inclusion' has never been mentioned in section seven of the Law on the right of the disabled individuals to education. There was no mention of diagnosis, evaluation, or early intervention for SEN children. Prevention is mentioned under health and rehabilitation services. Al Hroub (2015) added that the Lebanese law talks about teaching individuals with visual or hearing impairments in specialized institutions without talking about inclusion. The law even limits the provision of assistance to all SEN individuals under four categories of disability: Mental, physical, auditory, and visual, which reflect the least common disabilities in society. There is no mention of some of the most common disabilities in society, such as autism, learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties, emotional and behavioral disorders, hyperactivity and attention deficit disorder (ADHD). Further, the decentralization of authority is incompatible with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the philosophy of IE, especially after Lebanon endorsed Salamanca in Spain in 1994, a statement that emphasized SE responsibilities to be handled by a single education system, which can only be allocated to the Ministry of Education (MEHE) (Al Hroub, 2015).

That noted, the teachers of the current study who are familiar with Law 220 had higher conceptions of IE and lower concerns than those who are not, as

explained in teachers' findings (Chapter Four). This finding is consistent with other studies (Hamman et al. 2013; Loreman et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2011; Subban & Sharma, 2006). Besides, Sharma et al. (2008) suggested that teacher education programs about inclusion held in countries where strong IE legislation is emphasized, such as Canada and Australia, yield lower levels of concern than programs held in countries with weaker laws about inclusion. Accordingly, because Law 220 reflects weak IE philosophy, the teachers of this study likely expressed fear and concern. Teachers' conceptions about SEN students rather reflect the medical and charity models of SEN, for they firmly believe some SEN categories should be educated in special schools as articulated in FGDs and anecdotes. Hence, low levels of awareness on Special needs policy contributes to negative conceptions and poor high concerns.

Considering the findings of this research, teachers whose job category is SE, are older, and who work in private inclusive schools have higher IE conceptions and less concerns. This is likely that teachers whose job is SE have more contact with SEN students and indicated that they had more adequate and formal training than regular education teachers. Besides, this shows that teachers who have confidence in their school administration in supporting them with necessary services or resources when they have SEN children in their classroom have better IE conceptions and fewer concerns. This result aligns with the findings of Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010), who found that older teachers had a more positive attitude toward inclusion. Yet, it contrasts findings of (Ahmmed et al., 2013; Forlin et al., 2008; Sharma et al., 2008; Savolainen et al., 2012; Yada & Savolainen, 2017) who concluded that younger teachers, were more open to inclusion than older colleagues and that the most experienced educators were the least accepting. One might question if this finding is

related to the specific population used in that study (Lebanon) or the demographics of the participants.

Perhaps most importantly, a lack of adequate teacher education, formal training, convenient resources, promising school support, and doable legislation on IE is consistently related to less positive conceptions and more concerns toward inclusion. Such findings have clear implications for school districts wanting to increase teachers' positive IE conceptions and lessen their IE concerns in mainstream classrooms.

Conclusions

The present study revealed that, within the mainstream schools in Lebanon, though most of the participating schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers are IE advocates due to their considerably average IE conceptions, they do perceive a number of major challenges concerning the lack of resources, teacher education and training, SEN stigma, rigid curriculum, academic standards, and inefficient IE policy.

The essence of IE success is teacher education that enforces IE conceptions and doable policies to safeguard and oversee IE implementation as per the unique Lebanese setting. We should admit that strategies that operate well in a wealthy country may not necessarily work in a low-budget country.

For example, studies from the reviewed literature (Agbenyega (2007; Kuyini & Mangope, 2011; Tiwari et al., 2015) investigating educators' views on inclusive education in Ghana, Bostwana, and India found that they valued IE. However, mainly due to the absence of explicit implementation purposes, lack of resources, and teacher education programs, educators were confused about how to enact inclusive practices in their schools.

Canada is a leader in IE for the many positive patterns of inclusive practice from preschools to university curricula designed to include adults with intellectual SENs (Gerg & Timmons, 2009). Because of their educational system structure and the focus on curriculum rather than the learner in junior high and secondary classes, students with intellectual SENs are still segregated. However, research indicated educators' engagement to inclusion, teamwork approach to support all students and each other, and individual and collective efforts to realize and reinforce effective IE practices (Lyons et al., 2016).

Nonetheless, it is important that the teacher is not left alone but backed by fostering leadership, other teachers and professionals available in the school or wider community.

This section elaborates further on the dilemmas of IE in Lebanon based on the discussed conceptions and challenges of responding schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers. Figure 7.1 is a visual representation of the IE dilemmas in a Lebanese context.

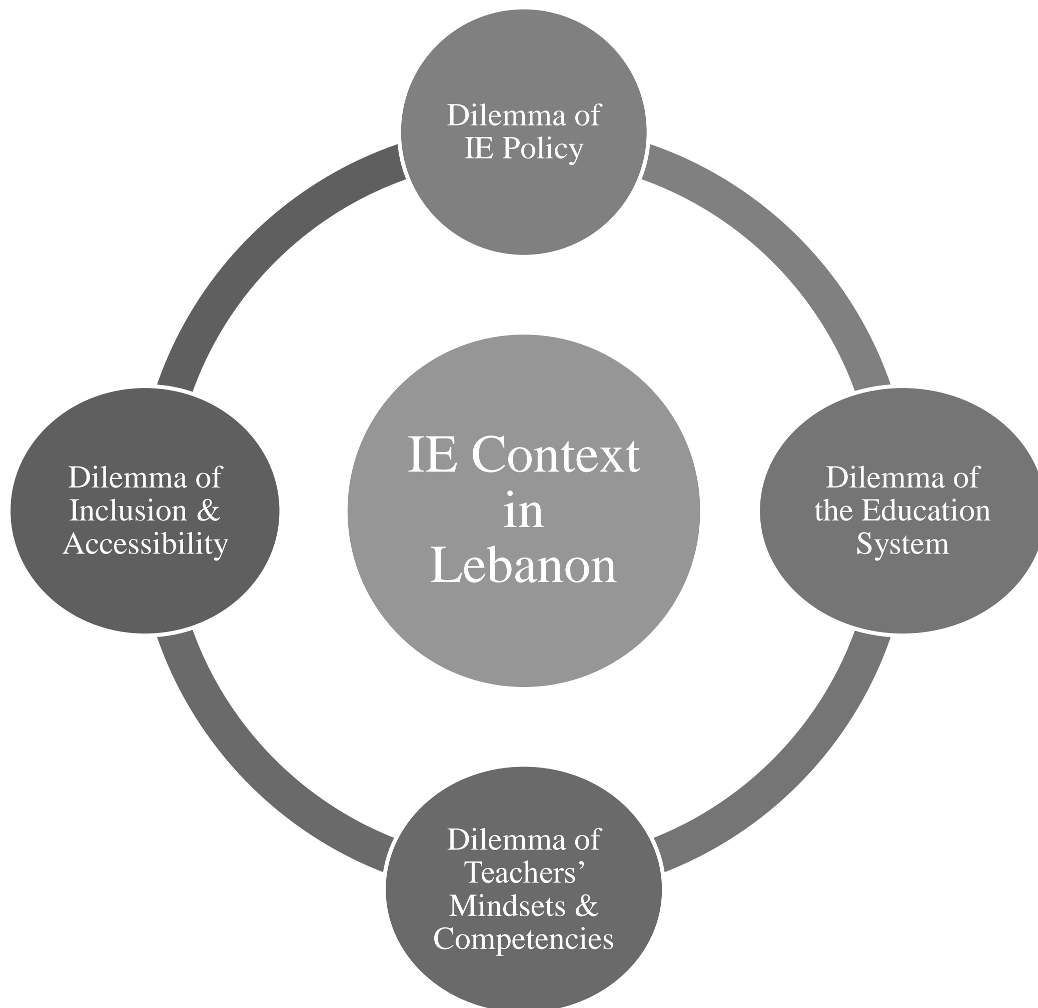

Figure 7.1. Visual representation of IE dilemmas in Lebanon

Dilemma of IE Policy

The Lebanese society is not well cognizant of the rights-based approach to IE. Sympathy, charity, and goodwill overshadow when the topic of SEN surfaces. IE awareness is necessary among people. People should be informed about international declarations and the successful implementation of IE. People should know that the international educational policy has moved beyond the medical model in many parts of the world. People should be educated about a policy that enables and supports IE and considers it as a significant foundation for a successful educational system. It is a fact that the Lebanese policy anticipated to govern the inclusion of SEN learners does not establish a clear commitment to IE in terms of accessibility, SEN

interventions, and SEN provisions. The participants contended that government mandates do not exist to make real progress in the field unless they are supported by strong legislation. The power of the law is an essential idea in the participants' responses. Thus, to make it operationally feasible and monitored, Law 220 needs some amendments and restrictive decrees.

Once the IE Lebanese policy is operationally doable, it is expected to be conceptualized by all individuals, and in particular, school principals and teachers who are accountable for the provision of quality education for all students. Familiarity with the concepts of legislation is necessary so that educators and administrators comply with the administrative duties to IE, for it is when they can communicate their understanding of SE legal basics that they can effectively conduct IE service at their schools. Therefore, is it of utmost importance that the Lebanese community comprehend the law specific to inclusion and the proper ways to discuss learning issues.

Dilemma of the Education System

Our education system proceeds to discriminate and deny SEN students from their right to an equitable education. Whilst, the Lebanese instructional content is rigid rather than flexible and is directly tied to state academic standards, the need for initial interventions to develop inclusive educational curricula that secure early childhood inclusion and sustains education for all arises. The curricula have to be designed by multiple stakeholders with a smooth transition from early childhood to secondary levels to retain students and prevent dropouts.

In addition, one cannot ignore the need for operational screening and diagnostic systems to detect developmental disorders at the earliest possible stage,

evidently indicating that the chances of overcoming difficulties are significantly enhanced by early identification and intervention.

Further, the lack of technology integration in the national curriculum; poor infrastructure necessary for technology and Internet connectivity should not be overlooked. The curriculum has to be flexible, accessible, and away from being rigid or difficult to attain. Therefore, SEN learning and assessment necessitate some curricular modifications with some space for formal and non-formal education, for a highly academic overloaded curriculum is ineffective for inclusion.

Even though the findings of the current study informed the researcher of the shy signs of IE in Lebanon, the progress is at a snail pace. Up to the date of writing this research, public and private schools still lack the necessary physical and human resources to enable SEN children to learn. There is a lack of paraprofessionals and necessary provisions such as SEN friendly materials and specialized equipment (braille books and hearing aids).

In circumstances where schools do have these resources, they are often provided by costly private inclusive schools or as an NGO charity to public schools. With the scarcity of funding, there is a substantial deficiency of trained teachers and paraprofessionals. Most teachers and school administrators had no training on IE practices to include SEN kids in mainstream classrooms and make sure they receive the required provision.

When talking about IE, issues of cost should not be ignored. Parents, often, cannot afford the costs of IE education. National funds are often restricted, and support from charity donners and NGOs have to be continually sought. The risk that IE is very costly for parents, schools, and even for governments is alarming. In Lebanon, inclusive private schools are two to three times more expensive than

regular schools. Thus, having to deal with the costs of various paraprofessionals on top of doing the coordination themselves have added the burden on parents.

Though the situation is very distressing, a more cost-efficient education system can contribute to the salvage by optimizing the use of resources, which are mostly spent on students who have to repeat classes because of their inadequate achievement. For example, the government may improve the education system by investing in ICTs, providing support to SEN students by trained teachers, and in the supply of material. That said, such financial resources could be more cost-efficient if spent on a better education system for all that would lessen expenditures on repeating students who in turn would add to the country's economy instead of being unemployed, dependent dropouts.

IE interventions need not always be costly if some cost-efficient measures are taken, such as training-of-trainers for professional development, linking student teachers' training with hosting schools, multi-grade, multi-age and multi-ability classrooms, peer teaching and utilizing special schools as resource centers that provide expertise and support to regular schools.

Dilemma of Teachers' Competencies and Mindsets

Teachers play a central role in IE, but it is unrealistic to think that teachers alone can be productive agents for change. In the current research, though the Lebanese teachers are IE advocates as indicated in the findings, almost all participating principals and decision-makers complained about their IE competencies and mindsets. GE teachers conceptually sympathize with SEN students, but when it comes to practice, they asserted their lack of prior SEN knowledge and skills. Teachers may welcome all learners but find themselves ill-equipped to deal with a

diverse range of needs. As teachers are regarded as the key to change in education, their mindsets of frustration and inadequacy are potential barriers to IE.

Many teachers indicated that they have not been prepared to teach SEN children and do not have adequate knowledge of disabilities that could help in screening and identification procedures in schools. Higher education universities in Lebanon offer general psychology courses in teacher education programs, yet, this is not enough to maintain their competence to cater to students of diverse needs. Accordingly, most of them are not able to differentiate instruction, plan, and adapt teaching activities and assessments for SEN children. Many complained about the difficulty of dealing with students' behavioral problems and laziness, which reveals their lack of classroom management skills and curriculum adaptation and accommodation strategies.

GE teachers are the backbone of inclusive classrooms. In order to challenge pre-existing assumptions about diversity, teacher education recommends a culture of critical self-reflection that forms a core element for teacher training. Teacher professional development and support are essential in order to assist learners with various needs. Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) stated that professionals and staff in schools must be trained to "incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities (p. 4). Besides, becoming an IE expert depends on knowing theory and legislation, turning knowledge into action, and believing in one's capacity to educate all learners.

When the school budget is an issue, teachers are encouraged to participate in an online discussion learning community (a virtual learning environment via the

Internet). This online discussion learning community helps teachers build professional groups to learn from and support one another. Put in different words, it may help them acquire a practical virtual training, discuss their specific concerns, types of children's SENs, problem-focused discussions, collaborative strategies with parents, administrators, and other professionals, classroom management strategies, and to get valuable information from colleagues who implement IE in diverse school settings. In addition, the online learning community can serve as an alternative practical training for teachers who do not have time to attend conventional training and collaborate with other teachers, as they can access the online discussion at times that are convenient to them.

Thus, we need to establish a paradigm that requires teachers to modify their roles and mindsets to enable rather than disable children. Put in different words, teacher education should work on the readiness of student-teachers for a profession that calls for improving the learning and participation of children of diverse abilities, where quality and impartiality are central to maintaining IE.

Dilemma of Inclusion and Accessibility

Not only does IE mean accessible curriculum, but also accessible infrastructure to cater for students with physical disabilities. This necessitates making sure school facilities are accessible, including the toilet facilities, classroom mobility, and ramps. Though more than180 public schools were renovated to accommodate disability-access, the participants asserted that school accessibility is inadequate, and to some nonexistent. Article 33 of Law 220 states that every disabled person has the right to accessibility to all buildings, public, and private accommodations while taking into consideration infrastructure aspects. Regretfully, until the moment of writing this research, neither the MOSA nor the MEHE has been

able to enforce this law. Consequently, most school premises in Lebanon are not disability friendly, and the inadequate infrastructure has deprived people with disability to blend into mainstream schools. Most mainstream schools do not provide an accessible environment for all learners, nor do they have the accessibility utilities like ramps, accessible entrance for wheelchairs, and accessible bathrooms.

That noted, certain mandates with accessibility criteria should be imposed on the Lebanese mainstream schools if IE is to succeed.

Limitations

While preparing this study, I made several assumptions and recognized potential limitations:

1. I assumed that the teacher participants would answer the survey questions honestly. This assumption was a potential limitation because dishonest responses from participants could have skewed my results. The researcher, though, tried to control this by convincing teachers of the confidentiality of the research, as explained earlier. A possible implication could be the hesitation of participants to give honest answers, for fear of losing their job, probably producing skewed results of teachers with firm beliefs about the matter and their school practices. Additional underlying elements that stir IE conceptions are the postulations that conceptions will translate to action and that participants will give politically suitable and ethically pleasing replies. Teachers may show agreement but may be unwilling to serve SEN students. The analysis of concerns tells that these participants may have certain IE conceptions but still hold concerns about the exact implementation of inclusion. Besides, what teachers say about their confidence in their work may not be reflected in actual classroom performance. Field research to

observe and evaluate teachers who report high levels of self-efficacy could add to the understanding of how these perceptions translate into actual work with students, especially in the area of student engagement.

2. Although the questionnaires work well psychometrically, they cannot provide full answers to explain why teachers have the conceptions and concerns they do. This would require an in-depth qualitative analysis of teachers' perceptions.
3. One of the scales, IEPFS, used in the survey instrument to collect the data, could not be supported by previous studies that employed the pre-existing scale. When the researcher contacted the educator who devised the scale to ask about the measures undertaken for the validity and reliability of the instrument, the response was that they do not have these details any longer. Although the validity and reliability measures of the employed instrument were considered in this study, it would have been of more value to have it conducted in various settings and different population.
4. The fact that most of the interviews were conducted in Arabic, a language different from the one used to report the study, created a burden on the degree to which the results could be confirmed or supported by the participants. The researcher had to translate the participants' views into English in order to code them and generate concepts and categories, which reflect their views.
5. The assumption that all school principals have the same amount of autonomy to make decisions regarding their schools was also a limitation of this study. Theoretically, this assumption could be valid. The level of autonomy that school principals have may vary depending on their experience and the dynamics of their schools, not to forget that public school management is

centralized unlike the majority of decentralized private schools whose principals have independent authority to govern their schools.

Implications

This study presents an opportunity to consider the implications that resulted from its findings, which stakeholders can utilize to support SEN students and efficiently realize IE in Lebanon.

If it is found that the concern about resources (Factor I) is greater than the remaining three dimensions, then school administrators and decision-makers must target their efforts to reduce this concern by providing the necessary resources to implement integrated education.

This finding has significant implications for researchers, school leaders, and decision-makers. Policies and legislation, both internationally and nationally, have emphasized the need to include SEN students alongside their typically developing peers. As a result of these policies, a large number of SEN students are being enrolled in mainstream schools, but it is not yet clear if these students receive quality education when they are included in the regular classroom. Based on this study's results, we suggest that such students are likely to get high-quality education in the classrooms of teachers who have lower degrees of concern about inclusion. Decision-makers and school leaders should attempt to understand what concerns educators about teaching in inclusive classrooms and address their concerns. This goal can be accomplished by providing custom-made professional development programs targeting teachers' concerns in schools. This approach may reduce teacher concerns and motivate teachers to use inclusive practices.

The finding implies that decision-makers and government agencies need to identify ways mainstream schools can include SEN students in their classrooms.

Such support needs to be explicitly identified in laws and policies that support inclusion. Legislation and policies need to change their focus away from just theorizing what needs to be done, to identifying pragmatic ways the key stakeholders can employ to implement the policy and legislative reforms of IE. Put in different words, clear decrees and monitoring mechanisms need to be established should IE be efficiently implemented.

Another clear implication of the finding requires making reforms at the system level. The ministry of education in collaboration with stakeholders should consider revising the curriculum and make it flexible to adapt to meet the needs of SEN children. Further, schools need to be encouraged to include all learners and should not just be ranked on how well they perform academically, but also on how well they are ranked in terms of including SEN learners, especially that distinction and equity can coincide. Making such a critical policy reform is not easy by any means, but is likely to have a weighty impact in enhancing the commitment of mainstream schools to educate all learners rather than insisting to view inclusion as an additional responsibility.

Having clarified the research implications, it is of worth to propose a framework of action in an attempt to improve IE as a human-rights based approach sought under the international CRPD (2006) and SDG4 (2016).

Proposal of an Inclusive School Blueprint for SEN Students: Based on Empirical Research in Lebanon

This proposal is based on the context of an empirical research in Lebanon. The recognition of SEN children within the Lebanese educational system is not innovative. Building on prior analysis and implications of the main themes of

conceptions and challenges that affect the construction of IE in Lebanon, an inclusive school blueprint for action is proposed.

Rationale and Aims

The proposal aims to contribute to a better understanding of the concept of IE and to inform governmental and nongovernmental efforts that pertain to establishing a prototype model of best practices of IE provisions in the mainstream schools of Lebanon as follows:

- Making school more welcoming, learner-friendly, and beneficial for a wide range of children.
- Restructuring the foundation of the school system by adopting a human rights-based approach to education whereby school philosophy, policies, accessibility, teacher recruitment, and quality management system are its core base.
- Identifying and improving location and resources barriers – all stakeholders should collaborate (government policy-makers, local leaders, NGOs, teachers, parents, community members).
- Providing a flexible curriculum to accommodate the diverse individual needs of any learner.
- Fostering the professional development of school leaders and teachers.
- Encouraging collaboration among teachers and staff.
- Allocating time for teachers and staff collaboration
- Maintaining a partnership with parents and the local community.
- Supporting and encouraging differentiate instruction to cater to all students of diverse abilities and needs.
- Ensuring IE provisions and allocation of support are adequately provided.

- Networking with other inclusive schools to share and exchange IE best practices.
- Identifying and removing barriers that exclude SEN learners in terms of accessibility, participation in the learning process, and academic and social achievement.

Definition of an Inclusive School

- A school that welcomes and accommodates the needs of all children to fully participate in learning alongside similar-aged peers, supports practical customized teaching strategies appropriate for their different needs, and endorses policies informed by a culture of inclusion, which all the school community and parents abide by, is an inclusive school.
- Inclusion is NOT integration – SEN students are physically placed in mainstream classrooms with their similar-aged peers, but no further adjustments are made to meet their individual needs. This restricts their ability to fully access or participate in learning.
- Inclusion is NOT segregation – SEN students are placed in schools or educational settings where they learn in isolation from other students in separate classrooms, designed to respond to their particular needs or impairment.
- Inclusion is NOT exclusion – students are placed in special schools and are unable to access any form of education like similar-aged peers.

Indicators of an Inclusive School

Key indicators of an inclusive school include:

- All school community share a philosophy of inclusion.

- Welcoming all children without discrimination.
- The belief that all children can learn if given appropriate learning opportunities.
- An efficient and accessible infrastructure and SEN friendly facilities.
- Making education available to all the children who can access and fully participate in learning, alongside their similar-aged peers.
- Making education affordable and accessible.
- Promoting differentiated instruction.
- Fostering attractive and engaging teaching strategies where cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and multiple sensory modalities are utilized.
- Providing individualized instruction plans (IEPs) to SEN students with practical adjustments and teaching strategies and assessments tailored to meet their individual needs.
- Spreading SEN and inclusion awareness amongst the students, teachers, staff, and parents.
- Adopting strict corrective measures against SEN harassment and bullying.
- Encouraging the use of technology and assisted devices in the classroom.
- Allocating two or three learning centers in the classroom.
- Encouraging co-teaching and co-planning between general and special educators.
- Fostering collaboration among teachers and staff.
- Sponsoring professional development of teachers and staff.
- Allocating adequate time for teacher/staff collaboration and coordination.

- Managing the number of classroom students while considering the SEN student ratio per class on the basis of natural proportions.
- Identifying the requirements of the school in terms of resources (human, physical resources, & materials) and allocates adequate funds.
- Recruiting teachers and paraprofessionals on the basis of qualifications and competence to serve all children.
- Fostering partnership with parents and the local community.
- Networking with other schools to share expertise and knowledge via periodical workshops of best educational practices.
- Promoting social skills and responsibilities among the children.
- Maintaining a climate of collegiality among students, teachers, and staff.

Inclusive Teacher Profile

- Identifying SEN children in the classroom
- Referring the identified student to the specialists for diagnosis and intervention
- Accepting SEN children
- Nurturing and modeling a positive attitude among typical and SEN children
- Allocating the SEN children in decent places in the classroom where they are comfortable, learning, and interacting with peers.
- Drafting proper adjustment in the curriculum so that SEN students receive customized education to their abilities.
- Involving SEN students in almost all the activities of the classroom where applicable.
- Providing differentiated instruction to all students

- Facilitating the use of instructional tools to help the SEN student learn.
- Communicating with parents about the progress of the SEN child and finding common grounds to determine the best pedagogical approach
- Employing ICT in the classroom
- Collaborating with other teachers, school counselor, paraprofessionals, special educators, and parents to develop the suitable IEPs and to follow up the progress of SEN students
- Adapting/customizing instructional materials and assessments to fit SEN children
- Providing SEN learners one-to-instruction or remedial instruction when necessary
- Spreading SEN awareness among students to prevent discrimination
- Seeking professional development

Hence, I propose an *Inclusive School Blueprint for Action* (Figure 7.2) followed by a practical *National Inclusive Education Framework* built on prior analysis and implications of the main themes of IE conceptions and challenges indicated in the responses of the research participants.

Figure 7.2. Visual Representation of the Proposed Inclusive School Blueprint

The visual representation of the inclusive school model conceptualizes the successful implementation of IE practices throughout the four layers: (1) foundation, (2) mission, (3) vision, and (4) philosophy. For each layer, some indicators help us monitor the progress made in order to reach a prototype model. The foundation layer holds three indicators, including policy, accessibility, teacher recruitment, and quality

management system. At the mission layer, there are five important indicators. The third and fourth layers hold the vision and philosophy of the inclusive school.

A National Inclusive Education Framework

IE journey starts with a declaration like the Salamanca Statement or a convention as CRPD followed by a national Framework for action empowered by enacting mechanisms and decrees critical to realizing IE.

Given the realities of the local scenario resulting from the current research, I devised the *National Inclusive Education Framework* to provide a clear roadmap to the Lebanese education system on their journey towards inclusion. For the purpose of this framework, I adopt the most relevant definitions for IE and SEN culminated from the conclusions of this dissertation elucidating that: IE should cover all facets of education and should be accessible to all children regardless of their ability or disability, where they belong as valued members through active participation and the elimination of the barriers restricting the participation and achievement of all learners. Additionally, and most importantly, IE means that SEN students are taught with their peers in a mainstream classroom for most of the school day. SEN refers to a long-term physical, sensory, mental, psychological, or psychosocial impairment which if interacting with various barriers may impede one’s full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Recommendations for Action by Stakeholders

Fundamentals of IE are recommended to be adopted from the national level (macro), to the district (meso) and to school level (micro).

The Government – MEHE - Macro

The key elements of successful IE implementation are to be managed by MEHE as follows:

- An Innovative IE Law:
    - Ratifying the CRPD convention
    - Adopting an up-to-date definition of SEN based on the social model (not medical) as the definition adopted earlier in the previous section.
    - Adopting an appropriate definition of IE (refer to the definition postulated in the previous section).
    - Releasing a Rights-based legislation that raises concerns about equity and discrimination in case of SEN students' exclusion from school
    - Issuing mechanisms and decrees to mandate and monitor IE implementation with incentives for compliance and penalties for non-compliance
    - Introducing IE into schools after the administrators and teachers are adequately exposed to the concepts and have received proper training.
    - Raising IE awareness and readiness for parents, teachers, administrators, and the community
    - Providing extensive support and advice from the central level to decentralized schools
    - Enabling SEN children to attend their local pre-school, primary, or secondary schools whose responsibility is to accommodate instructional services tailored to differences in learners
    - Promoting IE awareness and communication of information at the community level concerning activities related to education for SEN children
    - Collecting statistics on SEN children

  - Ensuring that the building standards of mainstream schools include accessibility, safety, and health measures
  - Devising a national assessment that qualifies future teachers for a teaching license while focusing on IE competences and practices without which they cannot be recruited
  - Maintaining teachers' and staff professional development, pre- and in-service training to facilitate the transition to IE

- A National Curriculum for All:
  - Dealing with curriculum overload by shifting the focus of our students to quality education for all students rather than "more hours for learning"
  - Reforming the education system to facilitate IE by establishing a structured yet flexible, accessible curriculum
  - Enabling all students to participate and accommodating a range of learning styles
  - Emphasizing skills and knowledge relevant to all students
  - Ensuring equity in curricula to benefit all students from social, economic, and technological changes, rather than just a select few
- The Transition from Special Schools to Inclusive Mainstream Schools:
  - Cooperating with the NGOs providing education to SEN children and developing plans to include them in accessible mainstream schools, within a national education system whose curriculum is flexible and accessible
  - Coordinating with caregivers of SEN children to undertake including them in regular schools and that their needs met

- Resource Centers for Inclusion (RCI):
  - Converting special schools into Resource Centers for Inclusion (RCI)
  - Delivering specialized support through their specialized professionals to schools, teachers, families, and students
  - Facilitating access to education, training, work, leisure, social participation, and autonomy
- A National Network of Information and Communication Technology Resource Centers (ICTRC):
  - Supporting mainstream schools all over the Lebanese regions
  - Assessing the pupils' needs, at the request of the schools, to grant the assistive products/devices to access the curriculum
- Funding Plans:
  - Allocating budget that SEN students are entitled to apply for in support of their disability
  - Allocating a budget to include the expenses of supporting the provisions of accessible quality education for all children such as teacher training, staffing, maintenance, resources, assistive materials, and devices
  - Admitting the rights of SEN children and ensuring equal access for all
- A Monitoring Mechanism:
  - Following the progress of IE implementation
  - Developing policy frameworks for early SEN identification and intervention, inclusive education, community-based rehabilitation and vocational training
  - Identifying gaps and difficulties in the system

  - Monitoring and evaluating the system in the early phase of transitional enactment of the IE program
  - Developing a guidebook of services that aid SEN children accessing schools in different regions

Schools – Meso + Micro

Inclusive schools should embrace:

- Inclusive school philosophy that develops a culture to include all learners and mission that includes evidence of values of equity and improved outcomes for all learners.
- Inclusive policies promoting positive outcomes for all students;
- Enrolment of all students able to attend school
- Flexible and accommodative curriculum;
- Supportive and firm school leadership;
- Adequate individualized support provisions and equitable distribution of resources and assistive tools, including Braille, sign language, ICT, etc.
- Control and elimination of bullying and discrimination
- Environment consistent with the goal of full inclusion maximizing academic and social development,
- Involvement of SEN learners enabling them to learn life and social development skills and facilitating their adequate and fair involvement in education and as members of the society
- Recruitment of teachers with a national teaching license based on a national assessment (refer to the earlier section An Innovative IE Law) and who are trained in inclusive pedagogy and view it as their role to teach all learners in a diverse classroom

- Access to specialists (external or within school) with specific knowledge and expertise in the education of SEN students to enhance the skills of teachers and provide specialist support when needed. Specialists include, but are not limited to: Speech pathologists, occupational Therapists, physiotherapists, nurses, psychologists, counsellors and paraprofessionals
- Mentoring for educators, especially newly appointed staff
- Inclusive pedagogy that seeks to serve SEN students a stretched teaching schedule of what is typically available to all students instead of providing a different or additional program
- Collaboration of class teachers and specialist teachers through co-planning, collaborative teaching, and co- evaluating for the purpose of improving the learning outcomes of SEN students and minimizing the achievement gap
- Differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, and national curriculum adaptations
- Individual Educational Planning (IEP) characterized by high expectations for the learner yet ensuring realistic targets
- Assessment policy through both formative and summative assessment practices that address the different needs and abilities of all learners, which are aligned to teaching methodologies.
- A peer preparation program to explain to peers without SENs how and why some SEN learners behave in specific ways and thus why the conduct policy cannot be the same for all
- A behavior modification plan for learners displaying challenging behavior
- A conduct policy accessed by all stakeholders (teachers, learners and parents) such that learners showing challenging conduct are referred to proper

services and supported through individual support, group approaches, and whole-school approaches

- A performance appraisal or performance measurement system for all teachers to provide regular feedback and learning opportunities for the teacher. This appraisal should cover the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the principal, the teacher, the family, and other relevant partners
- A periodic survey of the school climate to capture the school community's perception and experience of IE barriers such as stereotypes, bullying, curriculum, etc.
- A partnership between the school community and parents to increase learners' achievement and participation.
- An open communication channel concerning matters that are important the parents and the school
- Guiding parents in accessing support networks and resources available in their community.
- Orientation and training opportunities to enhance the parenting skills of parents to support their child's learning at home and school
- Communicating periodic feedback on learners' progress through the appropriate communication channels
- Response to intervention (RTI), an approach that provides high-quality differentiating instruction to meet all students' needs. As illustrated in Figure 7.3, the model provides a tiered strategy to the early identification of and intervention for SEN students and employs data to make decisions about levels of support and allocation of resources.

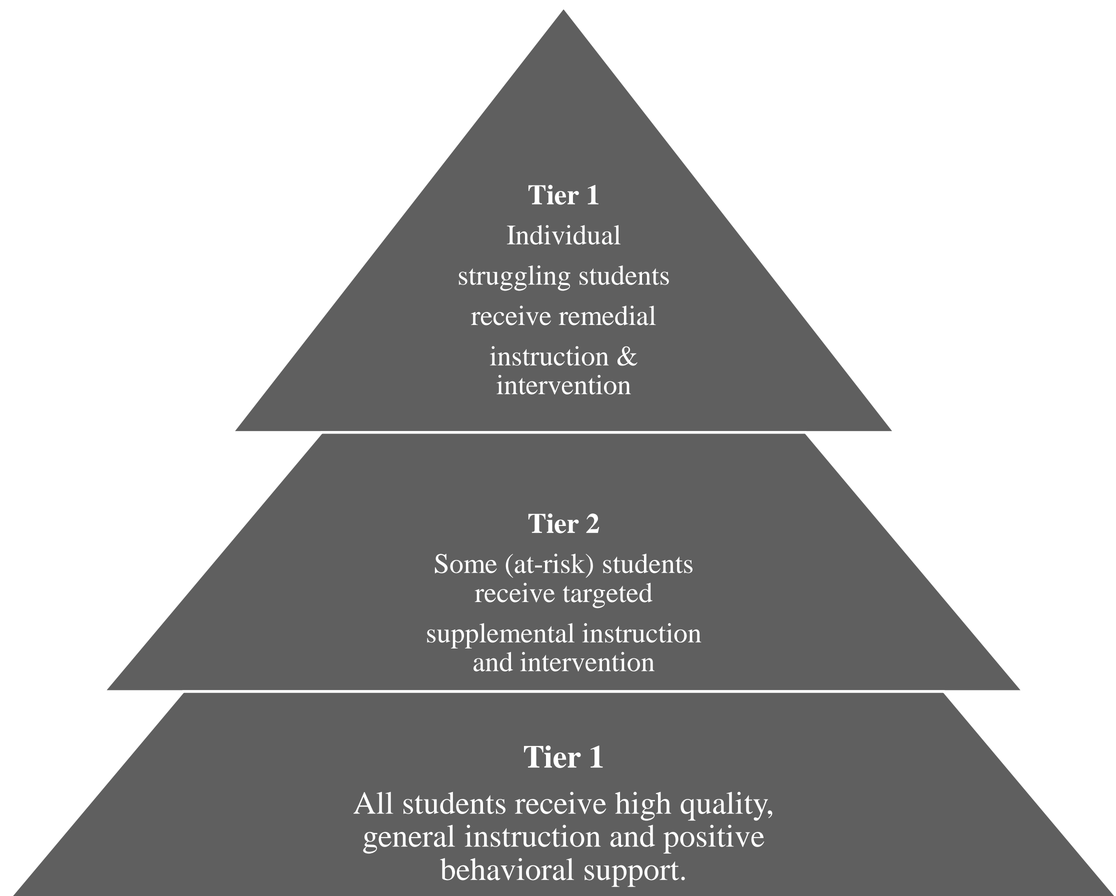

Figure 7.3. Visual representation of RTI

Figure 7.4 summarizes the RTI implementation under three tiers. Tier One is a universal intervention, Tier Two is a further targeted intervention for learners who are not proceeding as expected, and Tier Three combines additional focused assistance provisioned in Tiers 1 and 2 support. The four phases of RTI (screening, data-based decision making, multi-level prevention system, and progress monitoring) should be accurately implemented to improve school and student outcomes (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2011).

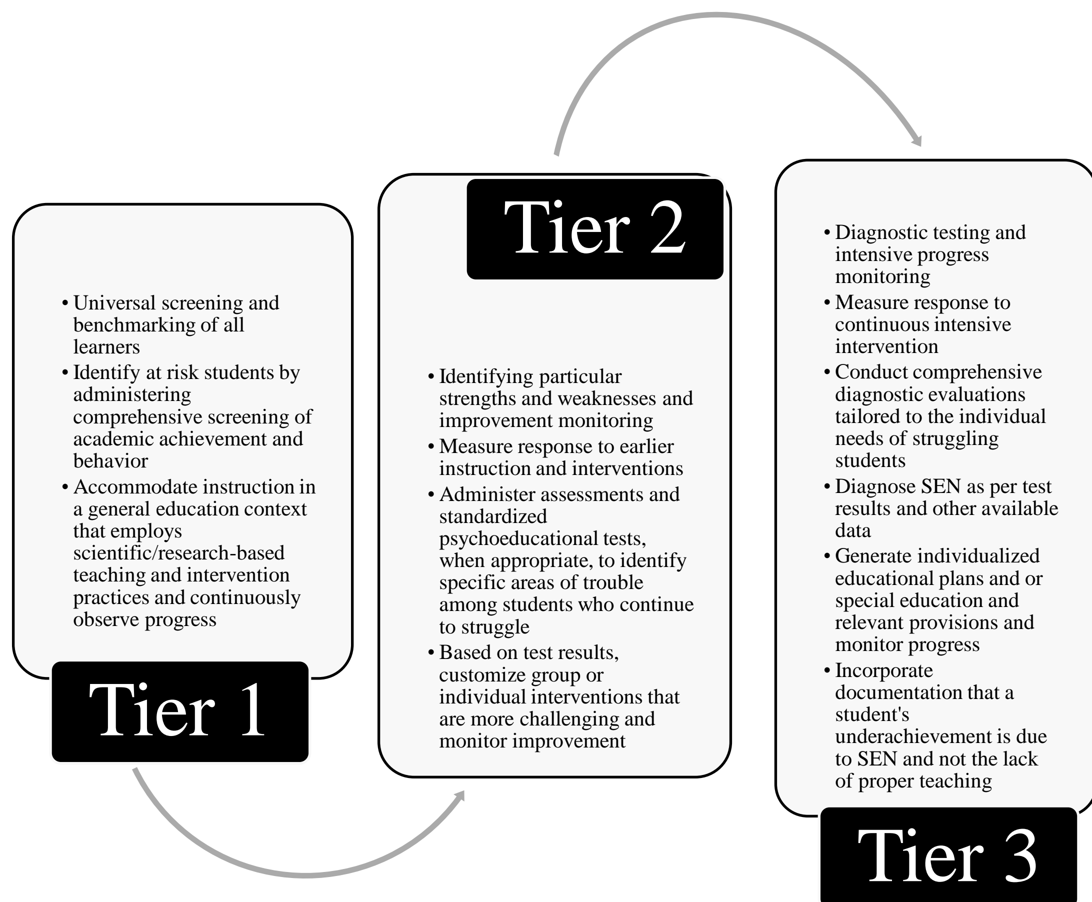

Figure 7.4. Visual representation of RTI implementation

Universities and Teacher Preparation Schools – Macro

Faculties of education and teacher training colleges should:

- Teach about the whole school environment when planning training courses for student teachers and school principals
- Include special education component for each teacher-training practicum
- Provide a more in-depth practicum on specific courses addressing the SENs
- Assess applicants for specialist training courses for their motivation and commitment to IE

- Include mandatory IE training for pre-school, basic education and secondary student teachers by ensuring an appropriate practical teaching assessment that students must pass before certification
- Provide training for all regular student teachers by incorporating practical skills and competencies to teach children with diverse abilities in their classes
- Demonstrate examples of good practice on video, CD and other technologies, so that student students develop an understanding of IE

Employ SEN students and family members as guest speakers, or contributors to discussions

Community – Meso + Micro

- RCI, ICTRC, and NGOs with the support of municipalities should engage in community IE awareness campaigns that encourage SEN acceptance and the elimination of marginalization and stigma
- RCI, ICTRC, and NGOs should conduct regular “customer satisfaction” surveys on the attitudes of families, parents, and children as to successes and failures, and, thus, valuable data on the internal workings of schools is to be employed to enhance their performance
- RCI, ICTRC, and NGOs should be involved in monitoring and evaluation of IE proceedings
- Parents of SEN children should ask for access to educational establishments and all public places on an equal level to others, along with information about the support that they can receive.
- Parents of SEN children should advocate and counter dealing with the impairment as problematic and would instead begin to question the limited provisions that can be made available in support of different needs.

- Parents of SEN children should ask about different educational and career-related possibilities and how they can be adjusted to meet the individual needs
- Teachers' associations should advocate on behalf of teachers for adequate training, better resources in the classroom, smaller class size and for volunteers

Final Words

The challenge for Lebanon as a state, attempting to meet the demands of present and future generations including SEN children, is to prepare independent learners irrespective of their physical, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. IE compels Lebanon to run the sturdy fusion of policy, curriculum, pedagogy, school structure, and conceptions that guide these schooling constituents. IE calls for changes at the macro, exo, meso, and micro levels. This necessitates adopting policies, decrees, and measures that promote the social and educational inclusion of SEN children, developing a flexible curriculum in educational settings aimed at all learners, irrespective of their differences, and having competent educators who can accept, adjust their teaching practices to meet the needs of all their children. However, until real changes take place to our IE legislation and rigid curricula change, educators, in Lebanon, need to work within the available school system that has enough room for adaptations, yet few distinct requirements for accountability vis-à-vis inclusion.

Hence, unless schoolteachers, principals, and decision-makers have high conceptions of IE, are less concerned about IE implementation, and are well supported by the rest of the schooling community, the likelihood of successfully maintaining the social justice and human rights of SEN children is far from being

reached. For many students, school is the only milieu where they can receive instruction and interventions designed to meet their specific needs. As a contribution to the field of IE, this study provides a modest but important empirical step towards the shared goal of understanding and supporting both the education and social-emotional development of all students in inclusive classroom contexts. The study suggests that to combat IE challenges and build constructive conceptions, an inclusive school policy for action needs to be adopted by the government and all stakeholders in order to facilitate the practice and implementation of inclusive education in Lebanon. A culture of IE needs considerable time and effort to be developed. It is a process that demands motivation, commitment, efficient use of time and resources, and collective efforts from everyone in the community.

Therefore, with a new IE legislation enacted by supportive governmental measures, school reform, teacher education modification, and community awareness, Lebanon steps forward towards truly inclusive schools. These schools will ensure that all students, regardless of their personal, economic, and social situation, will find services that enable them to attain a level of education and preparation, which will, in turn, enable them all to be fully socially included. For Lebanese, 'all' truly means all.

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Appendix A

Permission to use IEPFS and CIES Scales

Re: Quality Indicators of Inclusive Schools & Inclusive Education Practices Faculty Survey

Asma TG <asmatg99@hotmail.com>

Mon 5/13/2013 10:06 PM

To: Carol Quirk <cquirk@mcie.org>;

Bcc: asmatg99@hotmail.com <asmatg99@hotmail.com>;

Dr. Quirk, You are much appreciated.
Asma

Sent from my iPhone

On May 13, 2013, at 10:03 PM, "Carol Quirk" <cquirk@mcie.org> wrote:

> Hello Ms. Tillawi,
>
> Attached are the two assessment tools that you requested.
>
> You may use both of them, and I request that you reference the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education as the author of these tools.
>
> I would be very interested to know more about your research as you develop your research!
>
> Carol
>
> Carol Quirk, Ed.D., Co-Executive Director
> Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education, Inc.
> 7484 Candlewood Rd.
> Suite R
> Hanover, MD 21076
> United Way Number: 0648
>
> Phone: 410-859-5400
> Fax: 410-859-1509
> email: cquirk@mcie.org<blocked::mailto:cquirk@mcie.org>
> www.mcie.org
> From: Asma TG [mailto:asmatg99@hotmail.com]

> Sent: Saturday, May 11, 2013 4:06 AM
> To: Carol Quirk; MCIE
> Subject: Quality Indicators of Inclusive Schools & Inclusive Education Practices Faculty Survey
>
> Dear Dr. Quirk,
>
>
> I am a PhD student in Education from Lebanon in the process of preparing my dissertation. My research is about conceptions and challenges of inclusive education in Lebanon, and I am interested in using your 'Quality Indicators of Inclusive Schools' and 'Inclusive Education Practices Faculty Survey'. I'd appreciate it if you grant me your approval and update me with the latest version of the surveys to be able to use in my study. I may need to adapt or modify the survey for the purpose of my research questions if you don't mind.
>
> Thanking your feedback and support,
> Best regards,
> Asma Tillawi
> <Quality Indicators - Building-Based Practices 2011.pdf>
> <Faculty Survey.doc>

From: **Umesh Sharma** (umesh.sharma@monash.edu)
Sent: Fri 4/26/13 1:10 AM
To: asmatg99@hotmail.com

2 attachments
concerns.pdf (1618.7 KB) , Jorsen-early-views.pdf (167.2 KB)

Hi Asma,
Please see attached the survey and the paper. You may also find one other paper that we have designed to measure teaching efficacy to teach in inclusive classrooms.
Cheers!
Umesh
---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Clayton Course Info** <education.clayton@monash.edu
Date: 26 April 2013 10:45
Subject: Fwd: Attention: Dr Umesh Sharma
To: Umesh Sharma <Umesh.Sharma@monash.edu

From: **asmatg99@hotmail.com**
Sent: Wed 4/24/13 10:16 AM
To: education.clayton@monash.edu (education.clayton@monash.edu)

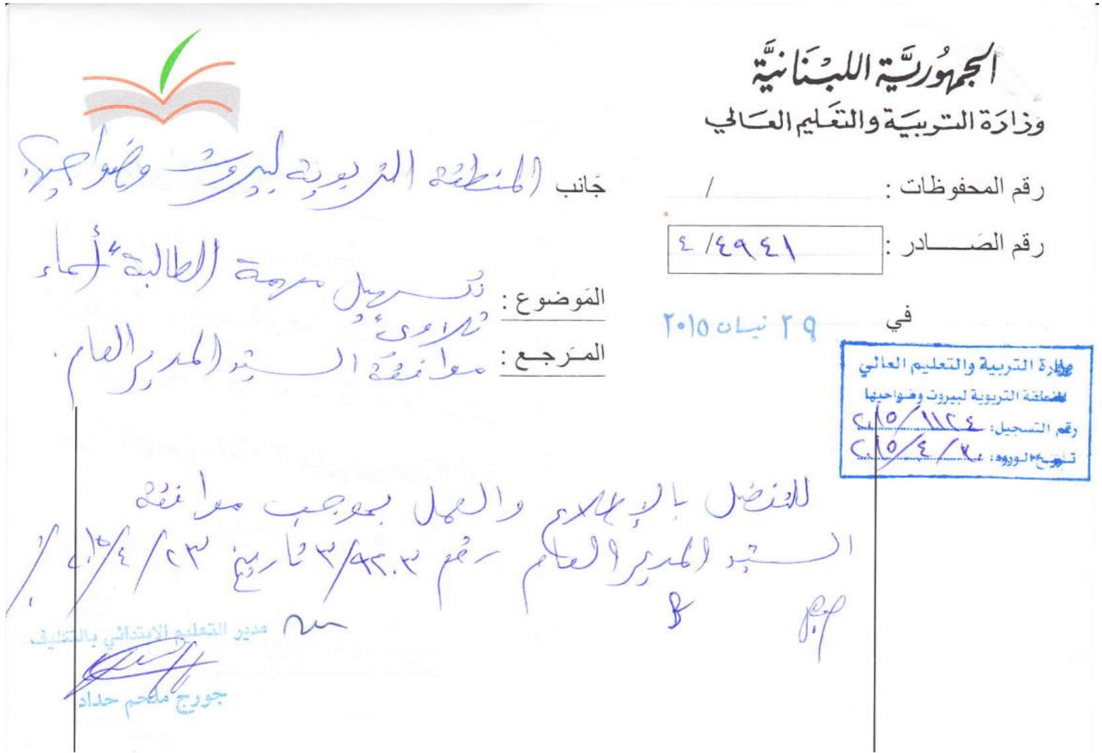
Dear Dr. Sharma,

I am a PhD student in Education from Lebanon in the process of preparing my dissertation. My research is about the challenges of inclusive education in Lebanon, and I am interested in using your **(CIES) Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (2002).** I'd appreciate it if you grant me your approval and update me with the latest version of (CIES) to be able to use it in my study.

Thanking your feedback and support,
Best regards,
Asma Tillawi

Appendix B

Ministry of Education and Higher Education Permission



الجمهورية اللبنانية
وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي

جانب المنطقة التربوية لبيروت وضواحيها

رقم المحفوظات : /

رقم الصادر : ٤/٤٩٤١

في ٢٩ نيسان ٢٠١٥

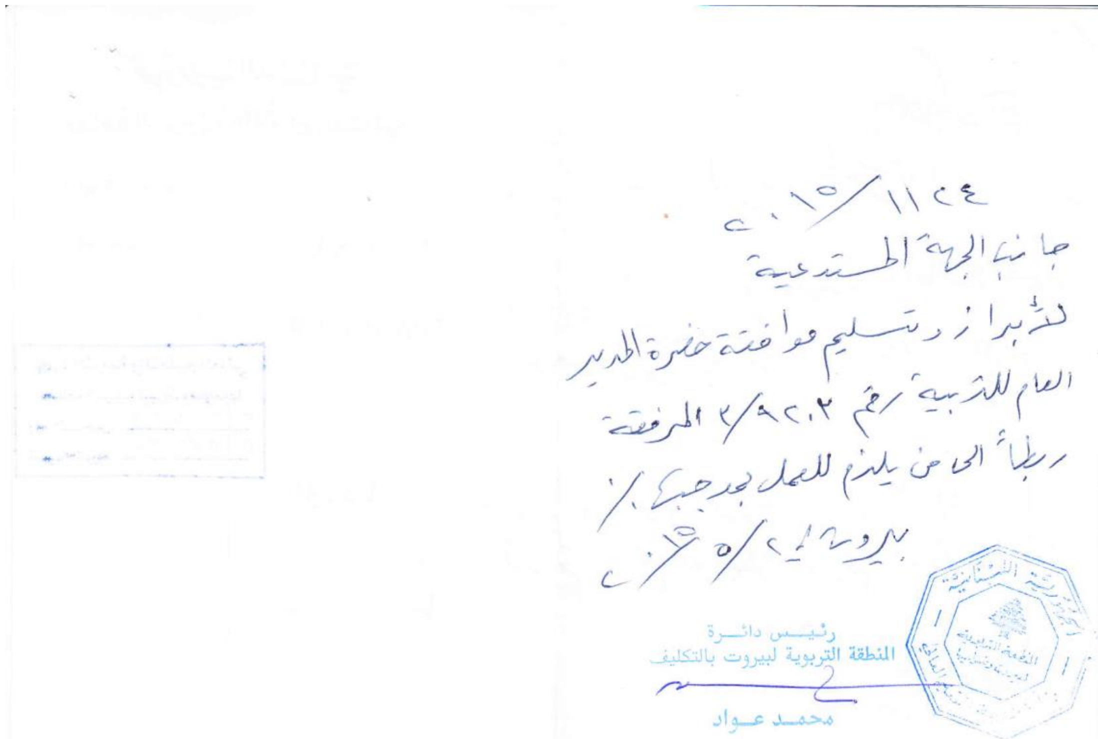
الموضوع : تسهيل مهمة الطالبة

المرجع : موافقة السيد المدير العام

وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي
المنطقة التربوية لبيروت وضواحيها
رقم التسجيل: ١١٢٤/٢٠١٥
تاريخ الورود: ٢٠١٥/٤/٣٠

للتفضل بالإطلاع والعمل بموجب موافقة السيد المدير العام رقم ٢/٩٣٠٢ تاريخ ٢٠١٥/٤/٢٣

مدير التعليم الابتدائي بالتكليف
جورج ملحم حداد



١١٢٤/٢٠١٥

جانب الجهة المستدعية

لإبراز وتسليم موافقة حضرة المدير العام للتربية رقم ٢/٩٢٠٢ المرفقة ربطاً الحاضر يلزم للعمل بموجبه

بيروت في ٢٠١٥/٥/٦

رئيس دائرة
المنطقة التربوية لبيروت بالتكليف
محمد عواد

الجمهوريـــة اللبنانيـــة
وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي

رقم الصادر: ٢/٩٠٢

بيـروت في

جـــانب مديرية التعليم الابتدائي

الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة الطالبة سماء شاوي

المرجـــع:

بعد الاطلاع مع الموافقة على اقتراحكم رقم ١٩٩٤١/٤
تاريخ ٢٢/٤ حول السماح للطالبة في المعهد العالي للدكتوراه في
الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية سماء محمد سليمان شاوي بدخول
المدارس الرسمية الواردة أسماؤها في اللائحة المرفقة خلال العام
الدراسي ٢٠١٤-٢٠١٥ من أجل إنجاز بحث من أجل الإعداد لشهادة الدكتوراه
اللبنانية - اختصاص تربية عامة، على أن يتم التنسيق مع إدارات
هذه المدارس بغية تنفيذ المطلوب وتأمين حسن سير العمل فيها،
لإجراء اللازم.

المدير العام للتربية
فادي يرق

صادر COMPUTER
23 APR 2015

٤٩٤١/٤
٢٥ نيسان ٢٠١٥

الجامعة اللبنانية
المعهد العالي للدكتوراه
في الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية

رقم الإفادة: ٢٤١
رقم الملف: ١٩٧٩
رقم التسجيل: ٥٥٧

COMPUTER
22 APR 2015

وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي
ديوان التربية
رقم التسجيل
تاريخ

وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي
مديرية التعليم الابتدائي
ورد في ٢٠١٥
رقم ٤٩٩١

٢٢ نيسان ٢٠١٥

إفـــــادة

----- . -----

يفيد عميد **المعهد العالي للدكتوراه في الآداب والعلوم الإنسانيّة والاجتماعيّة** في الجامعة اللبنانيّة بأن الطالبة **أسماء محمود سليمان تلاوي** المولودة في **بيروت** بتاريخ ١٩٧٠/٠٦/٢٨ رقم سجل القيد /٣/ من الجنسيّة **اللبنانيّة** هي مسجّلة في المعهد **لإعداد شهادة الدكتوراه اللبنانيّة** اختصاص **تربية (تربية عامّة)** للعام الجامعي ٢٠١٣ - ٢٠١٤ بإشراف الدكتور **أنيس محمد خليل الحروب** وعنوان الأطروحة:

" Inclusive Education : Conceptions and Challenges of Policymakers, Principals, and Teachers in Mainstream Schools in Lebanon "

لـذا يرجى السماح لها، ضمن القوانين المرعيّة الإجراء، بالدخول إلى الدوائر الرسميّة والمؤسسات العامّة والخاصّة، وتسهيل مهمتها ليتسنى لها إنجاز أبحاثها المطلوبة في التخصص.
إننا إذ نشكر لكم تعاونكم الأكاديمي، فإننا نتمنى عليكم مساعدة الطالبة المذكورة أعلاه.

ولكم جزيل الشكر.

أعطيت هذه الإفادة بناءً للطلب.

سن الفيل في: ٢٠١٤/١٠/١٣.

عميد المعهد العالي للدكتوراه
في الآداب والعلوم الإنسانيّة والاجتماعيّة

طلال عتريسي

٤٩٩١ /٤

حضرة السيد المدير (المحترم)
للتفضل بالموافقة على أن يتم التنسيق مع مديري المدارس المعنية في منطقتي بيروت وجبل لبنان

مدير التعليم الابتدائي بالتكليف
جورج ملحم حداد
٢٢ نيسان ٢٠١٥

رسمية	خاص غير مجاني
المنطقة التربوية: بيروت الاولى	
1. الاشرفية الثالثة المتوسطة الرسمية المختلطة الجعيتاوي - الرميل - شارع الخازنين - طلعة الجبيلي	1. القلب الأقدس -الفرير الجميزة - شارع غورو
2. سلمى الصايغ الرسمية للبنات الاشرفية - شارع الزهار	2. الثانوية الانجيلية لبيروت الكبرى السيوفي - شارع الغزالية
3. متوسطة الاشرفية الرسمية المختلطة الجعيتاوي - شارع مار لويس	3. الليسيه الفرنسية اللبنانية الكبرى اوتيل ديو - شارع اسحق بن حنين
4. الاورغواي الرسمية المختلطة - الاشرفية الاولى الاشرفية - العدلية - شارع 90	4. الثانوية لراهبات المحبة السيوفي - الاشرفية - شارع ساسين
المنطقة التربوية: بيروت الثانية	
رسمية	خاص غير مجاني
5. البنات الثانية الرسمية المختلطة المصيطبة - شارع مصطفى نجا	5. ثانوية مار سويريوس المصيطبة - شارع المعلوف
6. البسطة الأولى الرسمية المختلطة العاملية - المزرعة - شارع الشقيف- المتفرع من ش عمربن خطاب	6. ايليت المصيطبة - شارع رشيد طميع
7. عمر الزعني المتوسطة الرسمية المختلطة الملعب - ابو شاكر - شارع محمد سلام	7. الليسه ناسيونال مارالياس - شارع نقولاسرسق
8. الارشاد الرسمية برج ابي حيدر شارع مصباح شبقلو	8. ثانوية الحريري الثانية البطركية - شارع عبد القادر
المنطقة التربوية: بيروت الثالثة	
رسمية	خاص غير مجاني
9. جابر الأحمد الصباح رأس بيروت - شارع التنوخيين	9. انترناشونال كولدج راس بيروت - شارع بلس
10. الامير شكيب ارسلان المتوسطة المختلطة (سابقا فردان الرسمية)	10. ثانوية السيدة الارثوذكسية راس بيروت - الحمراء - شارع المكحول

بيروت BEIRUT

- Abi Bakr El Siddeeq School-Makassed
  مدرسة أبي بكر الصديق - المقاصد
- Adventist School, Mousaitbeh
  ثانوية الأدفنتست المصيطبة
- Ahliah School
  مدرسة الأهلية
- Al-Kawthar Secondary School (Al Mabarrat)
  ثانوية الكوثر (المبرات)
- Al Imam Al Hassan Secondary School (Al Mabarrat)
  ثانوية الإمام الحسن (المبرات)
- Al-Mojtaba Secondary School (Al Mabarrat)
  ثانوية المجتبى (المبرات)
- Al-Mustafa High School - Ghadir
  ثانوية المصطفى، غدير
- Al Batoul High School for Girls (Al Mustafa)
  ثانوية البتول للبنات (المصطفى)
- American Academy of Beirut
  الأكاديمية الأميركية في بيروت
- Beirut Annunciation Orthodox College
  مدرسة البشارة الأرثوذكسية، بيروت
- Beirut Baptist School (BBS)
  المدرسة المعمدانية الإنجيلية
- City International School
  مدرسة ستي إنترناشونال
- Collège de la Sagesse, Beirut
  مدرسة الحكمة الأشرفية، بيروت
- Ecole des Trois Docteurs
  مدرسة الثلاثة الأقمار
- Ecole Zahrat El Ihsan
  مدرسة زهرة الإحسان
- Hassan Kassir High School
  ثانوية الشهيد حسن قصير
- Heritage College
  ثانوية التراث
- Khaled Bin Al-Walid al-Horj College (Makassed)
  كلية خالد بن الوليد، الحرج (المقاصد)
- Saint Mary's Orthodox College
  ثانوية السيدة الأرثوذكسية
- Wellspring Learning Community - PYP Al Mathaf Campus
  مدرسة ولسبرينغ
- Wellspring Learning Community - MYP City Center Campus
  مدرسة ولسبرينغ

Appendix C

Consent Letter

Dear Principal/Teacher in Cycle 1/2/3:

We are asking for your participation in a **research study**. Participation is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions that you may have.

Study Title: Inclusive Education in Mainstream Schools in Lebanon: Conceptions and Challenges of Schoolteachers, Principals, and Decision-makers

A. **Project Description**

1. The aim behind this study is to identify key aspects in terms of the conceptions and challenges of change agents to inclusion of students with special SEN in mainstream schools. Empirical data about conceptions and challenges to inclusive education as perceived by policy makers, school principals, and teachers will be collected. This study is being conducted for the purpose of a PhD dissertation study in Education – Doctoral School of Literature, Humanities & Social Sciences, Lebanese University. No personal or sensitive questions will be asked as part of this study. The estimated time to complete this study is six months. The expected number of participants is 600 (around 20 stake holders, 36 principals and 540 teachers from cycles I, II, & III). The estimated time for data collection at each school is 7 days. The results of the questionnaire will be published in the form of a dissertation report and will be available at the LU Library.
2. School principals will be asked to sit for a semi-structured interview and teachers will be asked to complete a Questionnaire. The principal's interview takes around 15 minutes to complete, and the teacher's questionnaire takes around 20 minutes to complete.
3. Participants are free to choose to answer the English, French, or Arabic version of the questionnaire. The questions are intended to collect descriptive data only and answers will be descriptive and exploratory.
4. By returning the questionnaire, teachers are giving their consent to participate.

5. Teachers will receive the questionnaire on ___/___/___ and have the duration of one week to complete it.

Risks and Benefits

Your participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk to you beyond the risks of daily life. You may choose to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Your decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Discontinuing participation in the study will in no way affect your relationship with the school or with LU. In addition, you receive no direct benefits from participating in this research; however, your participation does help researchers better understand school principals' conceptions and challenges of inclusive education. The findings of this study could be used by policy makers to enhance policies and training opportunities for school teachers and school principals.

Confidentiality

If you agree to participate in this research study, the information will be kept confidential. Your name and/or the school's name will never be attached to your answers. The data is only reviewed by the researcher working on this project. Participants' contact information will be disposed as soon as data analysis is completed.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, you may contact Dr. Anies Al-Hroub at 01-350000 ext. 3053 or by email: aa111@aub.edu.lb or Ms. Asma Tillawi Ghandour at 03-683394 or by email: asmatg99@hotmail.com

Yours sincerely,

Asma Tillawi Ghandour

Appendix D

Survey

Part I

Please √ on the line as appropriate.

The students referred to in this survey are those with special needs. A developmental special need is one that begins in childhood (before age 18), is life-long, and significantly affects intellectual capacity and/or adaptive skills. Some examples of developmental special needs are: cerebral palsy, autism, Down syndrome, and intellectual special needs. Please keep this definition in mind when responding to the following questions.

A. Current Job

• GE refers to a classroom taught by an enrolling teacher that may or may not include students with special needs.

• SE refers to a program specifically developed for students with special needs (e.g., resource room, life skills program, etc.) or programs that service students with special needs that are taught by non-enrolling teachers (e.g., learning assistance).

I am teaching:

1. GE ☐ Cycle I ☐ Cycle II ☐ Cycle III
2. SE ☐ Cycle I ☐ Cycle II ☐ Cycle III

B. I am: ☐ 1. Male ☐ 2. Female

C. What is your age?

☐ 1. 25 years or below ☐ 3. 36-45 years
☐ 2. 26-35 years ☐ 4. 46+ years

D. How many years have you been teaching in total?

☐ 1. 0-5 years ☐ 4. 11-15 years ☐ 3. 6-10 years
☐ 5. 16-20 years ☐ 6. 21+ years

E. My highest level of education completed is:

☐ 1. Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) ☐ 4. Master in Special Ed
☐ 2. Diploma in Special Ed ☐ 5. Master Degree (other)
☐ 3. Diploma (other) ☐ 6. Other ________________

F. **I have attended training sessions in Special Education in the last 5 years:**

☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

G. In the past 5 years, have you taught students in any of the following categories?

☐ 1. Category A – Learning Difficulties

☐ 2. Category B – Behavior, Emotional and Social Development Needs (Such as ADHD)

☐ 3. Category C – Communication and Interaction Needs (Such as Speech problems, Autism)

☐ 4. Category D – Sensory and/or Physical Needs

H. I know of the Law 2000/220 ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

Part II. Inclusive Education Practices Faculty Survey (IEPFS)

Check off the box below that most accurately reflects your opinion and belief:

I believe that:	**YES, I Agree**	**SOME-TIMES**	**NO, I Don't Agree**	**I JUST DON'T KNOW**
SEN STUDENTS				
1. Every student, regardless of the special need, should be assigned to and be instructed in GE classes.				
2. Students who have special needs can be positive contributors to GE classes.				
3. Any student, and all students, can learn in the GE classroom.				
4. Students without special needs can benefit when a student with a significant special need is included in the class.				
5. A student with multiple special needs can benefit from and successfully achieve IEP objectives in a GE class.				
TEACHER'S ROLE				
6. Teachers with extensive SE training should NOT be the only ones to deliver SE services.				
7. A GE classroom teacher can deliver special instruction to students who have IEPs as a part of the general lesson.				
8. If a classroom teacher does not want to teach a particular child with an IEP, the class placement should change to another teacher who is willing to teach the child.				
9. When a SE teacher is assigned to deliver services in a GE class, it has a positive impact on the whole class.				
10. Special educators are equipped to teach GE students.				

I believe that:	**YES, I Agree**	**SOME-TIMES**	**NO, I Don't Agree**	**I JUST DON'T KNOW**
11. I am aware of my school's philosophy about including students with special needs.				
SCHOOL PRACTICES				
12. Our school's administration would support teachers working together to include students with special needs.				
13. The staff in our school feel positively about including students with special needs				
14. Staff members in our school are encouraged to collaborate and support all students.				
15. In our building, students who have special needs feel welcome and participate in all aspects of school life.				
TEACHER' SELF EFFICACY				
16. I feel comfortable including students with special needs in the GE classroom.				
17. I am adequately prepared to deliver instruction to a wide variety of learners using the GE curriculum as a base for instruction.				
18. I am willing to collaborate with other teachers.				
19. I feel comfortable and able to supervise and support the staff assigned to my class				
20. I am comfortable using technology (computers or adaptive equipment) to support the instruction of a wide variety of learners.				
21. I can adequately assess the progress and performance of most students who have IEPs.				
22. I can make instructional and curriculum accommodations for children with IEPs.				
23. I have the time to collaborate with other teachers when needed.				
24. I am willing to change and improve my instructional style to be able to reach more students.				
25. I feel that I can make a difference in the life of a student who has a special need.				

Part III

CONCERNS ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SCALE

Inclusive education is one form of educational provision that may be made for students with special needs within the school system. In the context of your school situation and/or your personal experiences indicate whether any of the following items will be a concern to you if a student with a special need was placed in your class/school.

Instructions

Please indicate your level of concern by circling the number that applies to you most appropriately.

	Extremely Concerned	**Very Concerned**	**A Little Concerned**	**Not Concerned at All**
1. I will not have enough time to plan educational programs for students with special needs.				
2. It will be difficult to maintain discipline in class.				
3. I do not have knowledge and skills required to teach students with special needs.				
4. I will have to do additional paper work.				
5. Students with special needs will not be accepted by students without special needs.				
6. Parents of children without special needs may not like the idea of placing their children in the same classroom where there are students with special needs.				
7. My school will not have enough funds for implementing integration successfully.				
8. There will be inadequate para-professional staff available to support integrated students (e.g. speech therapist, physiotherapist,				

	Extremely Concerned	**Very Concerned**	**A Little Concerned**	**Not Concerned at All**
occupational therapist, etc.).				
9. I will not receive enough incentives (e.g. additional remuneration or allowance) to integrate students with special needs.				
10. My workload will increase.				
11. Other staff members of the school will be stressed.				
12. My school will have difficulty in accommodating students with various types of special needs because of inappropriate infrastructure, e.g. architectural barrier.				
13. There will be inadequate resources or special teachers available to support integration.				
14. My school will not have adequate SE instructional materials and teaching aids, e.g. Braille.				
15. The overall academic standards of the school will suffer.				
16. My performance as a classroom teacher or school principal will decline.				
17. The academic achievement of students without special needs will be affected.				
18. It will be difficult to give equal attention to all students in an integrated classroom.				
19. I will not be able to cope with special students who do not have adequate self-care skills e.g. students who are not toilet trained.				
20. There will be inadequate administrative support to				

	Extremely Concerned	**Very Concerned**	**A Little Concerned**	**Not Concerned at All**
implement the integration program.				
21. The integration of a student with special needs in my class or school will lead to higher degree of anxiety and stress in me.				

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

If you encountered an incident of a significant (positive/negative) experience with a student with SEN (e.g. encountering SEN student(s) at school), briefly write about it making sure you answer the questions that follow:

- What happened?
- What significance did the incident have at the time it was occurring?
- What did it mean to you at that time?
- What is the significance of the incident now?

Thank you for your valuable contribution.

Survey – Arabic Version

إستبيان

القسم الأول

رجاءً ضع علامة √ إلى جانب الإجابة المناسبة.

إن الطلاب الذي يتناولهم هذا الاستبيان هم ذوو الإحتياجات الخاصة. الحاجة الخاصة النمائية التي تبدأ منذ الطفولة (ما قبل الثامنة عشرة)، تستمر مدى الحياة، وتؤثر بشكل كبير على القدرات العقلية و/ أو على مهارات التكيف. أمثلة على الإحتياجات الخاصة النمائية هي: الشلل الدماغي، التوحد، متلازمة داون، والإحتياجات الخاصة العقلية. رجاء أن تضع في اعتبارك التعاريف التالية عند إجابتك على الأسئلة.

الوظيفة الحالية:

التربية العامة (العادية) يعني الصفوف التي يتم تعليمها من قبل معلم مجاز والتي قد تحوي طلابا من ذوي الحاجات الخاصة وقد لا تحوي أيا من هؤلاء الطلاب.

التربية الخاصة (او المختصة) (SE) يعني برنامج أعِد خصيصا للتلاميذ ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة (مثال: غرفة المصادر، برنامج المهارات الحياتية إلخ) أو البرامج التي تقدم خدمات للتلاميذ ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة والتي يقدمها معلمون مساعدون.

أنا أعلِّم في :

1. التربية العامة/العادية ☐الحلقة الأولى ☐الحلقة الثانية ☐الحلقة الثالثة
2. التربية الخاصة ☐الحلقة الأولى ☐الحلقة الثانية ☐ الحلقة الثالثة
3. **أنا** ☐1. ذكر ☐ 2. أنثى

ب. **ما هو عمرك**

☐1. 25 سنة أو أقل ☐ 3. 36-45

☐2. 26-35 سنة ☐ 4. 46+ سنة

ج. كم عدد السنوات التي علّمتها مجتمعة

☒ 1. صفر-5 سنة ☒ 4. 11-15 سنة

☐ 2. 6-10 سنوات ☐ 5. 16-20 سنة

☐ 6. 21 وما فوق

د. أعلى مستوى تعليمي حصلت عليه هو:

☐ 1. بكالوريوس في التربية ☐ 4. ماجستير في التربية الخاصة

☐ 2. دبلوم في التربية الخاصة ☐ 5. ماجستير في تخصص آخر

☐ 3. دبلوم في تخصص آخر ☐ 6. غيرها ________________

ه. لقد شاركت في جلسات تدريبية في التربية الخاصة خلال السنوات الخمس الأخيرة :

☐ 1. نعم ☐2. لا

ز. خلال السنوات الخمس الماضية، كم عدد الطلاب الذين علمتهم من الفئات التالية؟

☐1. الفئة أ – صعوبات تعلمية
☐2. الفئة ب- إحتياجات نمائية سلوكية، عاطفية، إجتماعية (مثل قصور الانتباه وفرط الحركة – ADHD)
☐3. الفئة ج - إحتياجات التواصل والتفاعل (مثل اضطرابات التوحد، صعوبات في النطق)
☐4. الفئة د– الاحتياجات الحسية و / أو الجسدية

و. **أنا أعرف القانون 200/2000** ☐1. نعم ☐ 2. لا

القسم الثاني: استبيان ممارسات التعليم الدامج للمعلمين

ضع علامة في المربع الذي يعبر عن رأيك.

أنا أعتقد أنه:	**نعم، أوافق**	**أحيانا**	**كلا، لا أوافق**	**لستُ أدري**
1. ينبغي أن يتم إلحاق كل تلميذ، بغض النظر عن الحاجات الخاصة، في غرف الصفوف العادية وأن يتلقى تعليمه فيها.				
2. الطلاب ذو الإحتياجات الخاصة يمكن أن يكونوا مساهمين إيجابيين في صفوف التربية العادية				
3. أي تلميذ، وجميع التلاميذ، بإمكانهم أن يتعلموا في صفوف التربية العادية				
4. يمكن لتلاميذ من غير ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة أن يستفيدوا عندما يتم دمج تلميذ ذي حاجة خاصة في الصف				
5. يمكن لتلميذ ذو إحتياجات متعددة أن يستفيد من ويحصل اهداف البرنامج التربوي الفردي (IEP) في صف التربية العادية.				

أنا أعتقد أنه:	نعم، أوافق	أحيانا	كلا، لا أوافق	لستُ أدري
6. لا يجدر بالمعلمين المتدربين بشكل كاف على التربية الخاصة أن يكونوا الوحيدين الذين يقدمون خدمات التربية الخاصة.				
7. معلم الصف التربية العامة يستطيع أن يقدم تعليماً متخصصاً للطلاب الذين يملكون برنامجا تربويا فرديا(IEP) كجزء من الدرس العام.				
8. إذا لم يرغب معلم الصف بتعليم طفل لديه برنامج تربوي فردي (IEP)، ينبغي اختيار معلم آخر مستعد لتعليم ذاك الطفل.				
9. عند اختيار معلم التربية الخاصة لتقديم الخدمات في صف التربية العامة، فإن هذا الأمر يترك تأثيرا إيجابيا على الصف بأكمله.				
10. يمتلك معلمو التربية الخاصة إعداداً كافياً لتعليم طلاب التربية العامة.				
11. أنا واع لفلسفة مدرستي حول دمج التلاميذ ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.				
12. تدعم إدارة مدرستنا المعلمين للعمل سوية كي يدمجوا الطلاب ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.				
13. يوجد لدى الهيئة التعليمية في مدرستنا شعور إيجابي تجاه دمج التلاميذ ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.				
14. يتم تشجيع أعضاء الهيئة التعليمية في مدرستنا على التعاون ومساندة جميع الطلاب.				
15. في مدستنا يشعر الطلاب ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة بالترحاب ويشاركون في كافة جوانب الحياة المدرسية.				
16. أنا أشعر بالراحة لدمج الطلاب ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة في صفوف التربية العامة.				

أنا أعتقد أنه:	**نعم، أوافق**	**أحيانا**	**كلا، لا أوافق**	**لستُ أدري**
17. أنا جاهز بشكل كاف لتقديم التعليم لشريحة متنوعة من المتعلمين باستخدام منهج التربية العام كركيزة للتعليم.				
18. أنا مستعد للتعاون مع المعلمين الآخرين.				
19. أشعر بالراحة والقدرة على أن أشرف العاملين معي في الصف.				
20. باستطاعتي أن أقوّم بشكل كاف تقييم تقدّم معظم التلاميذ وأداءهم ممن لديهم برامج تربوية فردية (IEPs).				
21. باستطاعتي أن أجري تعديلات على طريقة التعليم والمنهج المستخدم مع الطلاب الذين يخضعون للبرامج التربوية الفردية (IEPs).				
22. أملك الوقت للتعاون مع المعلمين الآخرين عند الحاجة.				
23. أنا مستعد لتغيير وتطوير طريقتي في التعليم لأكون قادرا على على تقديم الدعم لأكبر عدد من الطلاب.				
24. أشعر بأنني قادر على أن أحقق فرقا في حياة التلميذ ذي الحاجة الخاصة.				

القسم الثالث

مقياس القلق حول التربية الدامجة

التربية الدامجة هي إحدى الطرق التعليمية المقدمة للتلاميذ ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة ضمن النظام المدرسي. وفي سياق مدرستك وبحسب تجاربك الذاتية أشِر إن كان أي من البنود التالية هو قضية تشغل اهتمامك في حال تم وضع طالب ذي حاجة خاصة في صفك/ مدرستك. رجاءً أشر إلى مستوى الأهمية عبر وضع علامة في المربع الذي يعبر عن رأيك.

	قلق بشدة	قلق جدا	قلق بشكل محدود	لست قلق على الإطلاق
1. لن أملك الوقت الكافي للتخطيط للبرامج التعليمية الخاصة بالتلاميذ ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.				
2. سيكون أمرا صعبا الحفاظ على النظام داخل الصف.				
3. لا أملك المعرفة والمهارات المطلوبة لتعليم الطلاب ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.				
4. لن يتم تقبل التلاميذ ذوو الإحتياجات الخاصة من قبل الطلاب من غير ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.				
5. سوف يكون علي القيام بعمل كتابي إضافي.				
6. أولياء أمور التلاميذ من غير ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة قد لا تعجبهم فكرة إلحاق أبنائهم في صف يكون فيه تلاميذ من ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.				
7. مدرستي لن تملك التمويل الكافي كي تطبق الدمج بنجاح.				
8. لن يكون هناك مساعدون بشكل كاف كي يساندوا دمج التلاميذ (مثال معالج النطق، المعالج الفيزيائي، المعالج الوظيفي، إلخ).				

	قلق بشدة	قلق جدا	قلق بشكل محدود	لست قلق على الإطلاق
9. لن أتلقّى المحفزات الكافية (مثال مكافأة مالية أو مخصصات) كي أدمج التلاميذ ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.				
10.سيزداد عبء العمل المطلوب مني.				
11.سيتعرض موظفو المدرسة للضغوط.				
12.ستواجه مدرستي صعوبة في تقديم خدمات للتلاميذ ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة المتعددة لعدم توافر البنى التحتية المناسبة (مثال: عوائق في تصميم المدرسة).				
13.ستفتقد المدرسة لمصادر التعلم الكافية أو لأعداد كافية من معلمي التربية الخاصة لمساندة الدمج.				
14.ستعاني المدرسة وتتأثر سلبياً على مستوى التعليم الأكاديمي للمدرسة.				
15.مدرستي لن تمتلك مواد ووسائل تعليمية كافية للتربية الخاصة مثل نظام البريل للمكفوفين (Braille).				
16.سينحدر مستوى أدائي كمعلم صف.				
17.سيتأثر تحصيل التلاميذ من غير ذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.				
18.سيكون أمرا صعبا إعطاء الاهتمام المتساوي لكافة التلاميذ في الصف الدامج.				
19.لن أكون قادرا على التكيف مع التلاميذ ذوي الإحتياجات				

	قلق بشدة	قلق جدا	قلق بشكل محدود	لست قلق على الإطلاق
الخاصة الذين لا يتمتعون بمهارات العناية بالذات (مثال: التلاميذ غير المدربين على استخدام دورة المياه).				
20.لن يكون هناك مساندة إدارية كافية لتطبيق برنامج الدمج.				
21.دمج التلاميذ ذوي الحاجات الخاصة في صفي أو المدرسة سيزيد من مستويات القلق والضغط لدي.				

الدليل المستند إلى تجربة

إذا واجهتك حادثة ذات أهمية (إيجابية أو سلبية) مع أحد الطلاب ذوي الحاجات التعليمية الخاصة (التعرف إلى تلميذ ذي حاجة تعليمية خاصة)، اكتب عنها بشكل مختصر بحيث تحرص على أن تجيب على الأسئلة التالية:

1. ماذا حصل؟
2. ما هي أهمية الحادثة ساعة وقوعها؟
3. ماذا عنت لك في ذاك الوقت؟
4. ما هي أهميتها الآن؟

Appendix E

Semi-Structured Interview Protocols

Decision-makers

1. Tell me about yourself:
    - A. Your educational background?
    - B. How long have you been in this post?
    - C. What positions did you have before reaching this post?
2. Are you familiar with the nation Law 2000/220?
3. Are you familiar with the International legislation that Lebanon has signed? Ratified?
4. Lebanon signed but has not ratified the United Nations convention on the rights of people with disabilities; is there any intention to comply?
5. What is your understanding of inclusive education? can you provide me with a definition? In your opinion is it beneficial to both students with and without SEN?
6. Do you think a GE teacher can deliver SE services?
7. What can you tell me about the involvement of the Ministry/NGO in projects around the inclusion of SEN students in mainstream education?
    - A. Previous projects?⊠(The 2012 National Plan of Inclusion)
    - B. Current projects?
    - C. Any Inclusive Education related future plans?
8. What are the main limitations that the Ministry/NGO faces in supporting Inclusive Education related projects?
    - A. Financial?
    - B. Human?
    - C. Physical?
9. Are public schools in Lebanon ready to implement Inclusive Education?
10. What initiatives have been done to prepare public schools to Inclusive Education?
11. What kind of support does the Ministry/NGO provide for those requiring support provision?
12. Are Private mainstream schools ready for Inclusive Education?

Appendix G

Principal's Background Form and Interview Schedule

Prior to beginning the interview, I will introduce myself and the purpose for conducting this research study. Then, I will kindly ask the principal to answer the questions below because they will provide me with demographic information to deduce statistical data. I will inform the principals that the information they provide will remain confidential.

Position:☒___________________________________

Number of Years in Current Position: _______________________________

Highest Degree Obtained:☒____

Are you familiar with the Law 220?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Fully Aware ☐

Did you receive educational training regarding including SEN students into GE?

Yes ☐ No ☐

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS
PRINCIPALS

After filling the form, I will inform the participant that the duration of the interview will be about 30 and 45 minutes. The interview questions will be the following.

1. What is your understanding of inclusive education? Can you provide me with a definition? In your opinion is it beneficial to both students with and without SEN?

2. How can a school principal provide support to implement the inclusive education program?

    a. What kind of support? /Describe the type of support?
    b. Does your school have a site-based planning team to identify SEN students and prepare the IEPs?
    c. How do you identify SEN students?

3. How do you think GE teachers view inclusion?
4. Are your teachers comfortable to deal with SEN students?
5. Do you think a GE teacher can deliver SE services? What if he/she refuses to teach a particular child with an IEP? What happens in this situation?
6. Are teachers able and willing to cater for the wide variety of learners with the GE curriculum in terms of:
    a. Technology,
    b. Collaboration with SE teacher

7. Does a SE teacher have a positive impact on the whole class? Can he/she teach GE students?

8. What are your concerns about the implementation of the inclusive education program in your school? Name the limitations or barriers that hinder its execution.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS – Arabic Version

تعليمات المقابلة شبه المنظمة

1. هل أنت ملم بالقانون 2000/ 220 ؟
2. ما هو مفهومك للتعليم الدامج؟ باعتقادك هل هو مفيد للطلاب من ذوي الحاجات التعليمية الخاصة والذين هم لا يعانون من اي صعوبات معا؟
3. هل تظن أن معلم الصف قادر على أن يوصل خدمات التربية الخاصة ؟ ماذا لو رفض هذا المعلم أن يعلم تلميذا ذا برنامج تربوي فردي؟ ماذا يحصل حينئذ؟
4. هل لمعلم التربية الخاصة تأثير إيجابي على الصف بأكمله؟ هل يستطيع أن يعلم الطلاب في التعليم العام؟
5. هل تقدم مساندة لتطبيق برنامج تعليمي دامج؟ ما نوعه؟
6. هل معلموك مرتاحون في التعامل مع الطلاب ذوي الحاجات التعليمية الخاصة؟
7. هل المعلمون قادرون ومستعدون أن يلبوا حاجات متعلمين مختلفين في التعليم العام من حيث :
8. التكنولوجيا
9. البرنامج التربوي الفردي
10. التعاون مع معلم التربية الخاصة
11. ما هي القضايا المهمة بالنسبة لك حول تطبيق برنامج التعليم الدامج في مدرستك؟ إذكر القيود أو المعوقات التي تقف في وجه التطبيق.

Appendix H

Focus Group Discussion Vignettes

Vignette # 1

Salma has substantial problems in recalling information and as such her achievement across all curriculum subjects is very low. Compared to her peers, she has a low self-esteem due to her immature social skills. She has few friends and is obviously excluded by many of her classmates. Salma's parents are overly protective which has resulted in her having limited social and recreational experiences.

Vignette # 2

Malek has a very short attention span. He is of normal intelligence and comes from a supportive, middle-class family. He has a specific difficulty in learning to read which leads to problems in several subject areas. He is normally a well-disciplined student but at times is inclined to impulsive actions and hyperactivity.

Vignette # 3

Nabeel is a hard-working well-mannered boy. However, any tasks related to oral presentations he finds overwhelmingly difficult. He has a serious problem in speech fluency. He repeats words and phrases and echoes sounds. He blinks continuously whenever he stutters. Some of his peers tease him and this overtly upsets him. He gets frustrated with children and teachers who finish sentences for him.

Vignette # 4

Celena experiences involuntary muscle spasms down the left side of her body and she is on medication. She is able to move around unaided, but her capacity to participate in a range of physical and fine motor activities is restricted. Celena needs considerable individual support to learn and her speaking is spasmodic and slurred. She comes from a supportive family background and has a small circle of friends.

Vignette # 5

Jad is a 12-year old child who has mild Cerebral Palsy that affected mobility in both his legs. He can move on a walker unaided, but his capacity to participate in a range of physical activities is restricted. Though Jad needs more time to move from one place to another and support to carry his belongings, he has normal intelligence and loves math more than other subjects. Because of his mobility impairment, some of the school children bully Jad. He comes from supportive family background and has a small circle of friends.

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS

After welcoming the participants, a power point presentation will be displayed portraying the cases of each of the vignettes.

Directly after each vignette, the participants will be prompted to answer these questions:

1. If you had this student in your class, to what extent do you find it challenging to effectively serve and respond to the student's learning, behavioral and/or social needs?
    a. Not Challenging
    b. A Little Challenging
    c. Very Challenging
    d. Extremely Challenging

2. Considering inclusive education as pedagogy to provide a curriculum and to make use of an approach that is inclusive and catering to the needs of all students, do you believe you will be successful in achieving these if this student were in you class?
    a. Extremely Successful
    b. Very Successful
    c. Successful
    d. Not successful

3. Focusing on the student you identified as the most challenging in respect of providing for their needs (Question 1), what would be the major reason for your difficulty?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION VIGNETTES – ARABIC VERSION

مشاهد مناقشة مجموعة التركيز

المشهد # 1

سلمى تعاني من مشاكل كبيرة في تذكر المعلومات لدرجة أن تحصيلها في مختلف المواد كان متدنيا جدا. وبالمقارنة مع أقرانها، فهي ذات تقدير ذات متدن لعدم نضج مهاراتها الاجتماعية. لديها أصدقاء محدودين وواضح أنها معزولة من قبل رفيقاتها داخل الصف. أما أهلها فهم مفرطون في الحماية ما أدى إلى تعرضها لتجارب اجتماعية وترفيهية محدودة.

المشهد #2

مالك سعة انتباهه محدودة جدا. هو ذو مستوى ذكاء وسطي ومن عائلة مساندة، من الطبقة المتوسطة. لديه صعوبة تعليمية محددة في القراءة أدت إلى مشاكل في مختلف المواد. عادة ما يلتزم بالنظام لكنه أحيانا يميل إلى أعمال مندفعة وحركة زائدة.

المشهد # 3

نبيل صبي يبذل جهدا كبيرا وسلوك طيب. لكنه يجد المهام التي تتطلب عرضا شفهيا فائقة الصعوبة. لديه مشاكل حقيقية في الطلاقة الكلامية. فهو يعيد الكلمات والعبارات والأصوات. يرمش باستمرار عندما يتلعثم. بعض أقرانه يغيظونه وهذا ما يغضبه بشكل واضح. يتضايق عندما يقوم المعلم والتلاميذ بإنهاء الجمل له.

المشهد # 4

سيلينا تعاني من انقباض عضلاتها لاإراديا في القسم الأيسر من جسدها وهي تتناول أدوية. هي قادرة على الحركة من دون مساعدة، لكن قدرتها على المشاركة في مجموعة من الأنشطة الحركية وأنشطة العضلات الدقيقة تكون محدودة. تحتاج سيلينا إلى مساندة فردية كبيرة كي تتعلم وطريقة كلامها متقطعة وسريعة وغير مفهومة. هي من عائلة مساندة ولديها حلقة ضيقة من الأصدقاء.

المشهد # 5

جاد طفل يبلغ من العمر 12 عامًا يعاني من شلل دماغي خفيف أثر على الحركة في ساقيه. يمكنه التحرك على مشي بدون مساعدة، لكن قدرته على المشاركة في مجموعة من الأنشطة البدنية مقيدة. على الرغم من أن جاد يحتاج إلى مزيد من الوقت للانتقال من مكان إلى آخر والدعم لحمل أغراضه، إلا أنه يتمتع بذكاء طبيعي ويحب الرياضيات أكثر من الموضوعات الأخرى. بسبب ضعف حركته، يتنمر بعض أطفال المدارس على جاد. إنه يأتي من خلفية عائلية داعمة ولديه دائرة صغيرة من الأصدقاء.