



The Inclusion of Children with Down's syndrome in Mainstream Primary Schools in Saudi Arabia: Understanding the Perspective of School Principals

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Aya (verse)

(بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ)

*In the name of Allah, Most
Gracious, Most Merciful*

الجزء { ٣ / ٣٠ } سورة آل عمران { ٣ / ١١٤ } الآية { ٦ / ٢٠٠ }

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ

Juz { 3 / 30 }

Sura Ali Imran { 3 / 114 }

Aya { 6 / 200 }

He it is Who fashioneth you in the wombs as pleaseth Him.
There is no Allah save Him, the Almighty, the Wise

Abstract

The inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabian schools is in a state of stress and confusion. School leaders have a critical role in improving inclusion, and they are also well placed to understand the challenges of their own schools. This research explores the perspectives of school principals on the inclusion of pupils with Down's syndrome in mainstream Saudi schools and factors that affect it.

This study consists of a qualitative study of inclusive schools (both government and ARAMCO) in the Eastern Province. Three methods were employed for data collection: interviews with a purposive sample of principals from 20 inclusive schools, the analysis of five government documents, and participant observation in five schools.

The principals lacked knowledge about inclusion-associated policy, particularly regarding children with Down's syndrome, which influenced their perspectives and had an impact on the strategies they adopted regarding inclusive learning for children with Down's syndrome in their schools. Principals from government schools also reported unsuitability of school buildings and lack of funding for improvements, whereas ARAMCO school buildings were better designed for inclusion. For both types of schools, additional limiting factors included the profundity of the learning difficulties of children with Down's syndrome and the training required by principals.

Recommendations are also made regarding infrastructure, apparatus and resources that aid inclusion, and for measures to foster community awareness and leadership training. Collectively, it is hoped that this will result in the fruitful inclusion of children with Down's syndrome within education and society in Saudi Arabia.

Dedication

To my father, Hassan Alabri,

Allah (God) rest your soul in paradise,

To my mum, Fatimah Alshaya,

For keeping me connected to streams of prayer, may you see your dream come true,

May Allah (God) prolong your age,

To my beloved wife, Monirah Al-Hamad,

For giving me constant encouragement every night and every day, also, for looking after
our children during this research,

To my daughter, Fatimah,

For leading me to dive into the depths of Down's syndrome,

To all my lovely children,

For your hugs when my morale sagged,

May Allah (God) bless all of you.

Waleed

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Glossary of Terminology

Terms used in this research	Explanation
Children with Down's syndrome	Some participants referred to these children using terms such as 'children with special educational needs', 'children with learning difficulties' and 'mongoloid'.
Learning difficulties	Children who have low mental ability.
Coeducation	This refers to boys' and girls' education in the same school.
Special school (intellectual institute)	A school that accepts only students with learning difficulties
General school and general classroom	A school that accepts only general students or a classroom that is only for general students.
Inclusive school and inclusive classroom	A general school where general students and students with learning difficulties are accepted, but with the latter in attached classrooms, which are called inclusive classrooms for students with learning difficulties. It should be noted here, as I mentioned in chapter 1, that this type of school and classroom would be called 'integrated', not 'inclusive', in a Western context. However, for translation and cultural reasons, I am using the word 'inclusive' in the Saudi context to mean general schools, which have separate classrooms. This terminology has been used by other Saudi researchers in Western universities who study Saudi education (Alquraini, 2011; Alanazi, 2012; Alothman, 2014).
General teacher	A teacher who teaches only general students
Special teacher	A teacher who teaches in a special school or in an inclusive school

Chapter One: Introduction and Research Context

Following the research stages:

Chapter 1	Introduction and Research Context		
Chapter 2	The Context, Theory and Literature Review	Part 1	The Context of Saudi Arabia
		Part 2	Theoretical Framework
		Part 3	Literature Review
Chapter 3	Research Methodology		
Chapter 4	Principals' Understanding of Concept of Inclusion		
Chapter 5	School Principals' Perspectives on Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Mainstream Schools		
Chapter 6	Factors Affecting the Perspectives of Principals regarding the Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome		
Chapter 7	Recommendations and Conclusion		

1.1. Introduction

This study explores and examines the understandings and perspectives of school principals regarding the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream primary schools in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

In addition to my own personal and professional interest (explained in section 1.8), this study was motivated by gaps and unresolved issues in the area of inclusion, in Saudi Arabia. The international literature on this matter describes inclusion through a variety of models of education for children with Down's syndrome, including special schools, integration (education in mainstream schools, but with limited participation with peers), and full inclusion in mainstream schools (see section 2.3.3). This latter approach is not yet practised in Saudi Arabia, although the government purports to be working towards this, as discussed in chapter two, part one, particularly section 2.1.5 – 2.1.8. The literature identifies both benefits and problems of inclusion, for children, families, the community and the school (section 2.3.4), (see for example, Wishart, 2005; Carrington and Robinson, 2006; Pijl and Frissen, 2009; Batu, 2010; Eldar et al., 2010). It also suggests that a key factor in the success of education is the role of school leadership in managing changes (see for example, King, 2011; Schmidt and Venet, 2012, in section 2.3.5), which in turn depends on the knowledge, understanding and attitudes of school principals towards inclusion (section 2.3.6), (see Foreman, 2011; Smith et al., 2014). Previous research in a variety of international contexts also identifies a range of personal, professional and institutional factors that have been found to influence perspectives towards inclusion (section 2.3.7), (for example, Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Avissar et al., 2003; Horrocks et al., 2008; Symeonidou and Phtiaka, 2009; Chhabra et al., 2010; Rakap and Kaczmarek, 2010; Gaad, 2011). In order to understand the current position and future prospects of Saudi Arabia with regard to the implementation of children with Down's syndrome, in the light of this literature, I identified the need to explore the perceptions of Saudi primary school principals towards inclusion.

The study involved interaction with school principals to understand their experience of the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome, rather than trying to measure objectively the performance of those principals. Interacting with school principals in

different schools also provided a means to understand how the principals work, communicate and deal with these children, and how Saudi culture impacts upon the principals' response to inclusion.

The study explored this topic through the following research questions:

1. What understanding do mainstream primary school principals in Saudi Arabia have of the concept of inclusion?
2. What is the perspective of school principals regarding the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream primary schools?
3. What are the factors that affect the perspective of school principals regarding the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream primary schools?

The theoretical framework underpinning this study emerges out of two different models of disability: the medical model and the social model (see discussion in section 2.2.2), which are particularly appropriate to the leadership culture in Saudi Arabia (Al-Rubiyeh, 2010). Because inclusion is a new concept in Saudi Arabia, with children only recently being moved from special schools to mainstream ones, and not every school being involved in inclusion, the medical and social models are particularly relevant when considering attitudes towards inclusion.

1.2. Current Research

In spite of the wealth of international literature regarding inclusion (for example, Fox, 2004), there is still a deficiency in qualitative research on this subject within the Saudi context. The majority of Saudi research is positivist in character (Aboela, 2008), using only quantitative study techniques. There is an absence of interpretive qualitative study strategies in educational study generally, and in the special education study area specifically. Gallagher (2014) argues that the positivist view aligns with a medical model of disability, and runs counter to the spirit of inclusive education. In contrast, the purpose of a qualitative strategy is to “*understand what is happening in that context*”

(Male, 2016: p.180). Therefore, a qualitative interpretive methodology is particularly appropriate when studying the complex field of inclusive education in the Saudi context.

For the above reasons, the outcomes of this research approach cannot be generalised to different schools. Nonetheless, generalisation was not part of the objective of the present research. Instead, it looks for deep comprehension, achieved by a combination of several sources of evidence (Yin, 2009), and relatability (Bassey, 2001), based on rich description of the research context, process and findings, to allow readers to evaluate the resonance and usefulness of the research for their contexts. The research was carried out by doing 20 semi- structured interviews with 20 participants (ten male and ten female school principals), participant observations in five schools, and analysis of five key documents, to enhance the reliability of the research findings (Cohen et al., 2011).

While teachers and parents were not formally interviewed, they were included in the participant observation, by means of informal interviews. Such interviews were culturally appropriate, as, from my experience of Saudi culture, it is not considered appropriate to be a silent observer; observations are expected to take the form of participation and conversation. These informal conversations provided further insights and interpretation in a joint process of reflection, which was particularly important in order to provide the appropriate depth to the study.

1.3. Significance of the Study

While there is a sizeable body of research on the topic of inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Western countries (see, for example, Buckley and Bird, 1998; Kasari et al., 1999; Wolpert, 2001; Gilmore et al., 2003; Fox et al., 2004; Buckley et al., 2006; Hughes, 2006; Sirlopu et al., 2008), school principals' perspectives on and understanding of the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream schools in Saudi Arabia is still an ambiguous, vague and little-known topic, due to the lack of detailed research. Indeed, not only the perspective of school principals on the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream schools, but also children with Down's syndrome generally remains an under-researched subject in Saudi Arabia.

Most of the existing studies on children with Down's syndrome are descriptive; they frequently describe the types and characteristics of Down's syndrome and the reasons for having a child with this condition (for example, Al-Habdan, 2001; Alabri, 2003). Indeed, many studies of inclusive education in Saudi Arabia have tended to focus on special educational needs more generally, or on pupils in one category of disability, such as those who are deaf, blind or have learning difficulties (Al-Abduljabbar and Massud, 2002; Alkalifa, 2002; Alqahtani, 2003; Aboela, 2008; Al-Ahmadi, 2009; Alothman 2014). In addition, as Almalq (2004) asserts, the unique nature and character of Down's syndrome means that it requires focused research in order to assist these children in succeeding in schools. Moreover, as far as I am aware, to date there have been no studies in the Saudi context considering these issues, such as children with Down's syndrome, inclusion in primary mainstream schools, the views of male and female principals, or provision in government and ARAMCO schools. To date, ARAMCO schools have not been discussed in literature.

The significance of scrutinising the perspectives of principals concerning educational change, is that there is little evidence that their viewpoint has been considered when trying to enhance the learning provision for students who have Down's syndrome, in spite of the endeavours of the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the present research will have implications for the application and planning of learning inclusion, and will, therefore, be of concern to policy formulators and managers.

The study is methodologically distinctive, as no other studies have used a combination of interviews, observations and documents; which helps decrease or avoid potential bias (Flick, 2009). Solely qualitative studies are particularly unusual in a Saudi context, and have never before been used to study children with Down's syndrome.

A further distinctive feature is that, by analysing education for both genders, this study is able to explore the similarities and differences in provision for male and female principals and both boy and girl students. This approach is unique in the Saudi context, due to the difficulties for researchers in obtaining permission to carry out research in schools for the opposite gender. To date, most educational researchers in Saudi have focused on the same gender as themselves – so that male researchers considered boys'

schools, and female researchers considered girls' schools. As a result, this study's ability to consider and compare schools for both genders will add a unique insight to the state of existing research. In addition to providing an important insight for education specialists in Saudi Arabia, this research will, in particular, inform perspectives on inclusive education in other Gulf countries: the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait, which have very similar cultural perspectives and economic conditions to Saudi Arabia (the Arabian Gulf Council, 2014).

1.4. Special Needs

This thesis explores inclusive education from the perspective of special educational needs with a specific focus on Down's syndrome. In the Saudi context, children are regarded as having special educational needs if they have a disability such as learning difficulties, sensory impairment, or physical disability, but also if they are particularly gifted (Alkalifa, 2002). Learning difficulties or intellectual disabilities, in the Saudi context, are defined as low mental ability, such that individuals require help to improve their skills. In addition, learning difficulties are categorised into three levels: 'moderate difficulty', 'severe difficulty' and 'profound difficulty' (Alquraini, 2011). Children with Down's syndrome function in the moderate to profound level (Al-Mousa, 2008), but only those children in the moderate category and some in the severe category are able to attend Saudi inclusive schools. These distinctions are based on a medical model of disability, whereby some children who are considered to have a severe disability and other children who are considered to have a profound disability, are required to attend separate special schools (Sadek, 2000).

It should be noted that in this research, I use the term 'learning difficulties', although the translated term for the concept is different from those used in some countries. I also use the terms 'special educational needs' and 'disabilities' interchangeably, reflecting the interchangeable use of these terms in Saudi policy. One important concept related to working with children with special educational needs is inclusion.

1.5. Inclusion

Inclusion as a process of addressing the diversity of the needs of all students has been gaining significant currency worldwide, reflected in any increasing number of international meetings such as that held in Salamanca in 1994, which resulted in the following statement:

“Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, 1994: p.6).

This statement has stimulated many states to change their educational policies to make their schools more inclusive (Black-Hawkins, 2014). Thus, *“inclusive education comprises a vibrant, global movement, which is located within a humanistic educational struggle”* (Daniels and Garner, 1999: p.xxiii). This movement reflects a view that education is an essential right of human beings and is the basis for establishing a more just society (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). Hence, inclusive education is increasingly being linked to social justice, as it is seen as a means of eradicating social exclusion (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). Nevertheless, as Booth and Ainscow (1998: p.8), argue, there are *“differences of perspective on inclusion... between researchers in different countries... particularly between the members of a school community: students, parents, teachers, other school workers and bodies with a management function at the school”*. Such differences are exemplified in the medical and social models. In the medical model, discussed further later. The former views deficit the result of physical conditions inherent in the individual, whereas the latter views society as instrumental in constructions of disability (Oliver, 2009).

Saudi Arabia is seeking to provide education suitable for children with special educational needs as a commitment to international agreements. In 1996, therefore, the Ministry of Education started educating children with special educational needs along with their peers within mainstream schools (Al-Mousa, 2008), although policy made only vague references to inclusion; for example, the policy in Article One states: “Inclusion means the education of students with learning difficulties [including Down’s

syndrome] at inclusive schools as well as providing them with special education services” (the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, 2002). Mainstream schools teaching these children are termed ‘inclusion’, although such children are taught in separate classes. This arrangement is also termed ‘partial inclusion’ (Alanazi, 2012; Alothman, 2014).

Accordingly, the terms ‘inclusive school’ and ‘partial inclusion’ are used in this research, since the terms ‘mainstreaming’, ‘integration’ and ‘inclusion’ all translate into just one Arabic equivalent— ‘damj’. Understanding of the Arabic term ‘damj’, in the Saudi Rules and Regulations of Special Education (2002) has changed to reflect changes in Western lines of thought and terminology, but the word itself remains unchanged. Nonetheless, disregarding semantic differences, inclusion as a practice essentially varies from country to country rendering to the cultural, political and social context, for example, economic conditions (Miles and Singal, 2010).

In fact, there were tentative attempts at inclusion in Saudi education before 1996, only for visually impaired students (Alqahtani, 2003). Even today, despite an espoused policy of equal rights for children with special educational needs to obtain a suitable education, not all the articles in the Rules and Regulations of Special Education (2002) are applied in mainstream schools, for various reasons, such as a lack of qualified staff (Al-Herz, 2008), unsuitable school buildings design (Alothman, 2014), and an acute shortage of training for school staff and parents (Alabri, 2003). The resulting gap between the framework of the law and service provision has led to the unavailability of special education services for children in some districts, villages and hamlets.

The present condition of inclusion within Saudi Arabia is complex, treating different disabilities differently. The Saudi Rules and Regulations of Special Education (2002) outline a range of different approaches, depending on the disability. For example, blind children experience full educational inclusion. The document also describes the option of support programmes, although in reality these are rarely implemented (Alanazi, 2012). On the other hand, the approach for children with learning difficulties mirrors endeavours in the direction of partial inclusion, in which children with learning difficulties study their academic subjects in specialised classes, while studying non-

academic subjects, in physical education, art education and extracurricular activities for boys, and home economics, art education and extracurricular activities for girls, with their peers (Al-Mousa, 2008). Special educational services such as natural and occupational therapy, speech therapy and psychological counselling services are also available, at least in theory (Al-Mousa, 2008).

According to the literature, studies conducted in numerous nations have outlined a variety of factors that have an impact on the likelihood of inclusion, such as school structure and location (Gaad, 2011), school facilities and school personnel who work as assistants (Janney et al., 1995), and educational leadership (McLeskey and Waldron, 2002; Shevlin et al., 2008; Ainscow and Sandill, 2010; King, 2011). Thus, support represents an essential function in the efficacy of inclusion. However, several researchers contend that school personnel have a negative perspective regarding inclusion if they believe there are insufficient resources, and that inclusion has been forced on them by superior policy creators with no discussion about what is needed (Agbenyega, 2007).

1.6. Down's syndrome

The study focuses on inclusion for children with Down's syndrome, described as having learning difficulties, and specifically those of primary school age. The research concentrates upon pupils with Down's syndrome for a number of reasons:

Firstly, as far as I know, there are no recent statistics on the educational preparation of children with Down's syndrome is subsumed within "learning difficulties" (Consultative Group for Down's syndrome, 2004). Almalq (2004) claimed that the number of children with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia is increasing, and estimated their number as 25,000 (I have been unable to obtain more recent statistics). The incidence of Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia has been reported as 1 in 554 live births, which is relatively high compared to other countries. This is due to many factors, such as illegality of abortion in Islam, which underpins Saudi law, which applies Sharia (Ibn-baz, 1999), and increased incidence of Down's syndrome with advanced maternal age (Niazi et al., 1995). In the same cultural context, a woman is expected to continue childbearing into

her 40s (Laws et al., 2000). Furthermore, the life expectancy of Down's syndrome people has increased considerably lately (Sadek, 2000), due to advances in medical care and facilities. The increased incidence and decreased mortality rate combine to produce an increasing number of Down's syndrome individuals in Saudi Arabia (Almalq 2004).

Secondly, internationally, among children with learning difficulties, defined as low mental ability, the highest number has Down's syndrome (Roizen and Patterson, 2003). Moreover, children with Down's syndrome display specific physical features which within Saudi culture contribute to the stigma linked with learning difficulties (Almalq, 2004). These children can also be distinguished from others with learning difficulties, as Down's syndrome can be identified from birth. The majority of children with Down's syndrome are assessed within the Saudi system as having learning difficulties, and therefore they are entitled to be educated in mainstream schools if their disability is classified as 'moderate', or 'severe'. Those who are classified as having 'profound difficulty' are placed in special schools, which specialise in skills development for children who have been assessed with this level of learning difficulties (Al-Mousa, 2008). The prevailing policy and practice both reflect and perpetuate the medical model, leading to social exclusion of children with Down's syndrome in and out of school (Alabri, 2003).

1.7. School Principals

This thesis addresses the perspective of school principals toward inclusion, addressed by the Index for Inclusion, as a practical application of the theoretical framework for the study (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). The objectives of this study are to understand the concept of inclusion from the viewpoint of mainstream primary school principals in Saudi Arabia, to explore principals' perspectives towards inclusion, and to identify factors that affect the perspective of school principals regarding the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream primary schools. Previous research has identified the school principal as a key member in bringing about inclusive school change (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010; King, 2011).

According to the Consultative Group for Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia (2004) training schemes for principals have been established, although many principals encounter difficulty in participating in training due to their substantial workload. Even though schools receive extra money for being 'inclusive', it is not mandatory for principals to attend these courses (Alfahili, 2007). Successful inclusion will depend on school principals' comprehension of the requirements of these pupils and acquisition of the necessary competencies for offering the most suitable educational context (The Rules and Regulations of Special Education, 2002). An understanding of present perspectives regarding inclusion within Saudi Arabia is critical for forming a context in which inclusion has the greatest possibility of success, which is why this research is crucial.

Research by Center et al. (1991) and Ainscow and Sandill (2010) illustrates the association between the outlook of a school principal and that of the school's personnel regarding inclusion and its likelihood of success. Some researchers have signalled that the knowledge of principals, and the training they undergo, particularly regarding special education, are understood to have an impact on inclusion procedures (Dessent, 1987; Alanazi, 2012; Alothman, 2014). As school leaders are responsible for implementing inclusive policies in schools, their role is essential in bringing about change. Hence, a deeper understanding of the critical role played by principals is important before undertaking any changes to promote inclusive education (Alothman, 2014).

The focus of this study is, therefore, on principals of mainstream primary schools; the rationale for this decision is discussed more fully in the methodology chapter. At this point, suffice it to say that, despite the important role of teachers, parents and pupils, I decided to focus only on school principals because principals can provide in-depth information based on their experiences, as they work in educational organisations and with students with and without Down's syndrome and because they are heading schools at the time of the inclusion policy in Saudi Arabia. In addition, as Alothman (2014) argues, even when teachers are willing to include children with special educational needs, it can be very difficult to achieve inclusion without the support of school leadership.

The other reason that led me to choose principals is that my research aims to make recommendations for the development of inclusive education policies, in the light of the Index for Inclusion, which is about development of inclusion in English schools (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) as a practical application of my theoretical framework. In the Saudi context, principals have the direct power to influence such policies (Alsimbel et al., 2006). Principals are often able to persuade decision makers to introduce practice, based on their expertise in this field, such as their knowledge of schools, students, all school staff, curricula and other issues. Furthermore, leadership is recognised as a fundamental element in the successful application of the involvement of special educational needs in mainstream schools (Ainscow et al., 2006).

Due to the position of principals within a school community, they are also well placed to offer an understanding of the perspectives of the other participants, such as teachers, parents and pupils. Thus, principals were considered the most suitable participants to offer reliable information about the topic being investigated and were expected to be able to contribute towards answering the research questions.

From the above discussion, it is clear that school principals have an important role in the success of inclusion. Hence, the study was conducted on the perspectives of 10 male and 10 female principals of mainstream primary schools towards the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome.

1.8. Personal and professional motivation for the study

As a former supervisor for special education, I had observed that school principals frequently have a limited understanding of the issues surrounding inclusion in general, and inclusive education for children with Down's syndrome in particular. As a result, the education of children with Down's syndrome is often at a disadvantage in terms of quality. In addition, the education system in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia requires principals to circulate between different schools every four years. Since not all schools are inclusive schools, this means school principals often have a limited opportunity to understand the issues of inclusion in a particular school before they move

on. This experience led me to the realisation that a wider study was needed to investigate the perspectives of school principals in a broad range of schools.

I also have a personal motivation as the father of a daughter who has Down's syndrome. Since my daughter's birth, I have been inspired by the social model of disability and I have been working as a volunteer to support the parents of children with Down's syndrome, through visiting them or answering their questions over the telephone. I have found that some children stay at home because of the lack of an inclusive programme for them in a school near where they live. In my case, for example, when I wanted to register my daughter with her cousins and our neighbour's daughter in the district primary school. I was told that due to lack of an inclusive programme in the school, I should register her at another school, far from our home and inconvenient to travel to.

In addition, when I worked as a supervisor in the local authority special education department, I found it very difficult to open inclusive classrooms in all schools, because of the financial cost involved. Whereas the medical model looks at the ability of the children, which is then used to decide if schools can or cannot accept them, the social model considers the importance of changing the environment to adapt to the child. The attitudes I encountered in both a professional context and as a parent are, therefore, in direct opposition to the social model of disability.

Such a situation is contrary to the goal of inclusive education, which is to remove social exclusion, that is, negative attitudes and responses to difference in race, social and economic class, ethnicity, religion, sex and ability (Vitello and Mithaug, 1998). Finally, I have been working as a lecturer in learning difficulties in the Special Education Department at King Faisal University. I obtained a scholarship from the university to research Down's syndrome in an attempt to establish my personal and professional efforts in a theoretical context.

1.9. Research constraints and parameters

The restrictions that apply to this research are as follows. First, due to sensitivity to gender and strict segregation in educational institutions in Saudi Arabia, I used the

telephone when interviewing female principals, so unlike face to face interviews with men I could not use gestures such as hand movements, or facial expressions, or “read” those of participants. Moreover, some voices over the phone were not very clear because some Saudi women become embarrassed when speaking with men. In addition, some principals had fears about being interviewed, although I was able to reassure them based on my experience of intervening school principals in my previous supervisory role.

This study is also limited geographically to the Eastern Province in Saudi Arabia. Interviews were conducted with ten male and ten female mainstream primary school principals of both government and ARAMCO schools. Moreover, observations were carried out in mainstream primary schools: four government schools and one ARAMCO school (see chapter 3). The limitation of the sample of school observations (only five boys’ schools and no girls’ schools) was due to factors beyond my control, relating to religion and culture.

1.10. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters, including the current chapter. The distribution of the material in the chapters is as follows:

The second chapter is divided into three parts: the first part is about the context of Saudi Arabia, including the historical background and education system, Government and ARAMCO schools and the development of special education and inclusion programmes. The second part is about the theoretical framework of this study, which includes the social and medical models of disability and the Index for Inclusion. In the third part, literature related to the research topic, such as definitions of Down’s syndrome, the concept of inclusion, and related matters are considered in detail.

Methodology, including the epistemological perspective, research approach and data collection methods, is explained in detail in chapter three. Sampling design, data analysis, ethical considerations research challenges are also described.

In the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters, the findings of this research are reported and discussed in the light of the theoretical framework and relevant literature.

Chapter seven is the concluding chapter. It reviews the findings of the thesis before going on to offer a set of recommendations as to how the Saudi Ministry of Education should work towards enhancing inclusive education for children with Down's syndrome.

Chapter Two: The Context, Theory and Literature Review

Part One: The Context of Saudi Arabia

Following the research stages:

Chapter 1	Introduction and Research Context		
Chapter 2	The Context, Theory and Literature Review	Part 1	The Context of Saudi Arabia
		Part 2	Theoretical Framework
		Part 3	Literature Review
Chapter 3	Research Methodology		
Chapter 4	Principals' Understanding of Concept of Inclusion		
Chapter 5	School Principals' Perspectives on Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Mainstream Schools		
Chapter 6	Factors Affecting the Perspectives of Principals regarding the Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome		
Chapter 7	Recommendations and Conclusion		

2.1.1. Introduction

When researching disability in inclusive schools in the Islamic context, it is essential to explain the modern-day cultural, political and social context, along with the historical setting. This is because educational changes in the domain of inclusion, along with the viewpoints of school principals, as examined in this research, can only be well understood if the cultural and historical settings of the debate are established. As noted by Law et al. (1998), in an effort to ensure awareness and understanding of the various considerations for studies in particular countries, and also in an effort to understand research outcomes, it is pivotal to gain insight into the background.

I consider this a fundamental chapter for non-Saudi readers, owing to the fact that this research was carried out in a British university setting (the University of Lincoln), meaning that it is likely that it will be read by those with an interest in such areas as, for example, inclusion and Down's syndrome, but unfamiliar with the Saudi context. Accordingly, when non-Saudis read the analysis, discussion and recommendations of this research, they will need an appreciation of the geographical site and the Saudi position on the research, as well as the cultural (including religious) and educational context of Saudi Arabia. Thus, given the importance of these contextual factors for the current study, in this part of the chapter I present a brief background to the context of the study in terms of an overview of Saudi Arabia, the Saudi education system and the impacts of culture and religion, special education, the regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities, as well as the current education and other services for students with learning difficulties in Saudi Arabia.

2.1.2. Overview of Saudi Arabia

In 1932, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was officially established, when Ibn Saud (King Abdulaziz, after whom the country was named) conquered most of the Arabian Peninsula following a 30-year war (The World Factbook, 2013), thereby uniting what had previously been a poor and politically unstable region and made up of small emirates and warring groups and factions (Facey, 1993; Vassiliev, 2000). Since that time, the Al-Saud family has reigned (Facey, 1993).

The country is an absolute monarchy, with the king recognised as the top point of contact for the state's executive, judicial and regulatory powers (The Shura Council, 2015). A Consultative Council was established by the government in 1993, with members appointed from many of the country's key professions, as an advisory body or the Council of Ministers. Since 2003, however, its role has been expanded to encompass a number of legislative functions (Kapiszewski, 2006). Moreover, in 2013 King Abdullah issued a royal decree granting women 30 seats in the Consultative Council (The Shura Council, 2015).

Saudi Arabia is positioned in the south-east of the Arabian Peninsula, with Iraq, Jordan and Kuwait located to the north; Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE and the Arabian Gulf to the east; Oman and Yemen to the south; and the Red Sea to the west (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2014). The total land area of the country equates to approximately 80% of the entire Arabian Peninsula region, spanning approximately 865,000 square miles (Ministry of Education, 2008). The topography is very diverse, including desert land, plains and mountain areas (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2014). In 2009 the Saudi Arabian population was estimated as being more than 25,000,000, with more than 6,000,000 of these being non-Saudi nationals, both living and working in the country (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Administratively Saudi Arabia comprises 13 provinces (see Figure 2.1: Ministry of Education, 2008). Within each province, education is overseen by a local authority, affiliated to the Ministry of Education in the capital city, Riyadh. Due to time and resource constraints the current study was confined to a single province, the Eastern Province. This is the largest province in Saudi Arabia, and is the only one to have schools built both by the local authority and by ARAMCO, an influential oil company (see section 2.1.10).

Figure 2.1: Administrative Provinces of Saudi Arabia



The language of Saudi Arabia is Arabic, which adopts two different forms, namely, colloquial and classical. The latter is the language of the Qur'an and utilised for formal communication, oration, poetry and literary expression (The World Factbook, 2013). The kingdom is predominantly Islamic, with Islam providing the main guidance for the way of life, mainly due to the fact that Saudi Arabia is home to Islam's two holy cities, Makkah and Madinah (Wardak, 2005). Furthermore, the Kingdom's constitution is represented by the Qur'an and the Sunnah – the holy book of Islam, and the actions and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed, respectively – which dictate government functions, laws and policies. Shariah (Islamic law) attaches importance to education and equality

for all. Arguably, inclusion of individuals with special educational needs, including children with Down's syndrome, is consistent with Islamic values.

Oil is the key driving force of the Saudi economy. According to the Ministry of Education (2008) Saudi Arabia possesses as much as 25% of the world's oil reserves. Oil revenues dominate the economy, despite efforts at diversification (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2014). The development of business, education and health has been facilitated by oil wealth, enabling free education and free health care insurance (Vassiliev, 2000). Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia is still regarded as a developing country or one trying to evolve, relative to other developed countries such as the UK and the USA. Importantly, a number of changes are rapidly being implemented in the country, which are likely to have a notable impact on education policy (Ministry of Education, 2008), for example, interaction of a specific written policy on special educational needs and, increasingly, inclusion of such children in mainstream schools. The government has expressed concern to improve education amongst students with disabilities, to enable them to contribute to society, and above all to provide equality for all (Al-Mousa, 2008).

2.1.3. The Saudi Education System

This section provides a summary of the educational system in Saudi Arabia, highlighting details of particular relevance to this study. Education is regarded as a right and a duty which is communicated directly from Allah (God) through the Qur'an. Family has a key role in ensuring children receive a nurturing environment in which to grow, with Muslim practices needing to be implemented on a daily basis throughout the course of their lifetime. Furthermore, school is assigned the key obligation of ensuring the provision of formal education, particularly pertaining to Islam, placing emphasis on the learning and reading of the holy texts (Ministry of Education, 2008).

According to the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia (2014), Saudi Arabia's education system has been significantly expanded and developed since its formation 80 years ago, when education was limited to wealthy families and children of the elite. As the school age population increased, so have the number of new schools, although more are still needed. The curriculum comprises a combination of Islamic religious education, built on

a traditional foundation, as well as lessons in a number of disciplines, commonly based on the curricula adopted by US or UK schools (The World Factbook, 2013), including art, geography, history, mathematics, physical education and physics (Ministry of Education, 2008).

The Saudi Ministry of Education is responsible for providing suitable education for all children, including those with special educational needs. This responsibility encompasses the establishment and maintenance of schools, development of curricula, teacher training, and adult literacy programmes (Ministry of Education, 2008).

2.1.4. Impact of Religion and Culture on Saudi Education

Saudi Arabia has a number of cultural and religious differences when compared with Western contexts. Essentially, Islam, as a religion, affects Saudi Arabia's societal values, which are centred on the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an. In the main, such values consider disability as a punishment for wrongdoing, such as the committing of a sin (Afeafe, 2000). Another perspective adopted on disability, according to Saudi values, is that Allah (God) is testing the patience of the individual and/or his/her family, and that acceptance of this will enable access to Paradise (Al-Mousa, 2008). Moreover, disability is viewed as a condition that *"comprises helplessness, continuing dependence, being home-bound, low quality of life and lack of productivity"* (Al-Gain and Al-Abdulwahab, 2002: p.45). This perspective on disability often also results in low quality education, due to the fact that such individuals are not expected to live independently (Fandy, 2007). Hence, educational opportunities and prospects are restricted, particularly among those with significant learning problems (Fandy, 2007). Accordingly, social conventions and conservative religious views have a significant impact on the Saudi educational system.

The prevalence of this medical model for attitudes towards disability is responsible for causing people to view disabled individuals as objects of pity or ridicule, resulting in societal exclusion. Such negative perspectives towards disabled individuals can be responsible for the lack of involvement of people with disabilities in various community-based activities (Catlett, 1999; Afeafe, 2000). When it comes to the

inclusive education of children with Down's syndrome, the views of a number of adults in society, including the perspectives of parents, teachers and school principals, have an impact on the outcomes for these children. Whilst it is important to be sensitive to these people's beliefs, such ideas have a direct impact on the level of inclusion of children with Down's syndrome, as well as those with other disabilities.

As considered above, in Saudi Arabia there are various cultural and religious differences when compared with Western countries. In particular, in Saudi Arabia, as a religious nation, it is considered important to ensure that education is oriented towards Islamic considerations. This means not only the life events of the Prophet Muhammad and the teachings of the Qur'an, for example (Alsimbel et al., 2006), but the whole ethos of the education system. As one key example, student advisors in schools have a role of guiding students and their guardians through any problems that could negatively impact their education – and always with the main objective of bringing them closer to Allah (God). Accordingly, it is a form of guidance that functions within a particular religious model of ethics, as opposed to being centred on improving one's sense of self. Hence, policy and its application are directed less by technocratic or abstract values, than by Islamic teachings. Accordingly, there has never been a complete distinction made between the educational system and its Islamic foundation (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Moreover, Saudi Arabia's religion affects education in the practice of gender segregation (Metz, 1993), except in kindergarten/nursery (Alsimbel et al., 2006). 'Coeducation', defined as the education of students of both sexes in the same schools (Kollu, 2006), is banned in Saudi Education Policy, post – kindergarten (the Education Policy, 1970). Coeducation is also banned by a decision of the Higher Saudi Court, issued when the Ministry of Education tried to apply coeducation of students in the first three years of primary school (Saudi Court, 2014). All schools have therefore restricted their enrolment to a single sex to date, and the policy in Saudi Arabia shows no signs of changing and accepting coeducation. Girls' schools prepare students to be good housewives – for example by teaching home economics, whereas, however, PE is not taught to girls (Alsimbel et al., 2006). Moreover, girls are prepared for limited career

options that are considered suitable to their nature, including medicine and teaching, but they cannot be trained to be soldiers or engineers.

2.1.5. Special Education in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, disabled individuals were not afforded any special, focused educational services until the late 1950s, but depended on the assistance of their parents (Al-Ajmi, 2006). Special education in Saudi Arabia was first introduced in 1958, when students with visual impairments were given education in different schools, referred to as 'scientific institutions' (Alsimbel et al., 2006). The Special Learning Department was established by the Ministry of Education in 1962 with the aim of enhancing the provision of skills for independent living and learning services among disabled students (Afeafe, 2000).

The Special Learning Department began by focusing on blind people for religious reasons encouraging the social model, since the Qu'ran particularly mentions the integration of blind people into the community, stating that there is no excuse for blind people not to go to pray in the mosque. This initial movement led to improved provision through the implementation of regulations for safeguarding disabled people's rights, enhancing the quality of their education and providing qualified professionals with the necessary skills to provide such services. In line with Islamic principles, Saudi Arabia proclaims and emphasises the rights of disabled students and children to receive care, education and encouragement in line with their capabilities and potential, with education recognised as an obligation. There is an espoused commitment to enabling such individuals to live both safely and with independence (Al-Mousa, 2008).

This aim is one of the key principles of inclusion as defined by the research community, along with upholding rights of education and contributing to a more integrated society (the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, 2002). These aims of achieving safety, independence, education for all and social integration are mentioned in the articles of Saudi policy documents, but arguably some of the specifics of these policies, including limiting inclusion to certain schools and placing children in special schools, are in

opposition to these principles, being based on medical rather than social models of disability.

Al-Khatteeb (2008) put forward that all school-age children must have the right to a mainstream education in the company of their peer. Therefore, Saudi policy carries a strong emphasis on the education of gifted, talented and disabled children and the implementation of this inclusion can take many forms. It is recognised that special needs children make up a minimum of 20% of school-age children and that, furthermore, most children with special needs in education are best served by attending a natural school environment. In recent years, special educational services have expanded in terms of the adoption of inclusion in mainstream schools centred on the approaches of Western countries (Al-Mousa, 2008).

2.1.6. Saudi Legislation for Disabilities

The following are the key policies of legislation on disability:

The Code for Persons with Disabilities in Saudi Arabia

The Code for Persons with Disabilities was accepted by the government of Saudi Arabia in 2000, and aimed to ensure those with disabilities were guaranteed access to the most appropriate educational, medical, psychological, rehabilitation and social services through public entities – and all without charge. Such agencies are further required, as a result of this legislation, to provide those eligible with education, health care, rehabilitation, training, employment and any other services (The Code for Persons with Disabilities, 2001).

The Rules and Regulations of Special Education in Saudi Arabia

In 2002, this policy was implemented, encompassing various assessment strategies for students, centred on establishing their eligibility for special educational services. Under this policy, those with disabilities are to be afforded free and suitable education, early intervention initiatives, transition services and other complementary services. The policy further outlines how schools need to deliver such services to disabled learners. As such,

the policy not only shapes but also supports special education service quality in Saudi Arabia (the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, 2002).

Overall, such policies provide support and safeguard the rights of those with disabilities in terms of securing the most suitable education, without cost. Nonetheless, although such laws were approved and accepted more than ten years ago, there remain various provisions that have not yet been implemented. In actuality, the inadequacy of efficient application has established a gap between rhetoric and practice. The next section discusses the current provision.

2.1.7. Education for Students with Learning Difficulties

According to Al-Mousa (2008), inclusion centres on two different groups of pupils: the first are those in mainstream schools, seen as able to benefit from the educational schemes in place, with special educational initiative. This group comprises talented and gifted individuals, and those with behavioural difficulties, as well as those experiencing problems, for example, with vision, communication or dyslexia. The second group comprises students who are usually educated in special schools or special classes, but who would benefit from being educated in a more inclusive environment. This group is recognised as including those who are blind, deaf, have difficulties in learning, and are hard of hearing, autistic or multi-disabled.

In consideration of Saudi Arabia's conceptualisation of inclusion based on the medical model of disability, the objective centres on facilitating those with learning problems to receive quality learning in the Least Restrictive Environment (Al-Mousa, 2008). This is a concept applied in the US, which encompasses a number of different educational settings – such as where special lessons are taught in mainstream classrooms with the assistance of special needs teaching staff. In Saudi Arabia, the inclusion initiative is adopted in a manner referred to as partial inclusion, which is achieved through the adoption of self-contained classrooms in mainstream schools, with specialist teachers. Such students are enrolled in a special education curriculum, which differs from the general one applied and adopted for their general peers (Al-Mousa, 2008), implying that students with learning difficulties are considered to be incapable of accessing the regular

curriculum. Universities in Saudi Arabia providing Initial Teacher Education offer a complete scheme for special education, with a three-year programme focused on specialist modules.

Furthermore, Al-Mousa (2008) maintains that even when mainstream schools educate exceptional children, there is still a need for special schools, which have played a major part in educating students with disabilities for a long time. It has been suggested that in the future such schools could provide support and assessment spruces to schools and families, as well as training for teachers (Alquraini, 2011).

Al-Mousa (2008) defines inclusion as the education of children who have special educational needs and who have been enabled to participate in education with their peers, regarding both the learning and socialising activities, and according to a set of plans or programmes that have been constructed to suit the needs of each individual child. From this definition, I infer that Saudi Arabia believes that this way of inclusion is a move towards the social model. Nonetheless this definition is different from those applied in Western contexts, such as Ainscow et al.'s (2006: p.25) definition of inclusion as *"the processes of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from the curricula, cultures and communities of local schools"*. Whereas in Western contexts, the emphasis is usually on changing the system to fit the needs of the child, the Saudi definition of inclusion focuses on educating the child in order for them to fit into the existing system.

Learners with educational difficulties are enrolled in primary education from 6 years old through to the ages of 13–15, with secondary and high school education provided until the age of 19. However, for many of these learners, there are no subsequent further education opportunities, other than those offered at vocational training centres that exclude people without disabilities (Al-Ajmi, 2006). These centres have the key objective of providing disabled students with employment skills that can help independent living (Ministry of Education, 2008). Accordingly, the key obstacle is recognised as providing those with learning difficulties with education in a general educational environment. This research tries to offer a number of recommendations to improve the inclusion available for these children in primary, secondary and high

school, in order that they may have a realistic chance of access to higher education after the age of 19.

When establishing the eligibility of students with learning difficulties to receive the appropriate educational service, the various procedures and strategies include a number of weaknesses. One key drawback is the fact that the assessment process is not initiated early enough in the child's development, ideally, early intervention could support child development, and prevent worsening of the disorder, or the possibility of developing further disabling conditions (Shonkoff and Meisels, 2000). However, in the Saudi system, assessment is only conducted when the child is enrolled into school at 6 years old. Furthermore, the majority of special schools, in addition to mainstream schools, do not provide various important tests, such as academic scales, IQ tests, or adaptive behavioural scales (Al-Habdan, 2001). Thus, students' eligibility is commonly defined by school psychologists based on teachers' observations and the child's IQ score.

Moreover, in the view of Al-Ajmi (2006), among schools in Saudi Arabia, there is inadequate emphasis on behavioural management for those with learning problems, owing to the lack of efficient instruments to manage and understand problematic behaviours. It is common for teaching staff to apply more conventional approaches when dealing with problem behaviours, such as verbal chastising, as opposed to positive reinforcement. Al-Ajmi's (2006) research highlights that the majority of special educational teaching staff in Saudi Arabia are not aware of effective strategies for handling problem behaviours, and lack sufficient knowledge of how to identify problematic behaviours, such as functional behavioural evaluations. Such evaluation is a tool that can be applied by teachers in an effort to establish the link between problematic behaviours and the reason for them (Westling and Fox, 2008). Teachers would then be better positioned to teach more suitable behaviours. Similarly, in the specific case of Down's syndrome, the lack of adequate knowledge amongst teaching staff is a particular problem when including these children; a problem which this research will address.

2.1.8. Services for Students with Learning Difficulties

There are a number of complementary services for those with learning problems who have issues not only with behaviour but also with communication and motor skills. All of those with learning problems either in mainstream or special institutions should secure the most appropriate services in order to benefit from their Individual Education Programme (the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, 2002). Saudi Arabia adopts the Individual Education Plan (IEP), a programme planned for children with special educational needs to support them to get the most out of their education (Drasgow et al., 2001). Special schools are required to provide services such as speech therapists, psychologists, occupational therapy, physical therapy, health and medical services, and social workers. Nevertheless, research reveals a lack of properly qualified staff, possibly due to the lack of professionals available in the area, or the preference of qualified individuals to work in hospitals, which pay a higher wage (Alquraini, 2011). Nevertheless, there are other entities, including the Eastern Province Society, which deliver such services, although they must be paid for by parents (Alabri, 2003; Alquraini, 2011).

Generally, it is apparent from such research that certain associated services are provided to those with learning difficulties in both mainstream and special schools, such as counselling, psychological support and transportation. However, other services are lacking, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and language and speech therapy. The lack of such services to support teaching staff is likely to affect the perspective of school principals and teachers with regard to including students with disabilities such as Down's syndrome.

2.1.9. Providing Individual Education Programmes

The Saudi Rules and Regulations of Special Education require schools to offer an IEP for each student with a disability, including children with learning difficulties. Such provision has the potential to support education based on the social model of disability. However, thus far, few studies have been carried out to analyse IEP for those with learning problems in Saudi Arabia. Al-Herz (2008) looked into attaining the objectives

of IEPs and other related issues in special needs schools and found that teachers in special education are able to define the critical elements of IEPs regarding a child's particular strengths and weaknesses in addition to their long term and short term goals and objectives and, of course, to what extent their needs require tailored instruction methods. Importantly, however, various challenges were identified as restricting programme effectiveness, including insufficient inadequate multidisciplinary teams, and inadequate family participation in the development and application of IEPs (Al-Herz, 2008). In the absence of involvement of guardians or other service providers in special schools and despite policy guidelines, the sole responsibility for IEPs falls to the teachers (Al-Herz, 2008). However, Hunt and Farron-Davis (1992) argued that high quality IEPs can help to promote interaction with general peers, and facilitate successful inclusion for children with Down's syndrome.

2.1.10. Saudi ARAMCO

As mentioned above, the Eastern Province was the focus of my study, so this research includes not only government schools but also schools built by ARAMCO. Therefore, I will give an overview of the company's history and its role in social and cultural change in the Eastern Province, and an explanation about those schools.

Saudi ARAMCO is a government owned oil company based in Saudi Arabia (Ghainaa, 2008). It began as an oil concession granted to a US company in 1930, (Nawwab et al., 1995). Subsequently, in 1938 oil was first found in commercial volumes (Kyle, 2007), and with the growing importance of this resource to Saudi Arabia the company was nationalised.

In its range of activities, namely, the exploration, production, refining, marketing and international distribution of oil, Saudi ARAMCO is an international oil company (Ghainaa, 2008). It is widely accepted as the biggest oil company in the world, producing a larger quantity of oil than any other company, and controlling the world's the largest oil reserves (Waheed, 2007).

Since the early 1990s, Saudi ARAMCO has maintained the first position amongst the world's oil companies, according to the categorisation given by Petroleum Intelligence Weekly (Ghainaa, 2008). This has resulted in the company being recognised not only as a leading player in the field but also as highly significant in terms of fulfilling the oil demands of the world (Waheed, 2007).

The labour force working for Saudi ARAMCO numbers 55,000 (Saudi ARAMCO, 2015), the vast majority (85%) of them being Saudi nationals (Ghainaa, 2008). The company is known worldwide for delivering community services for employees and their families through its Department of Social Services. ARAMCO's efforts to improve the Eastern Province, its home base, can be seen in the company's long-term involvement and subsequent development in this community (Kyle, 2007). Saudi ARAMCO, from its early years, has focused on health and education, including building of new schools, as well as number of medical centres and hospitals (Al-Ghamdi, 2007).

The road network of the Eastern Province, and its electrical power grid, as well as its involvement in various awareness programmes on fire and safety, the development of health campaigns in addition to a number of environmental efforts are all key examples of such attempts to improve community life and infrastructure. Various activities in the religious domain have also been initiated by Saudi ARAMCO. For example, the company operates a "gifts for orphans" campaign for the two Muslim Eids. Islam has two official religious holidays: Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. Eid Al-Fitr is celebrated at the end of Ramadan, the fasting month. Eid Al-Adha is celebrated on the tenth day of Dhu al-Hijjah month, on which Muslims typically sacrifice animals, for example sheep, and distribute the meat among families, friends, and those in poverty (Saudi ARAMCO, 2015). For both of these festivals, there are a number of special events directed towards the elderly and disabled run by company volunteers (Kyle, 2007).

Furthermore, mobile libraries are also provided across the Eastern Province. These were first established by Saudi ARAMCO in 1982 with the objective of helping children to read, embrace reading as a hobby, and facilitate study. There are currently eight such libraries, each of which has several thousand books, spanning a number of different subjects and topics, including arts, biology, geography, history, Islamic sciences, social

science and fiction. The libraries have visited more than 3,000 schools, loaning in excess of 1.5 million books. Saudi ARAMCO has the main library, which houses 50,000 texts (Saudi ARAMCO, 2015).

Moreover, in 1987, the company created a permanent exhibition at the headquarters of Saudi ARAMCO, located in Dhahran in the Eastern Province, centred on energy education, which showcases the history of oil extraction within Saudi Arabia. The exhibition details the various elements of the company's operations, ranging from exploration and drilling through to the production and distribution of oil and is seen by more than 200,000 visitors from across the world annually (Saudi ARAMCO, 2015).

Throughout the summer period, temporary employment is often given to Saudi students by the company, with various supplementary courses, including computer training, English, mathematics, technical skills and special safety programmes. This educational initiative centres on providing the Saudi community with opportunities not only to learn but also to teach. The foundation of the courses is concerned with enabling and facilitating community and cultural awareness, developing skills, enhancing capabilities and investigating new areas. The various courses provide a number of different subjects, spanning history, languages, physical exercise, technology and desert driving (Saudi ARAMCO, 2015).

The company has made it known that there are various concerns in the local community within which it functions. Its efforts in this regard are predominantly centred on the Eastern Province, which is the geographic centre of its operations. Accordingly, from a historical perspective, the Eastern Province has reaped considerable benefit from the social services provided by ARAMCO, as well as the company's efforts towards infrastructural development. The company recognises that the staff, the government, local community and the families of its staff as all being key stakeholders in ARAMCO. The importance of providing the local community with benefits, and establishing and maintaining a positive relationship between the company and the community, has been acknowledged and accepted (Saudi ARAMCO, 2015). Accordingly, Saudi ARAMCO's community responsibility is, to some degree, centred on it being a key employer in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the Eastern Province. The company is recognised as being

the second largest employer in the country, with only the government itself having a larger employee base (Waheed, 2007). One common aspect of the various social initiatives operated by the company is the fact that ARAMCO focuses on the support of nationals.

Saudi ARAMCO's allocating of resource and efforts towards serving the country as a whole led King Abdullah to mandate to ARAMCO the development and establishment of the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), established in 2009 on Saudi Arabia's west coast (KAUST, 2014). Also, ARAMCO was assigned to build the King Abdullah Sports City (King Abdullah Stadium) in Jeddah, which opened in 2014, and to start to build another 11 sports cities, in the 11 provinces that do not currently already have stadiums (Saudi ARAMCO, 2015).

Saudi ARAMCO government schools

In 1935 an agreement was made between the company and government officials concerning the building of schools, first in Dammam then in other Eastern Province cities, all of them built in an American style. The purpose was to accommodate the children of ARAMCO employees and other residents in their hometown. It should be noted that the children of ARAMCO's US and British nationality employees study in different schools in their own residential compounds, where the teaching and curricula are in English (Saudi ARAMCO, 2015). The ARAMCO schools, however, meet the needs of Saudi employees.

Upon completion, the schools established by ARAMCO were handed over to the Eastern Province's Local Education Authority. Nonetheless, despite this handover, ARAMCO is obliged to shoulder the costs associated with the schools, including the provision of school supplies (currently the Ministry of Education pays teachers' salaries). In total, in the Eastern Province, there are 65 ARAMCO schools for girls and 74 for boys, a total of 139 (Saudi ARAMCO, 2015).

As for the specifications of the school buildings built by ARAMCO, there is an understanding between the Saudi government and ARAMCO that ARAMCO adheres to

the general national specifications for school buildings, although few details are published. Examples of the general specifications include:

- The building should be in the centre of a residential area.
- There should be spaces around the school building.
- Because of the high temperature, there must be an inner courtyard inside the school building.
- Outdoor and indoor sports areas should be provided.
- There should be a principal's room, staff rooms, laboratories and library.
- Appropriate toilet facilities should be provided.

(Education Policy in Saudi Arabia, 1970).

These specifications are very broad and general. They do not, for example, specify the number and size of sport areas and other facilities, nor do they specify the materials to be used. Moreover, government schools themselves do not always conform to these specifications due to the use, in some areas, of leased buildings originally built for other purposes in order to meet rapidly growing demand.

With regard to classrooms:

- The number of classes in the school should be not less than 15.
- The classroom should be between 35m² and 48m².
- There should be glass window on the doors.
- All air conditioning, ventilating and lighting in the classrooms should be adequate in order to provide a suitable learning environment for students.

(Education Policy in Saudi Arabia, 1970).

Again, these are very broad and basic standards. For example, there is no definition of what would be 'adequate' to provide a 'suitable' environment. Nor is there any specific consideration of safety, such as the use of reinforced safety glass. This may be because these specifications date from a time when the government's main concern was quantitative expansion, and the materials and technologies available were more limited than those available today. However, it seems that the specifications have not been

updated to take account of more recent developments in construction, or the changing mature of the school population, especially with the move to inclusion.

However, ARAMCO adds other specifications to the Ministry's specifications, for the schools it builds, for example:

- Provision of soundproofing in the classroom.
- Coverage of the classroom floors with a noise-reducing material.
- Provision of parking for school staff, parents and visitors.
- Cultivation of outdoor playgrounds.
- Provision of air conditioning in indoor rooms.
- Building schools on one floor, for the safety of children.
- The building shall be free of blocked exits.
- Provision of emergency exits.
- Allocation of safe points for assembly.

(Saudi ARAMCO, 2015).

As compared to the government regulations, it can be seen that ARAMCO's own specifications show more thought for the comfort and convenience of staff and students, and explicit reference to safety issues. The provisions on accessibility and unimpeded movement also imply that the needs of children with disabilities are also considered.

The schools established by ARAMCO are centred on the provision of world-class education for the children of the company's employees as a way of ensuring that highly skilled staff are attracted to the company (Saudi ARAMCO, 2015). Accordingly, only the very best resources are expected to be offered by ARAMCO Saudi schools, with both resources and buildings maintained to a high standard. Photo 2.1 and Photo 2.2, which were taken during an observational visit to OSA1, show one of the buildings erected by ARAMCO in order to provide schooling for the children of its employees and the children of residents of the area. These schools are considerably better resourced than their government-funded equivalents because of the financial support from ARAMCO. This means that the principals of ARAMCO schools can easily obtain any specialist resources needed for teaching children with special educational needs.

Photo 2.1: Exterior view of ARAMCO School

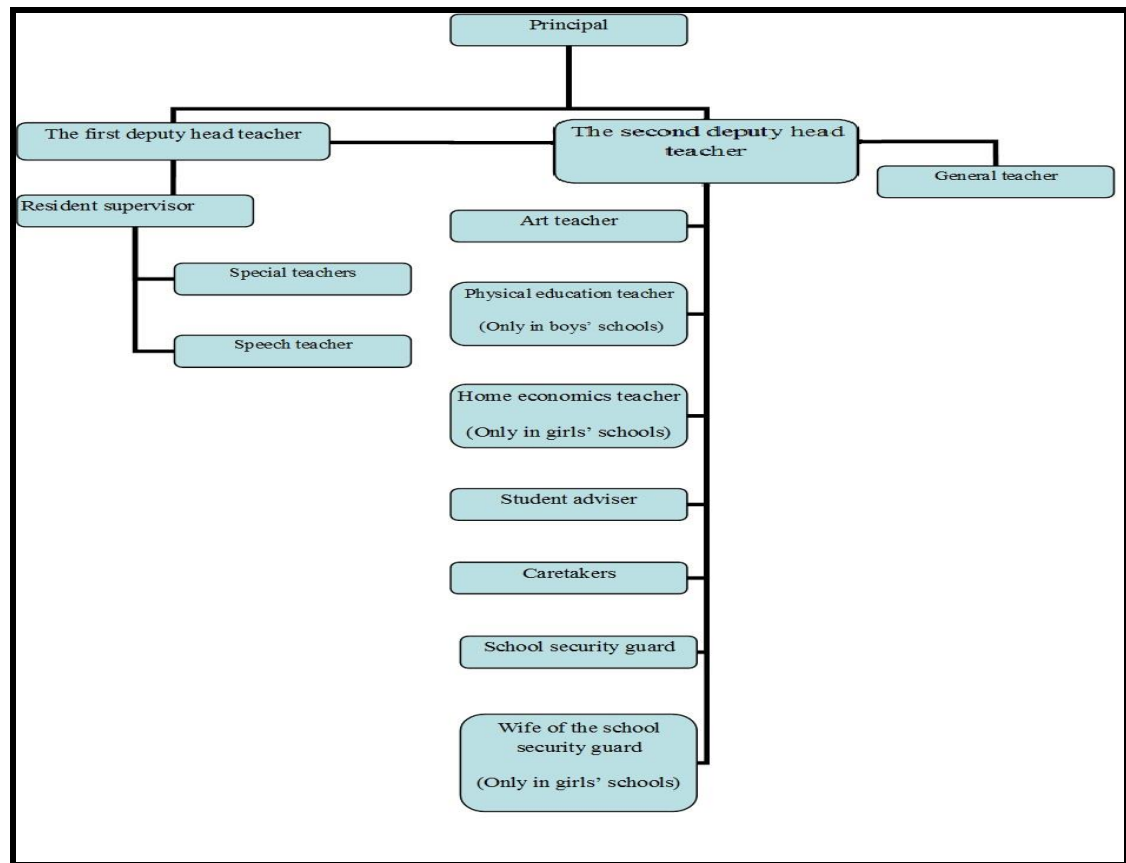


Photo 2.2: Interior view of ARAMCO School



Regarding the hierarchy of schools in the study, ARAMCO Schools and government schools are similar in terms of the administrative structure. The Principal and two Deputy Head Teachers have their offices at the entrance to the school. Figure 2.2 shows the organisational hierarchy of the schools.

Figure 2.2: The organisational hierarchy of the schools



It is clear from the above that the Eastern Province is a unique area in Saudi Arabia, because of the presence of the Saudi ARAMCO Schools only this region. This provided a strong rationale for focusing my research in the Eastern province.

2.1.11. *Wasta* and Historical Perspective

One of the key considerations recognised in the research findings is a particular social value described by the Arabic word '*wasta*'. During the course of interviews conducted for this research, this term was frequently used as principals explained their perspectives. Accordingly, the objective of this section is to provide a historical summary of *wasta* with regard to its development in the Saudi context. As I will explain further in the findings chapter, understanding the concept of *wasta* is central to an understanding of the motivations and perspectives of those involved in the education system, as well as the acquisition of resources.

In Saudi Arabia, in much the same way as in other Arab countries, *wasta* is deeply embedded in the culture, and therefore has a significant impact on people's lives. It is recognised as the use of connections in order to gain benefit (Hutchings and Weir, 2006). The concept is derived from the clan, family and tribal links and networks that dominate and control the Arab world's social domain (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993; Hutchings and Weir, 2006). *Wasta* is a recognised force in all important decisions made in the Arab context (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993).

It is worth noting that, although the use of *wasta* is widespread throughout the Arab world, comparable practices are also recognised in other areas in the world. Accordingly, *wasta* may be recognised as a mix of different networks, both internal and external, all of which are considered in literature in the Western context (Michael and Yukl, 1993). It is acknowledged that *wasta* is comparable to similar terms utilised in other areas, including 'jeitinho' in Brazil, 'guanxi' in China and 'svyazi' in Russia (Smith et al., 2011). Although internationalization, along with the lesser role adopted by state-owned entities in China, results in less importance being assigned to *guanxi*, in the Arab world, the organisational foundation is predominantly focused on *wasta* (Hutchings and Weir, 2006). Furthermore, 'protektzia', which is comparable to *wasta*, is used in Israel (Izraeli, 1997). In line with the significance of its effects in Israel, *protektzia* is also known as 'Vitamin P' (Kordova, 2012). Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, *wasta* is commonly referred to as 'Vitamin Waw' or 'Vitamin W' (Al-Maeena, 2001).

The concept of *wasta* differs from those of cronyism and nepotism: the former relates to the appointment of close friends as 'hangers-on' to office, whilst the latter is concerned with kinship. Although nepotism is seen to involve the hiring of relatives, cronyism, on the other hand, encompasses the hiring of friends. In this respect, it should be noted that *wasta* is not limited to particular groups, and in some instances, the client and customer may be strangers (Mohamed and Mohamad, 2011). *Wasta* is therefore wider than cronyism and nepotism, which can be seen as aspects of *wasta*.

From a historical perspective, casual, social-based networks and links in relation to clans, family and kinship are recognised as having played a fundamental role in the social lives of Arabs, as a way of overcoming community and local issues in an effort to

enable resource management, as well as in negotiations with authority (Al-Hussan, 2011). Moreover, *wasta* was also utilised as a way of managing relationships among Arab tribes and families, through the good office of an intermediary, to act between conflicting parties (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993). The main *wasta* channel is represented by the family as the basis for gaining advantages through the socio-political domain in the Arab context (Neal, 2010). It plays a key role in terms of social security, and is widely adopted in place of a formalised organisational welfare system (Al-Ramahi, 2008; El-Said and Harrigan, 2009).

The concept of *wasta* also includes the involvement of a patron in favour of a client with the objective of securing beneficial outcomes and resources from a third party (Al-Ramahi, 2008). Despite the fact that this was originally centred on family loyalty, *wasta* links have developed and extended to involve friends, acquaintances, and the community (El-Said and Harrigan, 2009). This is owing to the fact that Arabs feel responsibility towards both their family and their wider network. Accordingly, in *wasta*, reciprocity or mutuality and exchange are fundamental, forming the foundation for social relations in the Arab world (El-Said and Harrigan, 2009).

Although the extent of the adoption of *wasta* differs from one Arab country to the next, *wasta* can be seen in various long-term elements in the Arab context (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993; Kilani and Sakijha, 2002). In the Arab world generally and in Saudi Arabia in particular, to date, very little research has focused on *wasta*. Below are various examples of research carried out in the Saudi Arabia and various Gulf countries with comparable cultures to Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, *wasta* is recognised as a ubiquitous element in Saudi culture, affecting the business, economic, political and social spheres. In Saudi research by Al-Faisal (1993), the vast majority (88%) of the sample held the view that *wasta* referred to a standard of loyalty, as perceived by families, with more than half (57%) recognising *wasta* as the friendship standard. Furthermore, a large proportion (79%) did not consider *wasta* to be a social deviation. Perhaps the reason for this result is that the sense of belonging among members of the community increases when they promote of common values (Van Kraayenoord, 2007).

In addition, a study carried out in the United Arab Emirates found that more than half of the sample believed in the value of *wasta* in terms of promoting an individual's career (Mohamed and Mohamad, 2011). Furthermore, Neal (2010) revealed that the majority of their female subjects from Oman showed a preference for leaders with the capacity to secure *wasta* for their followers. In the context of Kuwait, *wasta* dependence is significant, with its use recognised as all-encompassing (Ali and Al-Kazemi 2006). In a number of other Arab countries, it can be seen that *wasta* is widespread. In Jordan, for example, *wasta* is required in all areas, even for such a simple act as obtaining a driving licence; thus, rules and regulations are often disregarded in consideration of *wasta* (El-Said and Harrigan, 2009). Loewe et al. (2008) provide a further example, showing that Jordanians recognise *wasta* as being linked with loyalty and solidarity. Loewe et al. (2008) pointed out that the interviewees emphasised that there is great reliance on *wasta* as it is not possible to circumvent bureaucratic issues through other avenues. Such results suggest that *wasta* underpins and supports Arab societies as opposed to being responsible for their decline.

Wasta is maintained due to weak institutional frameworks in the Arab world, as well as by intrinsic ties to family links, social structures, and trust (Hutchings and Weir, 2006; Mohamed and Mohamad, 2011). Nevertheless, in the media in the Arab world, *wasta* is neither supported nor encouraged. Kilani and Sakijha (2002) in their study in the Jordanian context, found that the vast majority (90%) of the respondents to their survey sought to eliminate and remove *wasta*. In the work environment, *wasta* is a fundamental factor in the recruitment of individuals, and therefore in successful careers. Accordingly, those with notable wealth and/or influence, affecting public or private organisations, utilise and direct *wasta* connections in an effort to achieve positive outcomes (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993). In some way, *wasta* can therefore be seen to provide a number of unfair advantages amongst those who might not necessarily be deserving of them (Metcalf, 2006). Makhoul and Harrison (2004) found *wasta* to be ineffective, suggesting that its use sometimes results in poor job performance. Overall, *wasta* is recognised by Arabs as a negative concept (Hutchings and Weir, 2006).

It should be recognised that, despite *wasta* being deeply embedded within Arab culture, Muslim teachings oppose the concept. Tribal values are supported by Islam, with the value and significance of group relations and family emphasised through the establishment and development of cohesion, cooperation, loyalty, patience and trust (Abuznaid, 2006). Islam accords great importance to allowing all individuals the same rights and advantages (Ali and Al-Kazemi, 2006). Nevertheless, because *wasta* is so dominant in Saudi culture, it is also present in the school system. It is difficult to comment on the overall influence of *wasta* in improving inclusive education; in some cases, it is likely to have a positive impact. For example, if principals require resources quickly they can obtain them from friends at the local authority, whilst there are other cases when it can be a negative factor, for example, for principals without friends working in the local authority.

2.1.12. Summary of Part One

The purpose of this chapter was to provide necessary background and contextual information to facilitate understanding and interpretation of this study.

Saudi Arabia is an Arab, Islamic monarchy that has undergone rapid economic development and social change driven by oil revenues. Although still classed as a developing country, it has adopted ambitious policies for change, including a commitment to enhancing education for pupils with special needs.

Education, regarded under Islam as a right and duty, is provided by the Ministry of Education, and underpinned by Islamic principles, which require gender segregation. Religious notions of disability as a punishment or test have contributed to the prevalence of negative attitudes towards disability, which have often restricted the educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities, although the principle of duty of care for such individuals has underpinned a variety of provision in special schools.

More recently, legislation and policy on special education has adopted the U.S ideal of the least restrictive environment, with provisions intended to support the rights of those with disabilities to appropriate service, and a move towards inclusion, for those deemed

able to benefit from a more inclusive environment. In the Saudi context, this takes the form of partial inclusion, whereby, depending on their disability, pupils may be enrolled in mainstream schools, but in separate classes. They may be included with their peers socially (for example in break time) but receive some or all of their lessons separately, taught by special education teachers. This approach is supported by a system of initial teacher training that provides completely different training for general and special education teachers. Eligibility for enrolment in mainstream schools is determined by tests of physical and cognitive functioning with a child reaches primary school age, 6 years old. In theory, both special and mainstream schools provide a range of complementary services for pupils with special needs, according to each child's individual education plan. However, in practice, a comprehensive range of services may not be available, due to a shortage of appropriately qualified staff.

An important contextual feature of this study is that, being conducted in the Eastern Province, it was able to include schools established by the oil company, ARAMCO, as part of its corporate school responsibility activities. These schools, although similar in an administration to government schools and under the control of the Local Education Authority, are considerably better resourced and more likely to be able to provide the facilities and space needed to cater for pupils with special needs.

One outcome of the disparities between schools is the recourse to *wasta*, the exercise of social connections, to influence education decisions; for example, school principals may use it to expedite resource acquisition, or parents use it to get their children accepted into “good” schools. This deeply-rooted cultural practice is advantageous to some but ultimately likely to be detrimental to the implementation of inclusion.

In this unique social context, rapid changes are occurring in the education of pupils with special needs, implying a move from the medical model, focused on individuals deficits and remediation, toward a social model, focused on institutional adaption to meet individual needs. These models, together with the Index for Inclusion, a practical framework containing elements of both, are discussed in the next part.

Chapter Two: The Context, Theory and Literature Review

Part Two: Theoretical Framework

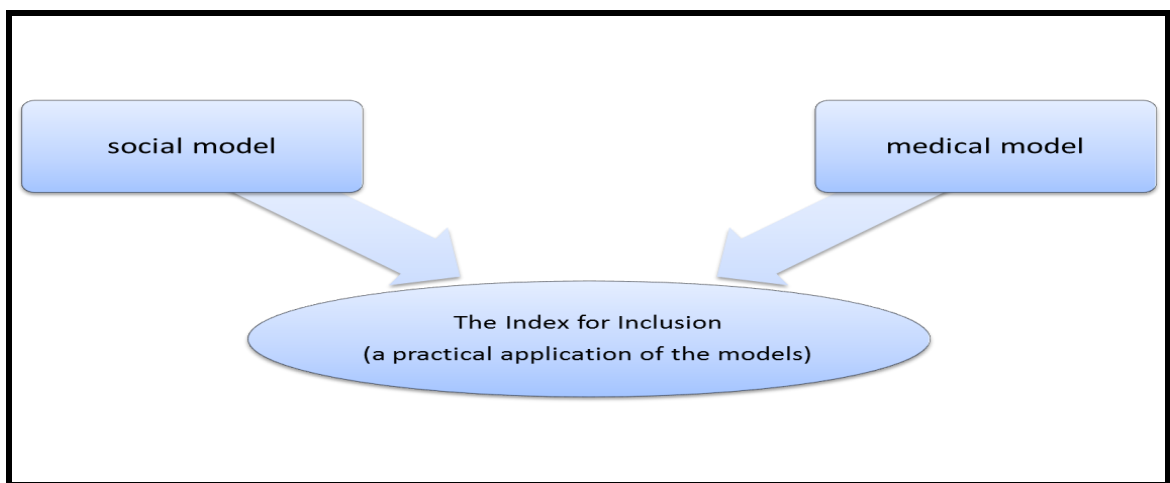
Following the research stages:

Chapter 1	Introduction and Research Context		
Chapter 2	The Context, Theory and Literature Review	Part 1	The Context of Saudi Arabia
		Part 2	Theoretical Framework
		Part 3	Literature Review
Chapter 3	Research Methodology		
Chapter 4	Principals' Understanding of Concept of Inclusion		
Chapter 5	School Principals' Perspectives on Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Mainstream Schools		
Chapter 6	Factors Affecting the Perspectives of Principals regarding the Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome		
Chapter 7	Recommendations and Conclusion		

2.2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this part is to explain the theoretical framework of this study. The theoretical framework underpinning this research stems from two contrasting perspectives of disability, the social and medical models, which are synthesized in a more practical way in the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). See Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: The theoretical framework for this study



The social and medical models are discussed in this chapter, with their advantages and disadvantages, and the elements and dimensions of Booth and Ainscow's (2002) Index for Inclusion are explained.

2.2.2. Models of Disability

According to Llewellyn and Hogan (2000), a 'model' is a specific theory which is structural in nature and which aims to describe and examine phenomena in abstract terms. Special Educational Needs is a contested field of study with competing ideologies and theories. Within this discipline, traditionally, two key theoretical frameworks have had an impact on modern-day thinking in regard to disability, namely, the social model and the medical model (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). The models provide contrasting positions in regard to those with disabilities. It is worth saying that there are other

models, for example the rights based model, which I do discuss in the thesis, but I focus in my study on the medical and social models.

Disability models provide a key point of reference for society in terms of the ways in which laws, regulations and structures are devised, as well as their effects on the lives of disabled individuals (Cole, 2008). For this reason, models have been applied as a theoretical framework in this research in an effort to trace the development of understanding on disability and to enrich the discussion of findings and recommendations for improving inclusive education provision in Saudi Arabia.

Through exploring the social and medical models of disability, it is possible to look at the impact of these models in terms of service delivery and the extent to which they achieve full inclusion for disabled children in Saudi schools.

2.2.2.1. The Medical Model of Disability

The medical model of disability originated in the 19th century, along with the development of the medical profession and technological developments created in the field of medicine (Drake, 1999). Those with disabilities were managed by medical professionals, responsible for providing rehabilitation so as to assist in the facilitation of a normal life.

This model centred on the individual with a ‘problem’ seen as a ‘victim’. Disability was perceived as an individual tragedy, with no perceived need for societal change (Barnes, 1999). Accordingly, the medical model commonly centres on those with disabilities who are socially excluded (Morris, 1991).

The emphasis of the medical model is on the individual’s disorder or abnormality. Disease is viewed as a disturbance of normal functionality, which can be identified through the application of diagnostic instruments or via chemical examination. Such analysis can provide insights into various symptoms and signs commonly believed to be particular to a specific classification, cause and/or diagnosis (Seale et al., 2001). The medical model’s attention is directed towards sickness or deficit within the individual,

with the view that specific diagnoses could result in social problems, such as discrimination and stigma (Williams and Heslop, 2005).

The model has been reinforced and supported through genetics, with extensive efforts to identify those genes that may cause diseases. Essentially, the physical body is viewed as an object, and those with disabilities are recognised as patients with a disease that may undergo medical treatment (Drake, 1999). Accordingly, people are classed as having a disability according to certain psychological or physical criteria (DePoy and Gilson, 2004).

The medical model centres on physical elements, and recognises disability as resulting from physiological impairment through disease or damage (Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000). It directs attention to the fact that individuals with disabilities are dependent on others, such as supporters and professionals. This perspective has two key consequences. First, it demands physical adjustment, achieved through various interventions for care or cure, including rehabilitation schemes with the aim of maximizing the likelihood of returning to a near-normal state. Secondly, psychological adjustments are critical, and assist the individual in accepting and managing his or her physical restrictions (Oliver, 2009). This model, although predominantly focusing on the individual, suggests a supportive role for society.

Through this perspective, disability as a construct is described in terms of poor inclusion in mainstream society. Those who are disabled are commonly marginalized due to their inability to perform social activities, and because of their functional limitations. Accordingly, someone who may not be fully mobile can be recognised as disabled for this reason (Oliver, 2009).

The rehabilitation process is facilitated and supported through the development of technological devices. For instance, those with hearing impairments might be helped by operations or hearing aids, as well as learning sign language and lip reading, while Braille may be a viable option for those with visual impairments (Pandey and Advani, 1995). Technological developments may not only help those with disabilities to overcome technical issues; but also provide more equality in a work environment

(Roulstone, 1998). Nevertheless, technological development in itself does not eliminate discrimination or social oppression.

At one level the medical model is extremely valuable, owing to the impact of the medical field and technologies utilised across this domain (Marks, 1999; Oliver, 2009). However, under the medical model, service providers have maintained their perspective of individuals with disabilities as a problem, directing focus on what they can not do, and what their disability inhibits (Dowling and Dolan, 2001). Early ideas concerning the delivery of education to children with disabilities were centred on a medical model of ‘defects’ (Thompson, 1998). However, the medical model of disability has been the focus of much criticism since the 1970s, particularly by proponents of the social model of disability, to be discussed later, and by those adopting a rights-based approach to disability. The medical model holds that disability marks an individual person’s physical or mental limitations, and is mostly unconcerned with the social or geographical setting. From that, it is easy to see how people who have disabilities might become stigmatised as ‘lacking’ or ‘abnormal’.

Barnes (1999) criticizes the three definitional categories adopted by the medical model: impairment is the first, which implies physical abnormality; disability is the second, which refers to the lack of ability to perform tasks and activities in the same way as an able individual; the third is handicap, which focuses on disadvantage (Barnes, 1999). Nevertheless, physical and psychological normality cannot be described without being subject to cultural, situational and temporal factors (Barnes, 1999). Furthermore, by focusing on the physical functionality, the definition fails to include non-medical causes of disadvantage, and ultimately encourages the concept of abnormality. Furthermore, the medical model fails to consider the experiences of those with the disability, as well as how such disabilities are perceived culturally. Moreover, much of the rehabilitation needed by those with disabilities cannot be delivered only by medical professionals and/or doctors (Oliver, 2009); rather, there is also a need for community rehabilitation.

Moreover, the medical model categorises those with disabilities in terms of their medical diagnoses. Accordingly, such individuals are recognised as, for example, ‘mentally ill’ (Williams and Heslop, 2005). This broad label might fail to distinguish between

categories of disability, which might include those with dyslexia, or "attention deficit disorder", or "autistic spectrum disorders" who are within the 'normal' range of intelligence (Rice and Brooks, 2004). In addition, through focusing on the disability or deficit within the person, who is labelled according to his or her disability, the medical model does not adequately acknowledge disability as a social response to impairment. The 'labels' used in the medical model approach mean there is no onus or responsibility on society. However, abandoning labels altogether would be likely to result in less resource or service provision and a lack of understanding.

Another criticism is that the medical model fails to recognise that in addition to the limitations that the impairment encompasses, societal reactions might also be degrading, insulting and patronising, thus inducing subsequent limitations. Social responses to those with disabilities can therefore prove to be just as debilitating as the actual problem itself. Moreover, more conventional approaches to impairment may be recognised as pathological, meaning that the individual is recognised either as a hero to be admired or a helpless individual warranting pity (Barnes, 1999).

Obviously, the above consideration of the medical model has important implications for the Saudi education system, particularly with reference to inclusion in primary schools. Prejudicial perspectives towards those with disabilities are widespread, learned through interaction with the prejudice and ignorance of others (Aboela, 2008). Hence, challenging discrimination against disabled people must begin in schools, with the fight for the inclusion of all children.

Another limitation of the medical model is the idea of quantification of the degree of disability, on a scale from mild to severe, depending on how much an individual deviates from a social norm. Such norms are arguably man-made constructs created to protect the 'self' as not having a disability (Slee, 1996). This arguably serves to maintain prevailing levels of social hierarchy (Slee, 1996). This limitation with the medical model of disability is also noticeable in the Saudi context in the IQ tests that are used in a deterministic way to assess Saudi children with learning difficulties on a scale from mild to severe, according to comparison with the perceived 'norm' and to decide their educational setting accordingly. Whilst the medical model focuses on deviance and

difference in the individual there is a contrasting model which contests this view: the social model of disability. The subsequent section provides a discussion of this alternative disability model: the social disability model.

2.2.2.2. The Social Model of Disability

The social model contests the medical model's tendency to equate disability and illness, arguing that those with disabilities are not always ill, or in need of medical care (Marks, 1999). Moreover, since this study was carried out in Saudi Arabia, a Muslim state, it is essential to highlight how such a social model aligns with Islam. Importantly, this religion considers the needs—economic, physical and social—of disadvantaged groups, whilst promoting a change of perspective and actions amongst people (the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, 2002).

As highlighted earlier some people have associated the medical model with the Islamic viewpoint, by viewing disability as Allah's (God's) will. However, Islamic teaching explains that all things, whether good or bad, are part of Allah's (God's) will, and it is necessary to solve any problem that arises. Thus, the social model of disability is a strong model for applying Islamic teaching in an education context. Accordingly, the social model of disability, is in line with Islam's teachings, whereby respect and rights in society are applied to all people including both disabled and non-disabled populations. Thus, arguably, the Saudi education system needs to move closer towards recognising the social model of disability, which is supported by the teachings of the Qu'ran.

In Saudi Arabia, stigma remains one of the key issues faced by those with disabilities. A number of derogatory terms are used to refer to such individuals, including 'feeble-minded', 'idiotic', 'imbecilic', and mentally or morally 'defective', thus inducing a number of social problems for such children (Alkalifa, 2002; Aboela, 2008). Stigma has also been linked with various social problems, and has been a fundamental obstacle to inclusion (Brown, 2005). Clements and Read (2008) claim that stigmatising children with disabilities is extended, encompassing their relatives and disturbing family relations, particularly when the disability is apparent from birth. Moreover, parental abuse and denial are often experienced by those with disabilities, possibly due to

parents' feelings of guilt and shame, leading to children being kept out of society (Wall, 2006).

The Qur'an directs attention to the disadvantage created by society and felt by people without the economic, physical and/or social qualities recognised as valuable by others (Bazna and Hatab, 2005). Esteem and respect for disadvantaged individuals are encouraged by Islam, with the rights to full inclusion and support clearly outlined (Bazna and Hatab, 2005). The responsibility and duty of society towards disadvantaged populations is further affirmed by encouragement of monetary donations from those with sufficient means (Ibn-baz, 1999). Nevertheless, societal responsibility towards those less able is not confined to financial considerations. Members of mainstream society are also required to work alongside disadvantaged groups, incorporating them within their community (Bazna and Hatab, 2005).

The originators of the social disability model, Oliver, Abberley, Finkelstein and Hunt, established the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) in 1976, as a response to the medical disability model (Chappell et al., 2001). The social model directs emphasis toward both institutional and social structures, and considers disability as an outcome of historic and cultural factors. Rather than the identifying disability as belonging to a malfunctioning or impaired body, it distinguishes between impairment and disability (Marks, 1999). The social model recognises disability in terms of the elements responsible for restricting disabled individuals, ranging from institutional discrimination through to individual prejudice, from unusable transport systems to inaccessible public buildings, and also in terms of education, schools, teachers and the curriculum (Oliver, 2009).

This innovative perspective towards disability, steering attention away from the body (Shakespeare, 2006), challenges the medical discourse, providing definitions in terms of how such people live their lives. It positions the concept of 'disability' as being beyond the individual's responsibility, and provides a new agenda, through which the daily lives of individuals with disabilities are viewed through a social perspective. Accordingly, this model recognises disability not as a direct outcome of individual impairment, but rather as the outcome of various social obstacles (Boxall, 2002; Shakespeare, 2006). Hence,

the focus is on how the environment meets and fulfils the needs of those with disabilities. This includes an emphasis on particular elements of the lives of disabled children that need and warrant support. For instance, if a school is lacking ramps, this prohibits wheelchair access. For the visually impaired, the physical environment is inaccessible if there are inadequate resources, such as signs or books available in Braille. Such an approach highlights society's need to change, rather than focusing on the rehabilitation of those with disabilities (Oliver, 2009).

Accordingly, it is stated that disability is the outcome of society's failure to deliver suitable and sufficient services, and to consider disabled people's requirements within social organisations. In various political, economic and religious contexts disabled people face oppression and negative social attitudes that undermine their person-hood (Lang, 2000). Similarly, Thomas and Corker (2002) view disability as a form of oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions for people with impairments. Oliver (2009) and Gallagher (2014) view disability solely as a social construct and place the onus on society to adapt to those with impairment, accepting them as they are.

Hence, the model directs attention to planning and policy in an effort to fulfil the requirements of those with disabilities (Marks, 1999; Smith et al., 2014). According to Shakespeare (2006), it plays a key role in empowering those with disabilities, through advocating and supporting their rights. The idea of 'right, not charity' is promoted by The People with Disabilities Movement, along with legislation regarding anti-discrimination (Oliver, 2009). In other words, support is a right not something that may be conferred as a type of care or kindness (Silvers, 2004). Accordingly, the social model results in more socially inclusive policies, as well as the delivery of greater support for those with disabilities to live within wider society, including living independently (Oliver, 2009).

There are, however, some limitations to the social model of disability. Indeed, Shakespeare (2006) claims it *"has created as many problems as it has solved"* (p.31). Marks (1999) argues that it does not adequately consider the complicated social factors and wide-ranging diversity affecting disability production, including the differences in experiences with regard to ethnicity and gender. Furthermore, the model is inadequate in

accounting for those with learning difficulties (Chappell et al., 2001). This is related to the model's focus on the physical domain, in relation to how they are affected by the physical environment, whereas those suffering with learning difficulties might not be as significantly impacted by this environment (Al-Khatteeb, 2008). Essentially, the model does not suitably highlight the interrelationship between biological, psychological and social factors (Marks, 1999). Moreover, it does not manage to fulfil people's needs when there are multiple impairments and/or disabilities (Shakespeare, 2006).

Shakespeare (2006) argues that it is somewhat restrictive to see disability as simply an issue requiring the removal or even circumventing of social barriers. This will not remove all impairments, since the same barriers might not be applicable or relevant to all those with disabilities. Moreover, a barrier may be identified by one individual or group, but not by another. For instance, an individual with a visual disability might not experience problems with holding a telephone conversation, whereas an individual with a hearing problem would. There are also other factors to be taken into account in attempting to remove environmental barriers for those with disabilities, including cost and practicality. Accordingly, the removal of obstacles is not the end solution; although, it may improve access to facilities, and, hence, inclusion amongst disabled individuals. Nevertheless, segregated or different services in particular cases could also ensure that such services are of high quality (Shakespeare, 2006).

Furthermore, the social model does not consider the importance assigned to impairment for various individuals with disabilities (Shakespeare, 2006). However, despite the limitations of the social model, it is still a valuable theoretical system (Barnes, 1999; Shakespeare, 2006). It is significant in suggesting that, rather than merely focusing on medical interventions with the aim of rectifying an impaired body, removing societal barriers should also be prioritised, as these also cause issues for disabled individuals, such as in terms of inaccessible physical environments, inadequate welfare policies, negative attitudes, and discriminatory treatment (Shakespeare, 2006; Smith et al., 2014).

In terms of implications for education, the social model decreases the burden placed on the individual through the medical model (Rieser, 2006). Hence, Middleton (1999) questions the logic of exclusion of those with special needs. Those children share a right

to be included, like any child without a disability. As Priestley (2003), argues the shift to the social model has facilitated the development of a number of critiques in terms of how disabled individuals are viewed by society. Table 2.1 shows a summary comparison relating the medical and social model of disability, as set out by Oliver (2009).

Table 2.2: Comparison of the medical and social models, Source: (Oliver, 2009: p.45)

The medical (individual) model	The social model
<i>personal tragedy theory</i>	<i>social oppression theory</i>
<i>personal problem</i>	<i>social problem</i>
<i>individual treatment</i>	<i>social action</i>
<i>medicalization</i>	<i>self-help</i>
<i>professional dominance</i>	<i>individual and collective responsibility</i>
<i>expertise</i>	<i>experience</i>
<i>adjustment</i>	<i>affirmation</i>
<i>individual identity</i>	<i>collective identity</i>
<i>prejudice</i>	<i>discrimination</i>
<i>attitudes</i>	<i>behaviour</i>
<i>care</i>	<i>rights</i>
<i>control</i>	<i>choice</i>
<i>policy</i>	<i>politics</i>
<i>individual adaptation</i>	<i>social change</i>

The medical model, by nature, implies that society is unable to respond to the needs of disabled individuals, meaning that such individuals do not benefit from full public policy rights. The social model, in contrast adopts a rights-based approach as McEwan and Butler (2007) note, it offers a more holistic and flexible approach to understanding disability recognising the importance of context.

The social model recognises that those with learning difficulties commonly face discrimination, attitudinal obstacles and a lack of independence. Should these factors be eradicated, those with learning difficulties would be less disabled in their community (Boxall, 2002). The social model is supportive of the values and underpinnings of inclusive education and is, therefore, pivotal to this research. Whereas the medical model considers disabled individuals as having inherent problems that need to be

addressed through intervention, the social model considers inclusion within mainstream society as achievable through the eradication of obstacles and barriers. Thus, the social model of disability contributes to a more inclusive society.

The facilitation by the social model of a deeper, more holistic understanding of disability has resulted in the acceptance of this approach in around the world (Nagata, 2008). However, Frederickson and Cline (2009) propose that the complete application of the social model would necessitate a complete overhaul of school classroom management, curriculum and organisation. In various countries, including Saudi Arabia, disability is commonly viewed through the medical lens, although a number of efforts have been directed towards emphasising the social model.

As mentioned above, different interpretations of Islamic teaching have contributed towards this confusion over whether the social or medical model is more appropriate in a Saudi context. Certainly, there are positive and negative aspects of both models, and there is a great deal of complexity surrounding society's understanding of disability. Nevertheless, in comparing the two models, it seems that the social model is more beneficial, and would be a better fit in the context of Saudi culture and religious beliefs. The Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) is important in this regard, and is recognised as a practical application of both the social and medical models. Accordingly, the next section addresses the Index for Inclusion.

2.2.3. A Practical Application of the Models: The Index for Inclusion

The Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) comes from the UK and consists of a number of different resources geared towards aiding schools to provide inclusive development, by removing and circumventing the obstacles to full inclusion amongst those with special educational needs. It is further posited by Booth and Ainscow (2011) that the Index is concerned with developing helpful school communities that facilitate greater achievement amongst their learner base. The Index for Inclusion is a practical application that makes use of the social model, which considers the learner's various characteristics, as well as cultural contexts and wider social factors.

The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) developed the Index in collaboration with the University of Manchester and Canterbury Christ Church University. Publication took place in 2000, following three years of development and research across 25 schools (Rustemier and Booth, 2005). Distribution then targeted 26,000 primaries, secondary and special schools, as well as educational authorities (Vislie, 2003). The Index was subsequently widely adopted in a number of countries, and translated into more than 40 languages (Booth and Ainscow, 2011), including Arabic. Nevertheless, the framework is not implemented in Saudi Arabia, because education for children with special needs is governed by the Rules and Regulations of Special Education (2002).

The Index is concerned with a precisely arranged step-by-step process centred on changes in cultures and values, which may facilitate both teachers and learners to implement inclusive practices and, given suitable support, induce additional motivation within the school development cycle (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). The Index process is summarised by Booth and Ainscow (2002), in five stages, as shown in Table 2.2:

Table 2.2: The Index process (Booth and Ainscow, 2002: p.13)

Index process	<i>Getting started with the Index</i>
	<i>Finding out about the school</i>
	<i>Producing an inclusive school development plan</i>
	<i>Implementing priorities</i>
	<i>Reviewing the Index process</i>

According to Booth and Ainscow (2002) the preliminary phase, the School Development Planning Team (SDPT) seeks to devise a coordinating group, whose members exchange knowledge on the concepts, approaches and materials for ascertaining information about the school across all of the school community's members. During the second stage, knowledge relating to the Index's materials and coordinating group is utilised as a foundation for an in-depth examination of the school. Development-related priorities are also established. The third stage involves changes being made to a school development plan with the aim of encompassing inclusive

objectives, in addition to specific priorities established during previous stage. The implementation and support of such developments occur in the fourth stage. In the final stage, a review of the process is completed.

The exploration of schools, along with the development and adoption of plans, is structured by the Index. School developments are recognised as spanning three different dimensions, as follows: Dimension A, Creating inclusive cultures; Dimension B, Producing inclusive policies; and Dimension C, Evolving inclusive practices. Each dimension is then broken down into two sections, as shown in Table 2.3 these are concerned with creating a planning template with the aim of moulding the exploration of activity areas within a centre of education. Importantly, this should be afforded attention in the writing of an inclusive plan (Booth and Ainscow, 2011).

Table 2.3: Index dimensions (Booth and Ainscow, 2011: p.13)

Index dimensions	<i>Dimension A: Creating inclusive cultures</i>	<i>A1: Building community</i>
		<i>A2: Establishing inclusive values</i>
	<i>Dimension B: Producing inclusive policies</i>	<i>B1: Developing the school for all</i>
		<i>B2: Organising support for diversity</i>
	<i>Dimension C: Evolving inclusive practices</i>	<i>C1: Constructing curricula for all</i>
		<i>C2: Orchestrating learning</i>

In my research, the Index for Inclusion's individual dimensions—cultures, policies and practices—along with their indicators as set out in Tables 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 below, are adopted in order to examine the findings, which centre on inclusion-related issues. A brief overview of each of the dimensions is provided by Booth and Ainscow (2011), as follows.

Dimension A: Creating inclusive cultures

This dimension is concerned with establishing and accepting a collaborative, secure, stimulating and welcoming community which values everyone. There is the development and communication of shared inclusive values amongst staff, students and their families, governors, communities, and anyone else associated with the school. The

inclusive culture values the provision of guidance on policy-related decisions and moment-to-moment practice, ensuring continuous and coherent development. Change needs to be embedded within school culture, which goes some way to integrating change across all groups—those of students and adults; these are then passed on to new arrivals. Dimension A and its indicators are detailed in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Dimension A: Creating inclusive cultures (Booth and Ainscow, 2002: p.39)

Dimension A: Creating inclusive cultures	<i>Building community</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Everyone is made to feel welcome.</i> 2. <i>Students help each other.</i> 3. <i>Staff collaborate with each other.</i> 4. <i>Staff and students treat one another with respect.</i> 5. <i>There is a partnership between staff and parents/carers.</i> 6. <i>Staff and governors work well together.</i> 7. <i>All local communities are involved in the school.</i>
	<i>Establishing inclusive values</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>There are high expectations for all students.</i> 2. <i>Staff, governors, students and parents/carers share a philosophy of inclusion.</i> 3. <i>Students are equally valued.</i> 4. <i>Staff and students are treated as human beings as well as occupants of a 'role'.</i> 5. <i>Staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation in school.</i> 6. <i>The school strives to minimise discriminatory practices.</i>

Through the culture of inclusive schools, staff and students can play pivotal roles in ensuring changes in practices and that policies are maintained (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). In other words, this dimension signifies an all-encompassing school culture, as well as that of the wider community, and ultimately the wider context, which is seen to influence practice and policy.

Dimension B: Producing inclusive policies

Dimension B is concerned with ensuring that inclusion is identifiable across all of the school's plans, with the involvement of everyone. Child and staff involvement is

encouraged through the policies from the time the children join the school. The school is encouraged, through the policy, to reach out to all students, with supportive policies considering activities that are able to enhance the environment in such a way that all individuals, irrespective of background, are involved and valued. Different types of support are seen to be linked within one individual framework, centred on ensuring the involvement and development of everyone in the school. Dimension B, along with its individual indicators, is detailed in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Dimension B: Producing inclusive policies (Booth and Ainscow, 2002: p.40)

Dimension B: Producing inclusive policies	<i>Developing a school for all</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff appointments and promotions are fair. 2. All new staff are helped to settle into the school. 3. The school seeks to admit all students from its locality. 4. The school makes its buildings physically accessible to all people. 5. All students new to the school are helped to feel settled. 6. The school arranges teaching groups so that all students are valued.
	<i>Organising support for diversity</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All forms of support are co-ordinated. 2. Staff development activities help staff to respond to student diversity. 3. 'Special needs' policies are inclusion policies. 4. The Code of Practice is used to reduce the barriers to the learning and participation of all students. 5. Support for those learning English as an additional language is co-ordinated with learning support. 6. Pastoral and behavioural support policies are linked to curriculum development and learning support policies. 7. Pressures for disciplinary exclusion are decreased. 8. Barriers to attendance are reduced. 9. Bullying is minimised.

Dimension C: Evolving inclusive practices

This dimension is concerned with expanding what is learnt and taught and how this occurs, ensuring that inclusive policies and values are reflected. The effects associated with the content structuring of learning activities are detailed in the section referred to as ‘Constructing curricula for all’, which links learning alongside experience—both on a local and global scale—as well as to rights, and further merges sustainability considerations. In this way, learning is coordinated so that both learning and teaching activities are receptive to young people and their diversity across the school environment as a whole. Accordingly, students are encouraged to be active, critical and reflective learners, and are recognised as valuable actors in one another’s learning. Adults come together to take responsibility for students’ learning. Dimension C and its various indicators are displayed in Table 2.6.

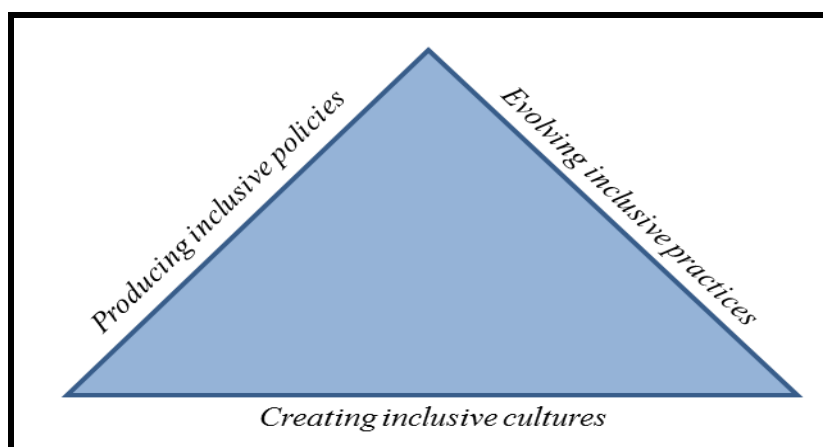
Table 2.6: Dimension C: Evolving inclusive practices (Booth and Ainscow, 2002: p.41)

Dimension C: Evolving inclusive practices	<i>Orchestrating learning</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
	<i>Mobilising resources</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
		<i>1. Lessons are responsive to student diversity. 2. Lessons are made accessible to all students. 3. Lessons develop an understanding of difference. 4. Students are actively involved in their own learning. 5. Students learn collaboratively. 6. Assessment encourages the achievements of all students. 7. Classroom discipline is based on mutual respect. 8. Teachers plan, review and teach in partnership. 9. Teachers are concerned with support for the learning and participation of all students. 10. Learning support assistants are concerned with support for the learning and participation of all students. 11. Homework contributes to the learning of all. 12. All students take part in activities outside the classroom.</i>
		<i>1. School resources are distributed fairly to support inclusion. 2. Community resources are known and drawn upon. 3. Staff expertise is fully utilised. 4. Student difference is used as a resource for teaching and learning. 5. Staff develop resources to support learning and participation.</i>

Each of the sections detail several individual indicators, which go towards delivering an in-depth plan for managing and directing the school's present position, along with its assessing its potential for inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). Moreover, the indicators enable present arrangements in a particular school setting to be analysed by a process of self-assessment by the staff, in order to establish and adopt priorities for change. *"Each indicator is connected to questions which define its meaning, refine exploration, spark off reflection and dialogue, and prompt further questions"* (Booth and Ainscow, 2011: p.13).

Moreover, the Index's three dimensions—creating inclusive cultures, producing inclusive policies, evolving inclusive practices—are all interlinked, highlighting the role and importance of the presence of an inclusive school culture, along with the need to examine and investigate issues associated with inclusion. According to Booth and Ainscow (2002), learning—and involvement-related obstacles—are recognised through the interaction of students with their environment, including cultures, economic and social circumstances, institutions, people and policies, all of which have an impact on their lives. This multi dimensionality is captured in the triangle, shown in Figure 2.4. The culture dimension is intentionally positioned at the triangle's base, since culture can either underpin or weaken inclusive teaching and learning, therefore potentially resulting in changes to both practice and policy (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

Figure 2.4: Index dimensions (Booth and Ainscow, 2011: p.13)



The Index was used as the framework for collaborative study by Carrington and Robinson (2006), utilising one university and one primary school in Queensland, Australia, concerned with establishing ways of facilitating school change, including culture, policy and teaching practice, in specific consideration to inclusion. Although the research is restricted to the Australian context, its application of the Index for Inclusion is thought-provoking and demonstrates the value of the Index as a conceptual framework.

The Index was included in my research on the basis of its comprehensiveness, clear structure and suitability for considering inclusion, within Saudi Arabia and internationally. An attraction of the Index is its provision of open-ended questions pertaining to each indicator, and relevance to different education contexts pertaining to inclusion (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). One of the objectives of this thesis is concerned with establishing different ways to enable schools to enhance inclusion within Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) has been adopted as a way of guiding the analysis of the findings, and devising suggestions to improve inclusion for unique children (with Down's syndrome) and individual contexts.

2.2.4. Summary of Part Two

This research is underpinned by two contrasting disability models, medical and social, pertinent to special education in the Saudi Arabian context. The rationale for special education is predicated on the medical model, which is centred on 'fixing' or 'curing' those with a disability, and schools will only accept individuals considered able to adapt to mainstream education. In the context of Saudi policy, this involves including such individuals in non-academic activities, which is supported by the social model, or excluding them in their own classrooms, which is based on the medical model. Moreover, some individuals regarded as unable to display 'normal' behaviours might be excluded in special schools, which reinforces the medical model (Sadek, 2000).

In contrast, the social model views disability as created or compounded by other personal issues owing to exclusion and isolation from society. Disabled individuals are, therefore, recognised as oppressed in the societal context.

Despite the various criticisms surrounding the restrictions and drawbacks of the medical model in Saudi Arabia, the medical model remains relevant to the policy context on inclusion. The social model is also pertinent to research into the concept of inclusion, and the various elements impacting school inclusion. It can not only result in improved insight into those with Down's syndrome, but arguably could also achieve improved inclusion.

As mentioned earlier, in the Saudi Arabian context the key obstacles facing the inclusion of individuals with Down's syndrome have not yet been identified, so consideration should be given to both the social and medical models, which accordingly, are applied in the theoretical framework of my research. The Index for Inclusion was also implemented as a practical application of the social model of disability, in an effort to provide further value and depth to the discussion of findings, as well as to the recommendations for developing inclusive education provision in Saudi Arabia. The Index for Inclusion is potentially pivotal in the effective adoption of inclusive education in Saudi Arabia, as it is considerably more comprehensive than the current special education policy (the Rules and Regulations of Special Education), since it considers all contexts, including inside and out of school. In addition, whilst the Rules and Regulations of Special Education consider each disability separately, the Index for Inclusion considers all disabilities together, arguing that all should be included.

Chapter Two: The Context, Theory and Literature Review

Part Three: Literature Review

Following the research stages:

Chapter 1	Introduction and Research Context		
Chapter 2	The Context, Theory and Literature Review	Part 1	The Context of Saudi Arabia
		Part 2	Theoretical Framework
		Part 3	Literature Review
Chapter 3	Research Methodology		
Chapter 4	Principals' Understanding of Concept of Inclusion		
Chapter 5	School Principals' Perspectives on Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Mainstream Schools		
Chapter 6	Factors Affecting the Perspectives of Principals regarding the Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome		
Chapter 7	Recommendations and Conclusion		

2.3.1. Introduction and Research Procedure

Saudi Arabia is currently taking the first steps in addressing the lives of children with special educational needs, including those with Down's syndrome, in an attempt to improve their quality of life and encourage positive attitudes towards them. Inclusion is a relatively new phenomenon in Saudi Arabia, posing challenges for educational leadership. However, Saudi Arabia is beginning to depart from the medical model and trying to access the social model, like Western countries.

In order to set such efforts in context, this chapter presents a selective review of the complex and expanding literature on inclusive education, focusing on the inclusion of children with learning difficulties in mainstream schools and, more specifically, the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome.

This review draws on literature available in databases, international journals, theses and books. Databases, for example, ERIC; EBSCO, the online platform for Taylor and Francis Group content, Wiley online library, APA PsycNet, as well as the Saudi Digital Library were searched for articles describing perspectives and attitudes towards mainstreaming, integration and inclusion. Books from, for example, the University of Lincoln and University of Hull, were consulted, especially those that contain studies on the subject of inclusion. I also drew on theses from the British Library EThOS and from the library of the Saudi Cultural Bureau in London and Washington, to make sure I included all the research conducted on children with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, the following international journals were searched for relevant topics on inclusion: American Journal of Mental Deficiency; American Journal on Mental Retardation; British Journal of Educational Psychology; British Journal of Special Education; European Journal of Special Needs Education; International Journal of Disability Development and Education; International Journal of Inclusive Education; International Journal of Special Education; Journal of Disability Policy Studies; Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability; Journal of Intellectual Disability Research; Journal of Learning Disabilities; Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs;

Journal of Special Education; Journal of the International Association of Special Education; and others.

The scope of this review addresses in turn Down's syndrome, education options for children with Down's syndrome, benefits and problems of inclusion, the role of leadership in school change, the perspectives of school principals regarding the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream primary schools and the factors that affect such perspectives.

2.3.2. Children with Down's syndrome

2.3.2.1. Definition of children with Down's syndrome

The genetic disorder of Down's syndrome is due to an extra chromosome (Nadel 2003). Children with Down's syndrome have 47 chromosomes instead of 46 (Wishart, 2005; Evans-Martin, 2009), and this extra chromosome *"disrupts physical and mental development throughout childhood and into adult life"* (Wishart, 2005: p.83). Down's syndrome is one of the most widespread causes of learning difficulties, a term used to denote those with low mental ability (Laws et al., 2000; Yang et al., 2002; Roizen and Patterson, 2003) as it occurs in 1 in every 730 live births (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006). Down's syndrome remains the most easily identifiable learning disability (Laws et al., 2000; Yang et al., 2002; Roizen and Patterson, 2003).

However, the real causes of Down's syndrome remain unexplained, as a child with Down's syndrome can be born to any family, of any religion, race, age or social background (Bird and Buckley, 1994). Nonetheless, a number of studies have linked the birth of a child with Down's syndrome with the age of the mother, suggesting that the risk of giving birth to a child with Down's syndrome increases with age (Laws et al., 2000). Birth of children with Down's syndrome is infrequent among young mothers compared with women over 35 years old (Al-Khatteeb, 2008). It is generally held that the age of the father has no bearing on the occurrence of Down's syndrome in a child. The additional chromosome in most cases comes from the mother (Sadek, 2000), although in 5% of cases it comes from the father (Baroff and Olley, 1999).

Children with Down's syndrome have characteristics that distinguish them from others, such as distinctive facial features and short stature (French et al., 2000), distortions of hands, legs, fingers and toes, and a small oral cavity (Sherrill, 2004). In addition, such children are characterised by the magnitude of the tongue (Al-Habdan, 2001). Moreover, children with Down's syndrome have various problems such as difficulty in balancing (Sadek, 2000). They have considerable difficulty in motor performance compared with other children with learning difficulties (Alabri, 2003). Moreover, the incidence of obesity increases dramatically with Down's syndrome (Luke et al., 1994). This reduces the social acceptance of children with Down's syndrome by their peers, and limits their physical activities (Alabri, 2003). As the evidence above shows these children have significantly distinctive physical characteristics, which is arguably why Down's syndrome is the learning difficulty that is most easily identified at the birth of a child.

From the social point of view, children with Down's syndrome are distinguished from other children with learning difficulties by their sociability, which makes them more receptive to participating in society (Serafica, 1990). Significant advances have been made in the integration of such children into society. For example, most are in education, and many live semi-independently in the community. However, children with Down's syndrome generally dislike changes or modifications in their surroundings (Al-Habdan, 2001), due to their difficulties with time and space perception (Singhania, 2005).

Children with Down's syndrome tend to have common health problems such as defects of the digestive system (Rasmussen et al., 2008). In addition, heart disease affects between 40% and 50% of those with Down's syndrome (Block, 1991), they are vulnerable to acute infections, especially respiratory passage infections (Sherrill, 2004). Nevertheless, most children with Down's syndrome enjoy good health, and their life expectancy has increased from the teens to about 50 years (Yang et al., 2002). Sensory impairments are commonly experienced by children with Down's syndrome, including eye problems, in particular squint and rapid eye movement (Block, 1991). Hearing impairment is also prevalent among children with Down's syndrome (Jarrold et al., 1999), affecting 55% to 60% of children with Down's syndrome, because frequent

infections of the upper respiratory system affect the connection of high frequency sounds (Block, 1991). However, the degree of hearing impairment is generally light to moderate (Alabri, 2003). Other hearing problems are auditory/sensory disability, which refers to the inability to identify sounds or to distinguish between sounds (Jarrold et al., 1999). As a result of hearing loss, the language and speech development of children with Down's syndrome is affected (Almalq, 2004).

In this regard, Fowler (1995) reports that children with Down's syndrome frequently achieve no more than the linguistic level expected from three-year-old children, and sometimes not even this. Hence, such children have difficulty in expressing themselves and their speech is often difficult to understand. Jarrold et al. (1999) found that children with Down's syndrome have difficulty in constructing long sentences correctly, rendering their speech stilted and staccato-like and, therefore, may not be easily understood by their teachers or classmates, which leads to a negative view towards these children (Glaubman and Lifshitz, 2001; Kibria, 2005). There is also evidence to suggest that poor memory is linked to the language understanding of these children (Laws et al., 2000).

Children with Down's syndrome also have various problems stemming from their disability, among which are learning and concentration difficulties (Singhania, 2005). These physical, linguistic and cognitive problems limit their education and/or their motivation to participate in various activities (French et al., 2000).

Whilst it is known that the progress and development of children without Down's syndrome is inconsistent, such children are involved in a continuous process of learning life skills until adolescence. This continuous process can also be seen in children with Down's syndrome, but their growth rate is slower than other children's, as they reach every stage later and generally remain there for a longer period (Alabri, 2003). Hence, the gap in development and progress widens over time between children with Down's syndrome and their non-Down's syndrome peers (Alabri, 2003).

However, it is important to note that in spite of the similarities and common factors among children with Down's syndrome, every child has his/her own abilities and

experiences that distinguish him/her from other children, with and without Down's syndrome (Alabri, 2003).

2.3.2.2. Down's syndrome and the Concept of Disability

As mentioned previously, Down's syndrome is a chromosomal disorder which is the most common reason for learning difficulties in human beings (Laws et al., 2000; Yang et al., 2002; Roizen and Patterson, 2003). In this section, I will explore the special educational needs of children with Down's syndrome as discussed in the literature. A number of researchers have investigated the reading ability and memory of children with Down's syndrome. In the USA, Pueschel and Hopmann (1993) surveyed 154 parents of children with Down's syndrome, using a checklist related to the language skills of such children. A third of those with children in the age group 17–21 (N=31) stated that their children were able to read sentences and half of the group stated that their children could read books.

In addition, a study in Australia was carried out on 66 students with Down's syndrome whose ages ranged between 13 and 20 (Bochner and Pieterse, 1996). The parents of 86% of these students stated that their children could read, with 22% able to read short words and 26% able to read books written for adults. However, the authors in these studies did not determine the efficiency of the reading of the children with Down's syndrome in terms of the reading rate. A British study of children with Down's syndrome, whose ages ranged between 11 and 17, found that 16% were able to read, half could add numbers up to 15, one-third could subtract, 6% could multiply and 3% could divide (Buckley and Sacks, 1987).

Another British study included 41 people with Down's syndrome aged under 20. The result showed that five of them could read books and newspapers and 63% were able to identify numbers and count, while 23% could add two numbers (Carr, 1988). Based upon the above, it is clear that such children may have some strengths in academic skills, but they also have particular needs in academic skills compared to other children. This requires a special educational intervention for every child, which can be met by an individual educational plan.

Laws et al. (2000) state that differences among children with Down's syndrome are due to biological and environmental factors which consequently affect their academic development. However, Alabri (2003) argues that to attribute every need in a child with Down's syndrome to such factors is a clear reflection of the pessimistic view that stems from the medical view of disabilities. Such a view may lead to a failure to provide appropriate educational services, resulting in frustration (Aboela, 2008), and risk of behavioural problems (Buckley and Bird, 1998). However, *"all pupils are capable of learning and... it is the job of schools to promote and support them in this, whatever their individual needs may be"* (Sommefeldt, 2001: p.164).

Thus, as children with Down's syndrome have physical and learning difficulties, it is needed to include them under the umbrella of special educational needs. Al-Mousa (2008) adds that the term 'learning difficulties' in Saudi Arabia covers children who have limited learning, difficulties in performance and a limitation in the adoption of behaviour such as social skills. Based upon the above, the evidence suggests that Down's syndrome is associated with special educational needs, and, as such, requires concerted efforts to ensure the provision of education suitable for such children with an individual educational plan for each child.

2.3.2.3. Down's syndrome in the Wider Society

Society's attitudes towards special educational needs generally and children with Down's syndrome specifically are shaped by attitudes formed at home and at school. Wishart (2005) identifies the way in which members of the public have many opinions on the health, life expectancy, developmental, social and educational expectancy of children with Down's syndrome, despite never having met a child with Down's syndrome. Societal participation is regarded as an important element in the acceptance of such children. Parents have to assume an educational role within society if they wish their children with Down's syndrome to be accepted in it. Moreover, parents have to show positive attitudes towards children with Down's syndrome and disseminate accurate information in order to help to remove the negative attitudes arising because of the traditional and often inaccurate perception of such children (Almalq, 2004).

In the 1990s in Saudi Arabia, parents and other interested persons failed largely to alter communities' attitudes towards children with special educational needs (Al-Abduljabbar and Massud, 2002). Therefore, disabilities activists such as Ferguson (1987) challenged the perception that a disability was a personal tragedy for all concerned, and began to foster a more socially inclusive view of disability. For example, a problem of poor vision can be solved by providing suitable glasses or through providing subsidised books in large print. Similarly, poor hearing can be overcome by providing hearing aids such as headphones for children who suffer from this problem. Social participation is also important. Kasari et al. (1999) demonstrated that children with Down's syndrome improved their understanding in their social interactions with others. Serafica (1990) showed that the acquisition of suitable or unsuitable behaviours or the eradication of such behaviour is affected by peers' behaviour. Hence, there is a strong relation between the attainment of such children and participation in the wider society.

However, Wiener et al. (1990) discovered that children with special educational needs were classified as less popular and more exposed to rejection by their peers. Such negative attitudes may derive, as Al-Habdan (2001) reports, from the misperception of Down's syndrome as a disease and the attribution of profound levels of ignorance to such children. Another reason for these negative attitudes towards people with special needs in the community, in some societies, is the widespread view that people with special educational needs benefit from preferential treatment within the social welfare system as has been reported, for example, in Australia (Yazbeck et al., 2004). In addition, negative attitudes towards children with Down's syndrome stem from the fact that some of these children manifest undesirable behaviour, such as aggression (Alabri, 2003). This generates fear, as people feel that they cannot predict the reactions of these children in certain social situations (Alkalifa, 2002).

It is perhaps surprising that negative attitudes still exist, as literature and media have sought to combat discrimination and remove social barriers (Park et al., 2010). Wishart (2005) argues that while there may be more social acceptance of people with Down's syndrome, underlying beliefs and knowledge have not changed.

2.3.3. The Education of children with Down's syndrome

“Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, 1994: p.viii).

Whilst every child has a right to an education, there are many different ways in which this education has been provided. Firstly, I will discuss the provision of special schools.

2.3.3.1. Special Schools

“‘Special educational needs’ can be a barrier to the development of inclusive practice in schools” (Booth and Ainscow, 2002: p.5).

Special schools are often presented as a contrast to inclusion or integration; hence, it is necessary to discuss exclusion first before attempting to understand integration or inclusion. Among the aims of the special school is the provision of suitable education for children with special educational needs in order to improve their knowledge and skills. Despite this, special schools seem, in some respects, to exclude children with special educational needs from society. For instance, Jenkinson (1997) argued that *“for many children with disabilities, education had consisted of training programmes that had little to do with future participation in the mainstream community”* (p.25). Accordingly, students with disabilities were educated in specific educational schools on the rationale, underpinned by the medical model, that they had a deficit which needed to be managed in such schools.

As stated by Booth and Ainscow (2002), exclusion is the phenomenon that occurs when there are barriers standing between an individual and their full acceptance within education as well as barriers to their participation in learning activities. They list such cultural and social barriers as politics or language as well as material barriers, which can include the design of a building, a lack of funding, or inadequate facilities and services, all of which can lead to specific people or groups being discriminated against. Thus, it can also be said that exclusion runs almost parallel to a certain set of circumstances,

such as the economic, political, historical, cultural or social environment (Ballard, 2003). Integration or inclusion, necessitate that barriers are identified and then removed. Supporters of exclusion and discrimination versus groups and individuals frequently justify their position on the grounds that such groups and individuals are not “like us” (Booth and Ainscow, 1998), and so need special treatment. For example, in special schools, social skills for children with Down’s syndrome are enhanced, as are language skills; this is because of the strong concentration on speech therapy in these schools (Alabri, 2003). Moreover, mainstream schools have realised that inclusion makes them less attractive to many stakeholders, and consequently they attempt to find ways to control the influx of students with special educational needs (Timor and Burton, 2006).

In fact, many students with special educational needs and disabilities are not in mainstream schools (Al-Khatteeb, 2008). This may be because mainstream schools lack the capacity to meet the needs of children with disabilities and special educational needs. As such, Carlberg and Kavale (1980) argue, some children with disabilities and special educational needs perform better in special education compared to mainstream schools. Moreover, some parents of children with disabilities and special educational needs intentionally opt for special schools because they are afraid of negative reactions in mainstream schools’ attitudes. Alabri (2003) points out that some parents, whose children do not have special educational needs or disabilities, would object to their children learning alongside pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, because of negative beliefs and attitudes.

Therefore, from some perspectives it can be said that some students’ needs or fundamental rights are denied unless they join special school/classes. For example, Farrell (2001) argues that education is a way to achieve goals and special schools may achieve the goals for some students. Moreover, the parent’s right to choose is ignored if a decision to close a special school is taken (Farrell, 2001). The question of special schools remains controversial and the arguments often depend on how one defines students’ needs. Arguably special schools need to form part of the continuum of inclusive schools. If inclusion is defined geographically as access to the nearest school, then special schools will rarely be the most inclusive option, but if it is defined in terms

of the ability to access, participate in and benefit from a quality education, then special schools may be seen as more inclusive. However, the rationale underlying special schools is challenged by the recent shift from a medical to a social model.

2.3.3.2. Mainstream Schools

“Education for All in a School for All (disabled and non-disabled children learning together in regular schools: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together)” (Puri and Abraham, 2004: p.25).

However, education for all can be located in general schools under several forms, including integration and inclusion as will be explained in detail below:

2.3.3.2.1. Integration

“... diversity is assumed, welcomed and viewed as a rich resource rather than seen as a problem” (Booth et al., 2003: p.2).

The idea of integration was generated from anxiety about the effects on children with special educational needs of learning in special schools in isolation from their peers studying in the mainstream system. Stephens et al. (1988) define integration as:

“the process of educational decision-making and planning for students with a handicapping condition in the least restrictive environment. It is based on the philosophy of equal educational opportunity that is implemented through individual planning to promote appropriate learning, achievement, and social normalization” (p.12).

The above definition implies that the education of students with special educational needs in mainstream education is a requirement for a “least restrictive environment”, which takes into account the needs of these pupils. According to Hodkinson and Devarakonda (2009), the term “least restrictive environment” is widely used to denote children with special educational needs learning with their peers as far as possible, to avoid their exclusion, unless they cannot keep up with learning effectively in the classes

assigned for them inside the mainstream school. The Ministry of Education of a country is responsible for providing specialist teachers for children with special educational needs. The policies and legislation of some countries confirm this idea. For example, British legislation provides that children with special educational needs should be put in mainstream schools if the student can receive the learning that he/she requires, on the condition that it will not affect the learning of the other children (Mittler, 2000). It is noted from this legislation that it includes the condition of not affecting the other children's education, thus prioritising their rights over those of special educational needs in participation and learning.

It can be concluded from the literature reviewed above that there is widespread agreement among researchers that children with special educational needs have the right to join mainstream schools. The salient idea here is that access to mainstream schools will lead to improved academic results for children with special educational needs and also to greater social acceptance by their peers. This can be seen in schools when peers build friendships with children with special educational needs, which will consequently lead to their peers developing more understanding of their abilities, although such friendships can sometimes be difficult to achieve (Almalq, 2004). Moreover, the children with special educational needs imitate other children in the mainstream school, which is likely to have a positive impact on their academic achievements (Alkalifa, 2002). For example, students with speech difficulties can hear how their peers speak and this may lead to the development of their own speech by imitation (Jenkinson, 1997).

This concept of integration is totally removed from the concept advocated by many academics and practitioners, which is that the school adapts to the requirements of every child and not the opposite. Integration tends to be primarily a question of geography, whereas inclusion requires the school to change in a more fundamental way. For example, Jenkinson (1997) argues that generally, in spite of children with special educational needs benefitting socially from integration, it appears to be an indication of difference among students that some children with special educational needs study in a separate class to their peers. Jenkinson (1997) asserts that schools try to minimise disturbance in regular classes by putting children with special educational needs in

separate classes. There have been tentative attempts in some schools to modify integration, with children with special educational needs sharing a part of the school day with their peers and spending the remainder of the school day in their special classes to complete their school programme (Thomazet, 2009).

According to Zollers et al. (1999), in practice, this results in children with special educational needs receiving a poorer quality of education. Arguably, integration is linked with the medical model of disability, with difficulties seen as inherent in the children, who therefore need to be educated separately. Children with disabilities are therefore still excluded from the school classroom.

In contrast, Pijl et al. (1997) argue that integration should not be about where to put the child or the standards of behaviour required to enter education, but that schools should be provided with the necessities to meet the requirements of students joining them, without exception.

2.3.3.2.2. Inclusion

“... education, as we conceive it, is a good, and a specifically human good, to which all human beings are entitled. There exists, therefore, a clear obligation to educate the most severely disabled for no other reason than that they are human” (Warnock, 1978: p.6).

Integration has been criticised by a number of leading educators, who called for the complete involvement of children with special educational needs with their peers in mainstream schools and for them to be granted more equal opportunities so that they can benefit academically and socially (Eldar et al., 2010). In fact, inclusion is an international movement calling for the education of all children within regular classes without making distinctions among them (Ballard, 2003). At the Salamanca Conference in 1994 it was suggested that:

“...schools should accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, 1994: p.6).

However, schools should not be interested only in increasing the number of disabled students in the school while ignoring their participation in the educational process (Ainscow et al., 2006). The Salamanca statement called for the necessity of preparing mainstream schools to accept children with special educational needs in all countries in the world. Thus, it encourages countries to adopt the idea of inclusive education (Ainscow et al., 2006). This development needs to be part of a complete educational strategy in order to implement major reforms in mainstream schools (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, 1994). Therefore, inclusive education supports calls for children to attend the local school (Ainscow et al., 2006). Based on the above, it is proposed that the main purpose of inclusion is to educate children with special educational needs in mainstream schools, based upon the right of every child to study with his/her peers without differentiation or discrimination. Moreover, there is a consensus among academics that inclusion for special educational needs was one of the major movements in reforming schools in the 1990s (Slavin, 1997).

According to Lipsky and Gartner (1999), inclusive education has educational benefits for children with special educational needs and their peers, as this education enjoys a unified system that meets the requirements of a changeable society. Lipsky and Gartner (1999) also held inclusive education to be *“a system that provides quality education for all children”* (p.15). Overall, inclusive education, seeks justice and excellence for all students (Farrell, 2001). Further, Al-Habdan (2001) argued that the role of the parents in educating their children with special educational needs to remain a key feature in the development of inclusion, while Villa and Thousand (2005), noted the importance of inclusive schools and parents appreciating one another’s inputs and having mutual respect. This is in order to promote a sense of belonging, which is one of the important principles of inclusive school (Miller and Katz, 2002). For instance, in practice, successfully applying inclusive education for those with Down’s syndrome relies, inter alia, on the number of knowledge, skills, positivity, and experiences of parents, teachers and principals, which play a critical role in ensuring inclusive educational practices are successful (Norwich, 2013).

The issue of inclusion is a complex one. Some authors (for example, Wilson, 2000) have argued that inclusion for all children poses a threat to other children's rights as the provision of the requirements of a minority of pupils is at the expense of the majority. In addition, Farrell (2001) argued that empirical evidence must be relied on to develop education for all learners, including those with special educational needs. It seems that the transition to inclusive education for children with learning difficulties was slower than for other disabled children with sensory or physical disabilities (Thomson et al., 1990). However, another study suggests that the transition to secondary school is the point at which the inclusion of children with special educational needs in school breaks down (Jenkins et al., 1994).

Hence, it can be said that welcoming and supporting every child is the distinguishing and main characteristic of the inclusive school (Knight, 1999). The main component of inclusive education is the respect of the teacher for the children and their families. This means that graduates who join the teaching profession need to be aware that their classes should be conducted with respect, taking into account social justice issues (Ballard, 2003). The definition of inclusion in the UK by the DfEE focuses on the social side of inclusion in terms of the involvement of all students in the school curriculum and the social life in the mainstream school, with the aim of extending this beyond their leaving school (Department for Education and Employment, DfEE, 1998). The question of how to define inclusive education has been widely debated amongst scholars, but it is generally agreed that inclusive education has both social and educational benefits for students. Inclusive education was defined by Stainback and Stainback (1990) thus: “... *everyone belongs, is accepted, supports, and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met*” (p.3).

A point of disagreement is the question of who the concept of ‘inclusive education’ primarily applies to. For example, Booth and Ainscow (1998) commenting on the tendency of some authors to relate inclusion to Special Educational Needs, stated that “*some people continue to think of ‘inclusive education’ as a new name for ‘special education’ and limit their concern to students who are categorised as having ‘special*

educational needs' because they are identified as low in attainment, deviant in behaviour or as disabled" (p.3). Educators have also suggested the concept of an inclusive school as including those educational systems that are offered for children with special educational needs or their peers, for their development academically and socially (Laws et al., 2000).

In fact, Kibria (2005) defines inclusion as *"the policy of placing children with disabilities in general education classrooms for instruction, with appropriate supports to meet their educational needs"* (p.43). Kibria's (2005) article clearly focuses on inclusion for children with disabilities, while ignoring other excluded children, such as children living in poor countries and even those from nomadic families, and thus the definition is limited in its scope.

However, *"inclusion should go even further, and schools should engage all families and the community as well as all children, seeking effective intergenerational learning across the lifespan, which might occur inside schools or outside or through a combination of these"* (Topping and Maloney, 2005: p.5). In that respect Booth et al. (2006) argue that the term 'inclusion' is:

as "concerned with the participation of practitioners as with the involvement of children and young people. Participation implies playing, learning, and working in collaboration with others. It involves making choices about, and having a say in, what we do. More deeply, it is about being recognised, accepted and valued for ourselves" (p.3).

This definition takes a broad view of the principle of inclusion, which is not confined to particular groups or activities, but is an attitude of valuing diversity. Accordingly, educators' attention has been diverted from providing special educational requirements for special categories to promoting the concept of education for all, so that all children benefit from education (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010).

Finally, Farrell (2001) suggests that inclusion has become more acceptable as the idea that everybody has equal access to education is becoming more mainstream. A number

of studies have focused on an inclusive direction in the development of practices in the classroom (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). Other researchers have focused on the development of schools (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). Ainscow et al. (2006) and others have focused on teacher development. In this regard, Ainscow et al. (2006) indicate that change to inclusion takes time because it necessitates significant changes in all countries.

2.3.3.2.3. The Differences between Integration and Inclusion

“In integration, the child must make adjustments to the requirements of the school but, in inclusion it is the school that must make adjustments to accommodate or include the child” (Mushoriwa, 2001: p.142).

Any definition of inclusion needs clarification and a distinction must be made between it and integration, as integration has been used widely as a synonym for inclusion (Mittler, 2000). Indeed, some literature claims that the two terms are similar and the philosophy of the integration concept comes close to the concept of inclusion (Pijl et al., 1997).

Some educators, when comparing the concepts of integration and inclusion, highlight the position of special educational needs in their definitions. For example, Jenkinson (1997) and Thomazet (2009) both maintain that in integrated school children with special educational needs attend a special class for part of the day, while for the rest of the day they are with their peers in the regular class, whereas in an inclusive school, children with special educational needs are with their peers in the regular classes all day. In addition, some authors differentiate between the concepts of integration and inclusion in terms of practice; for example, Vislie (2003) states that the concept of integration refers to the rights of children with special educational needs to study in the local school, while inclusion is a broad term, as inclusive schools take into consideration the requirements of all children, which consequently leads to changing curricula in order to provide a service for all children.

Thus, inclusive schools are meant to be effective and suitable for all children without exception. Loreman et al. (2005) distinguish between integration and inclusion by stating that in an integrated school, the children with special educational needs come to

all classes attached to the school and the schools help them to achieve harmony with the school environment, while in an inclusive school, pupils are part and parcel of the school system from the beginning.

Phadraig (2007) compares integration and inclusion by stating that pupils in an integrated school environment try to follow the school curriculum as far as possible, while in the inclusive school environment the curriculum, learning method and the school environment itself are flexible in order to accommodate all children. Mittler (2000) confirms this idea, asserting that the difference between integration and inclusion lies in the school curricula, which extends to include evaluation and teaching methods, such as cooperative learning method that can apply to teach students with disabilities (Schmidt and Harriman, 1998). Hence, all children are welcome in these schools. In the case of integration, it is not necessary that schools make changes to accommodate diversity among children, as those children study in classes specifically for them within the school. This is confirmed by Sommefeldt (2001: p.157) – in the past integrated students had to *“fit the dominant mould”*, and *“prove their suitability for normal schooling, rather than schools having to adapt to meet their needs”*. Ainscow et al. (2006) objected to the additional arrangements involved in integration and held that inclusive education involves the need to restructure the school to fit the needs of all students. Researchers agree that *“inclusion requires a wide array of school-wide modifications to succeed”* (Zollers et al., 1999: p.162).

Generally, researchers agree that the inclusive school has been exposed to change and development (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). One positive aspect of inclusion is that support comes from the entire school community and this is beneficial for all children without exception, not only children with special educational needs. Udvari-Solner and Thousand (1995: p.147) propose that: *“inclusive education is seen as a process of operating a classroom or school as a supportive community. Thus, it is different from integration and mainstreaming which focus upon how to help a particular category of students ... [to] fit into the mainstream”*. Villa and Thousand (2005) believe that heterogeneity among the children in school is beneficial and meets the unique requirements for each child.

In comparing these various approaches to inclusion and integration, it is important to remember that inclusion is defined differently within each country, and sometimes differences in definition even exist within countries. Therefore, the process of reaching scholarly agreement is complex (Hodkinson and Devarakonda, 2009). In addition, the question of which approach is suitable for a particular child is complex. For any child, educators ought to look at their individual needs before making a plan for their education, and there might well be some children whose needs would be best served in an integrated rather than fully 'inclusive' setting. Arguably, it is preferable that different educational choices exist on a continuum, with the focus being on the needs and wishes of the child and their family. For example, Down's syndrome is not very different from other special educational needs, so in some cases inclusion will be the best option for a child with Down's syndrome, whereas in other cases, integration or special schools may be more suitable.

Based on the evidence above, it is proposed that there are several differences between integration and inclusion. Integration calls for overcoming the problem of separating students from society, and, therefore, it encourages pupils to study in the local district school but be put in special classes. In contrast, inclusion upholds the right of all pupils to join the local school in the same way as their peers without discrimination, to establish the principle of justice. This involves the provision of requirements for success, such as modifying teaching methods, curricula, evaluation and so forth so that an equal service is provided to all children. Finally, children's attendance at a mainstream school is the key to their inclusion in the wide society. This viewpoint surrounding inclusive education rests on the social model, which is centred on the perspective that both society and school need to eradicate all limitations in the educational and societal domain that could result in special needs students' isolation (Villa and Thousand, 2005; Oliver, 2009).

2.3.3.3. Mainstream Schools vs. Special Schools

Inclusive education is seen to have stemmed from discontent with more conventional conceptualisation of special education, in addition to the restrictions of the medical model. Lipsky and Gartner (1998) argue that inclusive education is not a reform of

special education but that there is the need to restructure the general education system. They suggest that the idea of inclusion “*goes beyond returning students who have been in separate placement to the general education classroom*” (p.78).

The right of children with learning difficulties to inclusive education has been a controversial subject for some time (Slee, 1996). There are those who call for all children to study in mainstream schools (Guralnick and Groom, 1988; Falvey, 1995). Briggs (2004) notes that “*when all pupils are included and respected in groups within lessons, the achievement of all improves. Inclusion is not about educating pupils with learning difficulties at the expense of others. It is about making schools more effective and responsive for all*” (p.35). Moreover, the development of inclusive education leads to the adoption of principles of difference and diversity for all children, whatever their requirements.

According to Ainscow et al. (2006), one of the aims of inclusive education is to end social exclusion. Pijl et al. (1997) suggest that children with special educational needs should learn side-by-side with their peers in mainstream schools. As a result, the separate systems will disappear and will be replaced by one system that serves all pupils. Many studies have shown positive attitudes towards inclusive education related to children with learning difficulties (Kasari et al., 1999).

However, other scholars argue that inclusive education consists of the right of children and parents to participate in all environments, not just special schools (Purdue et al., 2009). Ainscow et al. (2006) suggest that, as all children are special, it must help schools to find ways to help the individual needs of all students.

Conversely, Frederickson and Cline (2009) argued that children’s individual needs, which are considered to be a priority, cannot be provided in an ordinary school. This opinion stems from the medical view of disabilities, which perceives disabled children as dependent on the school (Almalq, 2004). Moreover, some criticise inclusive education on the grounds that it is only a “*re-articulation of special education*” (Slee, 1996: p.21). It is also argued that parents’ opinions and wishes for their children’s education need to be considered carefully, as the insistence that says that one type of

education is suitable for all is not in the interests of children or their families (Borthwick-Duffy et al., 1996).

Some other studies found that additional demands result from the participation of children with special educational needs in an inclusive school and this plays an important part in the school's inclusion policy (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2004). However, Rouse (2003) states that "*the aims of education are the same for all children, although the means may be different, as might the extent to which the aims are achieved*" (p.87). Moreover, Sallis (2002) argues that the inclusive trend in education is a profound, essential change that cannot be ignored.

2.3.3.4. Similar or Different Education for students with Down's syndrome

This section centres on whether different forms of education are necessary when working with those with Down's syndrome. With regard to children with Down's syndrome, there are a number of specific societal barriers needing to be eradicated when considering mainstreaming. Barton and Armstrong (2008), who advocate the social model of disability, argue that governmental entities need to direct efforts towards eradicating all types of exclusionary practice surrounding young people and children. Governments need to take the leap because of the prevalence of negative attitudes in society. For example, Wishart (2005) reports in an Australian study, that only 20% of adults believed that mainstream classes should accommodate students with Down's syndrome, with a number of teachers also holding such views.

Decisions on educational need are influenced by health and developmental considerations. Students with Down's syndrome used to have only a very short lifespan, and commonly experienced heart disease or infections. However, medical advances now mean that such individuals usually can enjoy a healthy and happy childhood (Wishart, 2005). Learning difficulties can be severe to mild, but also can be profound and overpowering if there is the presence of other disabling conditions (Wishart, 2005). Accordingly, achieving early academic milestones can be problematic, with many children not being able to develop basic mathematical and literacy skills learnt by other children. Moreover, working memory is not usually strong (Jarrold et al., 1999).

As discussed earlier, learners with Down's syndrome are known to have strengths in visual learning and learning from others, but usually suffer weaknesses in auditory learning, speech and language development and concentration span. For example, language development is commonly hampered, with many parents opting to use sign language in an effort to bridge the gap between understanding and production (Alabri, 2003). Lack of attention to lessening the gap between these children and other students causes a number of academic and social issues, especially inclusion in secondary level education (Wishart, 2005).

Those with Down's syndrome conventionally have been provided with education through enrolment in special schools or otherwise in small classrooms, meaning the majority of studies completed in this field have been with staff with in-depth training and experience of working with such groups, albeit across a relatively limited curriculum. Accordingly, it is not feasible to generalise findings to mainstream classrooms and the wider curriculum. Wishart (2005) stated that, *"We have to recognize that meeting the additional needs of a child with Down's syndrome in a large mainstream classroom while continuing to meet the diverse needs of all of the other children is a challenge that many teachers may not relish"* (p.88). A number of teachers, despite supporting the foundations and values underpinning inclusion might not show enthusiasm concerning its educational value and thus might show a lack of inclination to implement this in their own professional practice.

As highlighted previously, there is a lack of educational research considering children with Down's syndrome in particular (Wishart, 2005). Moreover, a number of educational professionals reject a specific focus on those with Down's syndrome as it echoes past habits of labelling and assigning blame to the child. It may be to some extent surprising that special educators sometimes are seen to demonstrate the strongest resistance to any aetiology-centred method about teaching, reflecting concerns of returning to a less accepted medical model of learning disabilities (Dykens et al., 2002). All of this suggests that, in order for schools to be inclusive, there is a need for them to make changes concerning the past ideas of a medical model of disabilities, which

considers disability a problem and places emphasis on differences. Accordingly, a shift is needed to a social model of disability, which results in greater inclusion.

2.3.4. Benefits and Problems of Inclusion

2.3.4.1. Benefits and Problems for children with Down's syndrome

“One of the benefits of inclusion is that it focuses on individual learning styles and what assistance each child needs to succeed in school. This is helpful for all children — typically developing children, children with learning disabilities, and children with Down's syndrome” (Kumin, 2001: p.8).

Other children are considered an important component in successful inclusion, as children with special educational needs do not learn everything from their teachers in school but also learn continuously from their peers, not only inside the class but also outside it (Batu, 2010). For example, according to The Consultative Group for Down's syndrome (2004), one of the reasons that made the Saudi Ministry of Education begin to teach children with special educational needs in mainstream schools is that the environment of such schools is better for such children's learning, as they can gain both information and skills and can also adopt active behaviour through their interactions with their peers.

Many studies have shown that there is an improvement in the academic achievement of children with Down's syndrome when they are placed in a mainstream school. For example, in a study that was carried out in the USA, parents of children with Down's syndrome stated when interviewed that their children had achieved effective development in many skills such as social inclusion, self-respect, independence in performing daily tasks, and academic success because of inclusion (Wolpert, 2001). Wishart (2005) also observed that children with Down's syndrome who learn in inclusive schools tend to have a higher academic achievement in reading, writing and maths. They also have good social skills, show improvement in self-help skills and have a better linguistic outcome than their peers in special schools (Bird and Buckley, 1994; Wishart, 2005).

Hence, inclusion programmes have been shown to be effective in increasing the academic achievement of children with Down's syndrome whose IQ scores are in the upper range of learning difficulties, as well as increasing their social participation. Thus, such programmes have helped in providing strong psychological resources for families to include their children in other activities in the wider society (Falvey, 1995). This is borne out by Hughes (2006: p.2), who states that *"full inclusion in the curriculum leads to much better literacy and numeracy skills, and general knowledge. The level of supported literacy experience across the curriculum also provides important support for spoken language development"*. In addition, Bird and Buckley (1994) discussed the quality of education for children with Down's syndrome in mainstream schools and the advantages in developing their education that resulted from this.

Educating children with Down's syndrome in mainstream schools assists the close interaction between such children and their peers and this is believed to have an active effect on the quality of life for individuals with Down's syndrome in the long term (Scheepstra et al., 1999). Forlin (2004) considers that *"educational inclusion results in improved psychological, social and cognitive outcomes for students both with and without disabilities"* (p.186). Moreover, a large number of children with Down's syndrome succeed well in mainstream schools. It has also been observed that a number of them are accepted by their peers (Sadek, 2000).

In addition, Gilmore et al. (2003) explored parents' attitudes towards inclusion for their sons/daughters with Down's syndrome in regular classes and found that the parents perceived many advantages for such children and their peers in terms of knowledge, as well as at the social and emotional levels. Other researchers have shown positive results for inclusion programmes in terms of the development of children with Down's syndrome. Evidence demonstrates that children with Down's syndrome who learn in regular classes succeed in improving their communication skills (Guralnick and Groom, 1988). Buckley et al. (2006) confirm these findings, suggesting that it is possible to improve the ability to communicate and the social skills of children with Down's syndrome through their participation in regular classes.

However, others argue that regular mainstream schools are not a suitable option for children with special educational needs. For instance, Rouse (2003) asserts that teachers have fears about inclusion as they feel that they do not have the necessary skills or suitable training to meet the educational requirements of such children. Hornby (2010) expresses his fears that some special needs pupils find themselves in an inappropriate environment in mainstream schools, as their requirements will not be met consistently. The author adds that the many behavioural problems of children with special educational needs leads to their exclusion and consequently they miss out on education. In addition, it has been found that children with learning difficulties or Down's syndrome are exposed to social isolation in simple interaction with their peers (Scheepstra et al., 1999).

In addition, Fewell and Oelwein (1990), in a study carried out in the USA, explored the relationship between the time spent by pupils with Down's syndrome in mainstream schools or special schools and the benefits gained, and found that the linguistic expression of those in the special schools was more developed. Such development is attributed to the high ratio of teachers to pupils in special schools, which leads to a direct linguistic focus on each pupil in such schools.

With age, the complexity of social situations increases for those who have Down's syndrome. Therefore, it has been found that the best situation in terms of social relations for these children is during the pre-school period (Dykens et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2014).

2.3.4.2. Benefits and Problems for Families of children with Down's syndrome

Parents' opinions about inclusive education for children with Down's syndrome vary. For example, many are concerned that their children will be exposed to bullying from their peers in a mainstream school. This worry regarding their children's rejection by their peers often leads to the parents' wish that their children go to a special school (Bennett et al., 1998). Moreover, some parents fear that their children will become isolated in a mainstream school, whereas other parents of children with Down's syndrome expect that having their children in an inclusive school will lead to

friendships, leading in turn to greater social efficacy for their children (Sale and Carey, 1995).

Inclusion for all children with Down's syndrome is a right provided for by legislation, and parents should be aware of their rights and duties (Batu, 2010). It is vital for parents of children with Down's syndrome to be educated about the rights and choices they and their children have and can make, and the benefits of inclusive schooling (Al-Habdan, 2001). Al-Habdan (2001) explains that in a Saudi context, there is no dialogue between local authorities and parents: instead of offering choice for parents, local authorities make the decision of whether to send a child to a mainstream or special school. School principals should invite experts to their school to provide information about inclusion, special education and other issues relevant to all parents (Batu, 2010). Without such understanding, many parents prematurely remove their children from mainstream schools, even when it is not in the best interests of their child (Batu, 2010).

2.3.4.3. Benefits and Problems for children without Down's syndrome

There is little evidence of the effect on other children of inclusive schools (Ainscow et al., 2006). Some studies have shown that the inclusion of children with special educational needs has a positive impact on other children by the provision of teachers in the mainstream school who have abilities to facilitate the learning process for all the students (Sadek, 2000). Moreover, Eldar et al. (2010) propose that inclusion plays an important role in increasing academic achievement for all and encouraging social relations between children with special educational needs and other children. Furthermore, researcher in the field suggest that inclusion enables social and educational development amongst all learners—with and without disabilities (Ali et al., 2006).

Other children also benefit from inclusion. Sirlopu et al. (2008) found that other pupils in inclusive schools showed less fear and better skills in communicating with their Down's syndrome peers. MacArthur et al. (2005) suggest that inclusion programmes serve as a support for the development of personal and moral principles for pupils in mainstream schools, which leads to a greater appreciation of the diversity among human beings.

However, Pace et al. (2010) found from the responses of young people who participated in a survey that they were not prepared to work with children with Down's syndrome on class projects, the reason being that people with Down's syndrome in the workplace increase the chance of accidents. This response shows that inclusion of people with Down's syndrome does not necessarily indicate a change in understanding or beliefs. Inclusion is often much desired by some pupils, parents and teachers, but other pupils, parents and teachers often have deep resistance to the idea of inclusive education. Implementing inclusive education is certainly a complex process.

2.3.4.4. Benefits and Problems for the Community

Corbett's (1997) opinion on inclusion in schools is that *"this paves the way for a long-lasting social inclusion which determines quality of life and social status"* (p.60). Further, inclusion programmes are described as special social environments in which both children with special educational needs and their peers communicate with each other. Hence, in schools in which there is inclusion, relations and communications are supported among groups to overcome any resistance and build constructive relations between the children with special educational needs and their peers (Maras and Brown, 2000). This is confirmed by Carrington and Robinson's (2006) statement that *"inclusive education can also promote and direct social inclusion in society"* (p.329). Thus, the ultimate goal of social inclusion in the school is helping to encourage inclusion in the activities of the wider society and prevent exclusion (Lloyd, 2008).

Frederickson and Cline (2009) argue that among the advantages of inclusion is that children in inclusive environments are able to get to know each other as individuals, which encourages their trust and self-respect. Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007) also suggest that another benefit of inclusion is that, by reducing social exclusion it enhances social inclusion, thus making children with special educational needs learn and benefit from mixing with other children. With such interaction, fear can be overcome for both disabled and non-disabled individuals (Al-Khatteeb, 2008). Another consideration is the common belief that children with Down's syndrome have a strong ability to express their feelings, which consequently affects their personal relations, as children are often unreserved in expressing their positive or negative feelings about others. This belief

results from the relation of the emotional disability to the learning difficulties of such children (Sirlopu et al., 2008). However, it has been shown that educating children with special educational needs in mainstream schools has led to some children with Down's syndrome gaining popularity and friendships like other children (Perlmutter et al., 1983).

2.3.4.5. Benefits and Problems for School Staff

Education provides opportunities for teachers to accept human diversity in its various forms, such as diversity in culture, race, gender and disability. If the local authorities wish to encourage the next generation to accept diversity, perhaps the best way of doing this for children with special educational needs is complete participation of all children in the class (Aboela, 2008). Thus, children with special educational needs in regular classes, parents, neighbours or the peers of children with special educational needs will benefit from inclusion. In other words, inclusion will provide advantages for the whole school and not only for the children with special educational needs (Stainback and Stainback 1990).

For example, The Consultative Group for Down's syndrome (2004) in Saudi Arabia maintains that educating children with special educational needs in mainstream schools improves the social interaction and also between them and all staff in the school. As a result, teachers have an opportunity to work with change and adapt to it. Inclusion of children with special educational needs represents a change for teachers (Al-Abduljabbar and Massud, 2002). Hence, experience and practice is useful for all participants in the process related to inclusion. However, arguably it will take more than simply changes in individual teachers to promote inclusion – the organization of schools must be addressed (Pijl and Frissen, 2009).

In special educational schools, teachers use small groups and individual teaching, which obstructs pupils social skills by limiting interaction with peers in class (Al-Khatteeb, 2008). Nevertheless, it is possible that children can learn to work on a one-to-one and small group basis, thus gaining the skills to participate in the whole class. In contrast, it has been suggested that mainstream schools are not the most appropriate or the best option for some pupils with special educational needs. MacBride (2007: p.8) argues that:

“placing every pupil or student in a mainstream setting ... leads to stress on the teachers and lecturers involved, to damage to the education of other pupils or students, and to failure to meet the needs of the pupils or students involved”. Nevertheless, it is arguably not so much the number of students, but the skills and confidence of teachers that impacts on inclusion. Pijl and Frissen (2009) argues that training teachers in problem-solving skills would address the issues raised by large numbers of pupils with special education needs.

2.3.5. Leadership and School Change

“Change, uncertainty, openness are the order of the day”
(Morrison, 1998: p.5).

There is no one single definition of leadership (Male, 2006). However, visionary leadership is one of the key considerations in the field of successful inclusion (Lipsky and Gartner, 1998), as well as the ambition to motivate and drive teachers to ensure all learners are provided with education (King, 2011). Leaders in education are well positioned to challenge the more conventional methods of teaching, and accordingly inspire a related vision of what the school could be and should be, ensuring staff are empowered through the application of a cooperative team work approach (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010).

In the view of King (2011), leadership has the potential to significantly affect teaching staff in their professional learning and the adoption of new practices. This proposal suggests that principals, as leaders, need to encourage and support their staff in implementing behavioural change through a democratic process. School leaders, therefore, need to recognise and come to understand the value of inclusion, in order to keep the school focused towards achieving inclusive goals. This further suggests that school system reconstruction will require the school to work as a team, showing dedication to the application of an inclusive approach (Hattie, 2005). As Lindqvist and Nilholm (2013) maintain, the views of school leaders in regard to inclusion are critical as they have an effect on the way in which schools are organised in terms of fulfilling varying needs.

In consideration of the above, inclusive leadership could be described as leadership that can be changed and amended owing to the fact that inclusion is recognised as a change application method. Nonetheless, before implementing this change, there is a need for leaders to develop a sound perspective on inclusion (Beare et al., 1989), especially in regard to accepting that, regardless of factors such as gender, disability, race and socio-economic status, all children should be afforded quality education. This involves a significant shift in the value system, which needs to be accommodated by the inclusion policy of the school, as well as the school's methods, in order to ensure sustainability (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). From a more practical perspective, the point is made by Mendez-Morse (1991) that a principal with the ability to implement change concerning special educational needs commonly participates in typical school activities, including feedback procedures, identifying resources and providing support.

It is suggested by Zollers et al. (1999) that inclusive leadership is based on a democratic approach, as well as the capacity to serve as a role model ensure to value-driven leadership and a broad community vision. For example, Stanovich and Jordan (1998) argue that successful inclusion necessitates attention to the school climate and culture, as established by the principal. In a comparable vein, Rouse (2003) and Timor and Burton (2006) view the principal as one of the most influential factors in inclusion, with regard to school vision. In line with these views, principals should prioritise actively improving the climate and vision, and supporting staff, all of which are pivotal to inclusion. Studies highlight that the knowledge and of principals in the special education domain, one of the important factors that determine the readiness of principals for leadership (Male and Male, 2001), also have key influence on inclusive practices (Dessent, 1987). This is recognised as being in two key areas: implementing structures for both mainstream and special education teachers, such as by making changes to class sizes; and establishing a supportive environment aimed at improving involvement and decreasing resistance, whilst also setting high expectations (Rouse, 2003).

School principals have to intensify their efforts through leadership, professionalism and their responsibilities as chief executives in order for special educational needs provision to be reformed (Law, 1999). As Dyal et al. (1996) suggest, part of a school principal's

vision of inclusion is to admit that inclusion requires a modification in mainstream and special educational needs provision. Arguably, the leaders of any inclusion programme need to have certain characteristics, one of which is a vision for special educational needs (Alqahtani, 2003). Moreover, the leaders should encourage the value of relationships between school personnel (Male and Male, 2001). Furthermore, they should have an inspiring and helpful personality (Kouzes and Posner, 2007), since they need to take responsibility for collaborating and consulting with external agencies, internally allocating resources and shaping the attitudes of staff (Alsimbel et al., 2006). In addition, they can mentor the new principals in special schools (Male and Male, 2001).

Successful inclusion is also recognised as linked with the perspectives and attitudes held by the principal in regard to inclusion (Schmidt and Venet, 2012). For example, principals can allow teachers to “*create collaborative learning cultures*” (King, 2011: p.152), which could improve the performance of learners. Leaders have the responsibility of “*creating organisational capacity for change*” through ensuring adequate time for collaboration, as highlighted by (King, 2011: p.152). In contrast, however, negative perspectives can hinder inclusion, and even cause it to fail (Hattie, 2005), as such attitudes are linked with inadequate resources, knowledge, planning, sound practices and experiences with students with special educational needs (Schmidt and Venet, 2012). Nonetheless, negative viewpoints can be minimised if school leaders recognise the value of learning and garnering knowledge to facilitate building inclusive schools, as well as in helping other teachers to create inclusive learning environments (Vaughn and Schumm, 1995; Schmidt and Venet, 2012). This present qualitative research could facilitate insight and understanding to enable school leaders in Saudi Arabia to adopt positive perspectives and accordingly communicate a philosophy that reflects inclusive practices and beliefs. In the following section research evidence on principals’ viewpoints regarding inclusion will be discussed.

2.3.6. Perspectives of School Principals towards Inclusion

As inclusion becomes more important around the world, school leaders have a new role to play in promoting inclusion. In regard to the educational structure, school principals

tend to occupy a middle-rung position, positioned between teaching staff and the local authority (Smith et al., 2014). As a result of the political significance of their roles, both in society and in schools, gaining insight into their views can allow a greater understanding of inclusion as opposed to merely directing attention to the lower and upper levels of the hierarchical structure in the educational context, allowing us to understand organizations from the perspectives of these well-placed individuals. Nevertheless, studies in the education domain commonly place too much emphasis on those with less power, as highlighted by Walford (2005) and Foreman (2011); therefore, it is essential to study those with power, i.e. school principals.

The suggestion has been made that the personal education ideology of a principal, specifically in regard to educational needs delivery, is especially influential in regard to decision making surrounding the positioning and resourcing of the special educational needs department (Bowe et al., 1992).

In order to achieve success in inclusion, it is noted that the school administration, as a priority, need to adopt a positive outlook and show dedication to inclusion (Almalq, 2004). Study have emphasised that the views of school principals are fundamental in regard to the application of inclusive education (Horrocks et al., 2008). Principals play a key role in encouraging inclusive and special education in the school environment which is important in the effort to apply inclusion to school practices for students with special educational needs. Indeed, research in this field suggests that, amongst school staff, principals are regarded as having the most positive outlook regarding the inclusion of those with special educational needs (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Avissar et al., 2003). The positive perspective of school principals regarding inclusion has also been attributed to the fact that they are usually far from the daily teaching in the classroom (Al-Abduljabbar and Massud, 2002). Farrell (2001) points out that *“all staff will need to be committed to inclusion and to feel that they have a responsibility to make it work”* (p.8).

Furthermore, Center et al. (1991) found a positive relation between school principals' attitudes and those of school staff towards inclusion and the success of inclusion. Therefore, if the management of a school has an accepting attitude to the inclusion of

children with special educational needs, this is likely to have a positive influence on the teachers, the general education pupils and pupils' parents (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2004). For example, the results of a study carried out in the USA show that there is a change in the attitudes found in mainstream schools according to the degree of the enlightenment of its management (Elhoweris and Alsheikh, 2006). As Ainscow and Sandill (2010) argue, such a change in attitudes is essential to inclusive practice:

"Inclusive practice is not, in the main, about adopting new technologies of the sort described in much of the existing literature.... rather it involves social learning processes within a given workplace that influence people's actions and indeed the thinking that informs these actions" (p.403).

Research also emphasises that ongoing motivation and encouragement from principals is fundamental to achieving positive outlooks to inclusion among staff (Janney et al., 1995; Avissar et al., 2003). As Sommefeldt (2001) asserts, school principals should provide all school employees with moral guidance regarding inclusion in their school. Positive attitudes on the part of school management towards inclusion for children with special educational needs lead to the working environment of the teacher becoming easier than before, because of the support that the teachers obtain from the principal (Batu, 2010).

Pertinent literature in this field emphasises a lack of consensus in regard to the viewpoints of principals regarding inclusion in different cultures. For example in USA, Praisner (2003) conducted a large survey with 408 elementary principals to explore their attitudes towards inclusion. It was found that there were uncertain attitudes among principals towards inclusion with a tendency towards positive attitudes. Moreover, it found principals who have positive attitudes towards inclusion are more supportive of placement of students with disabilities in inclusive settings. In addition, Brotherson et al. (2001) in the USA, adopted a mixed methods design using focus group and a survey with 85 elementary principals. In general, they indicated that most principals supported implementing inclusion for students with disabilities. However, principals saw the difficulties in implementing it in practice, due to a lack of funding, lack of time for planning for inclusion, and inappropriate school buildings. Similarity, Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) surveyed 65 elementary, junior high schools and high schools'

principals to reveal their attitudes and knowledge towards inclusion. They found that principals felt that inclusion would not work with all students with disabilities. Moreover, principals felt that teachers were not ready for inclusion. More specifically, Horrocks et al. (2008) surveyed a large sample of 571 principals to explore their attitudes towards inclusion of students with Autism. They found that principals had positive attitudes towards inclusion students with autism. One of the interesting findings was that principals who had more experience had less support for inclusion.

Furthermore, in Hong Kong, one of the countries in Far East, Sharma and Chow (2008) found that principals had negative attitudes towards inclusion. They viewed to the negative attitudes of principals in Hong Kong as a response to the lack of legislation that supports inclusion. Moreover, they found a positive relationship between principals that support inclusion and having a member of family or close friend with disabilities. Furthermore, they found that there is a positive relationship between principals who support inclusion and a low number of students in school. Moreover, in developed countries, Bailey and du Plessis (1997) in Australia explored principals' attitudes towards inclusion based on mix methods design using interview (3 principals) which enabled them to develop a questionnaire and send it to 200 principals. The findings of this exploration of attitudes were divided into two levels, a philosophical and practical level. The philosophical level showed that principals supported inclusion and even principals who had negative attitudes were aware of the benefits of inclusion for students with disabilities and how implementing inclusion would increase social justice. However, the practical level showed a different view from the philosophical level, as some of the principals saw that inclusion would reflect negatively on students with and without disabilities, as implementing inclusion would disrupt the classes and placements and that mainstream classrooms would not be an appropriate place for students with disabilities.

In Israel, there are two studies investigating principals' attitudes towards inclusion. Avissar et al. (2003) used questionnaires to investigate 110 principal attitudes towards inclusion. They found that the severity of disabilities influenced principals' attitudes towards inclusion. Principals had positive attitudes towards inclusion of children with

mild disabilities and less support for inclusion of those with more severe disabilities. Furthermore, Timor and Burton (2006) compared the attitudes of principals, teachers, and counsellors towards inclusion of students with learning disabilities using questionnaires and interview. They found that principals had less support for inclusion compared to teachers and counsellors. However, in interviews, principals showed support for inclusion. One limitation of their findings regarding principals' attitudes is that the number of principals participating in the study was small (5 principals taking part in the questionnaires and interviews).

Moreover, there is a clear gap in the literature regarding the views of principals towards inclusion, especially with regard to children with Down's syndrome in certain contexts, such as Africa and Asia. Without adequate literature from different countries, international comparisons are problematic, thus making it more difficult to gather a clear understanding of the views of principals on inclusion adoption.

In consideration of these facts, examining the views of Saudi principals concerning inclusion is fundamental and pressing. This study investigated, in a Saudi context, the views of primary school principals in regard to the inclusion of learners with Down's syndrome for a number of different reasons, including the international emphasis on the attitudes and international perspectives of principals in regard to inclusion; the dearth of research in the field of the inclusion of learners with Down's syndrome in the Saudi context.

2.3.7. Factors Influencing Perspectives towards Inclusion

The positive attitudes of teachers are a fundamental element of the success of inclusion (Buckley and Bird, 1998). However, studies have revealed negative attitudes towards children with special educational needs (see, for example, Heinemann, 1990) and others have shown negative attitudes towards the inclusion of children with learning difficulties generally (Burke and Sutherland, 2004).

There are a number of factors affecting the attitudes of school employees, be they positive or negative. The literature identifies several factors including the categories of

disability, experience in the educational field, the training of school staff, support, the experience with children with special educational needs, gender and age.

2.3.7.1. The Categories of Disability

It has been recognised that some principals encouraged the inclusion of students irrespective of their disability (Barnett and Monda-Amaya, 1998) and its severity (Horrocks et al., 2008). However, it is also found that principals adopting more positive views regarding inclusion were more likely to hold the view that less limiting placements were more suitable for students with disabilities in a primary school setting (Praisner, 2003; Ramirez, 2006). From other studies, severely disabled children were the least preferred group for inclusion, while mildly and moderately disabled children were the most preferred groups to be placed in mainstream schools (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2004; Friend and Bursuck, 2012). The results of other research show that children with learning difficulties were the least preferred group for inclusion (Batu, 2010). Alfahili (2007) reported that teachers tend to have unreceptive attitudes towards the inclusion of children with learning difficulties, and also that principals did not entirely support full inclusion but held a preference for schools that delivered ongoing services and supported part inclusion for special educational needs, or showed a preference for more conventional placements in self-contained special education classrooms for those with significant disabilities (Dyal et al., 1996).

Despite the fact that principals in Israeli schools showed support for inclusive education, the support proffered ultimately depended on the extent of the disability (Avissar et al., 2003). A number of studies have pointed out that emotional-behavioural disability and moderate to severe learning difficulties are among the kinds of special educational requirements towards which teachers tend to have negative attitudes in terms of inclusion. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) in the USA conducted a survey with twenty-eight elementary general education teachers to explore their attitudes towards inclusion. They found that there was a small majority willing to include students with disabilities in their own classes, but responses appeared to vary according to the disabling condition and implicit obligations on the teacher. Moreover, in Jordan, there is a study that investigates teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, Al-Zyoudi (2006) used qualitative

methods to investigate 90 general education teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The results showed that teachers' attitudes were found to be strongly influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition presented to them. In addition, Gyimah et al. (2009) and Gaad (2011) suggest that some categories of children with special educational needs towards whom teachers have negative attitudes related to inclusion are, for example, the hearing and visually impaired, due to teachers being in need of more support such as specialised ready-made educational aids for these children; if this support is not available, the teachers' attitudes become negative towards accepting such children in mainstream schools (Alqahtani, 2003).

In Saudi Arabia, the results were similar to those of the previous studies. Al-Khatteeb (2008) stated that teachers had positive attitudes towards the inclusion of physically disabled pupils and those with moderate difficulties in hearing and vision, but had negative attitudes towards the inclusion of pupils with emotional disorders or visually and hearing-impaired pupils. On the other hand, Gyimah et al.'s (2009) study disagreed with the previous results, as it found that teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of emotionally-behaviourally disabled children were positive. There may also be cultural differences involved, as Gyimah et al.'s (2009) study was carried out in Ghana, or because the teachers wished to appear reliable and capable of including this category of pupils with special educational needs.

Williams and Algozzine (1979) state that the negative attitudes of the teacher arise partly because it requires a great deal of patience to teach pupils with special educational needs who have learning difficulties. Therefore, teachers realise that they need greater expertise and ability to become able and ready to teach pupils with special educational needs. The severity of the disability is one of the factors affecting the attitudes of teachers, such as severe emotional-behavioural disabilities. In this respect, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) state that *"there is enough evidence to suggest that, in the case of the more severe learning needs and behavioural difficulties, teachers hold negative attitudes to the implementation of inclusion"* (p.142).

Gal et al. (2010) hold that the refusal of inclusion for some categories of students with special educational needs is due to the difficult behaviour of such children when they are

included when they are primary age or above (Wade and Moore, 1992; Arampatzi et al., 2011). Nevertheless, this difficult behaviour is arguably the result of children's needs not being met. It seems likely that if teachers knew how to meet pupils' needs adequately, then behaviour would be different. Gaad (2011) adds that among the reasons for the unwillingness of teachers to include pupils in some special educational needs categories is the pupils' lack of skills needed to meet the curriculum assigned to mainstream classes. Gaad (2011) seems to be arguing that children in particular special educational needs categories, which might well include children with Down's syndrome, require a different curriculum and pedagogy to their mainstream peers. Other scholars disagree with this perspective, arguing that pupils with Down's syndrome require a similar curriculum and pedagogy to other groups of learners (Wishart, 2005).

Similarly, Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010) indicate that teachers in Turkey expressed their unwillingness to teach emotionally-behaviourally disabled pupils out of fear that the presence of such disabled children in the class would lead to the disruption of class activities and place significant and heavy pressure on the teachers. Accordingly, the view is adopted by principals that particular categories of disability—notably those that fit an academic category—are the most suitable for inclusion (Avissar et al., 2003; Praisner, 2003). Therefore, learning disabilities are viewed as primarily a problem with students, rather than an issue that teachers need to address.

Some studies have focused on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion for a limited category of children with special educational needs. Among such studies is that of Alqahtani (2003), who aimed to discover the views of teachers who supported inclusion of visually impaired children in regular classes and found that these teachers had positive attitudes towards such inclusion. It is important to note, however, that having positive attitudes and beliefs does not necessarily result in positive practices. Along with positive attitudes, teachers also require support, knowledge and skills to promote inclusive education effectively.

It seems that the category of special educational needs plays an important part in teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. It also appears that teachers in many countries have generally positive attitudes towards the inclusion of physically disabled children, as

shown in such studies as Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010) in Turkey, who investigated the opinions of general education teachers working in public elementary schools regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities into their classrooms, and their willingness to include students with more severe learning disabilities. The results of their study showed that more teachers felt comfortable working with children with physical disabilities (32%). Also, Gaad (2011) conducted a study in Dubai in the UAE; the purpose of the study was to identify perceptions about educating students with special educational needs in the mainstream education setting. The results showed that teachers felt students with special educational needs lacked the skills needed to master the mainstream regular classroom course content.

In research completed by Ramirez (2006), the disability category in a principal's school was not recognised as a meaningful factor concerning the view of principals regarding inclusion. Nevertheless, based upon the above discussion, it is clear that the more severe the disability, the more negative teachers' attitudes are towards inclusion, but, when the disability is less severe, teachers' attitudes towards inclusion tend to be positive.

2.3.7.2. Experience in the Educational Field

Experience in teaching is another factor affecting the attitudes of school staff towards inclusion. Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010) explored teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in Turkey. Their sample was divided into three sections: little experience (1–5 years), moderate experience (6–14 years) and high experience (15 or more years). They found that highly experienced teachers and teachers with little experience had more positive attitudes towards inclusion than their moderately experienced colleagues. Similarly, Gaad (2011) discovered in a study carried out in the UAE that teachers who had more than 12 years' teaching experience tended to have positive attitudes towards inclusion, as such teachers' long experience gave them confidence and prepared them to accept the inclusion of children with special educational needs. Gilmore et al. (2003) found that the success of the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome was evident in the views of the most experienced teachers. However, their article concerned only children included in a mainstream school, meaning that potentially, those severe learning difficulties may not have been included.

Conversely, Glaubman and Lifshitz (2001) and Forlin (2004) found that the views of teachers towards inclusion became less positive the greater their teaching experience. Kis-Glavas et al. (1996) found that teachers with more than 15 years' experience had more negative attitudes towards inclusion than teachers with less than 15 years' experience. Brady and Woolfson (2008) similarly associated more positive attitudes with less experienced teachers. Both studies attributed such attitudes to younger teachers having learned modern scientific methods for educating children with special educational needs.

However, Fox et al. (2004) found that teachers with little or no experience in education were, when dealing with children with special educational needs, worried that they would have a child with Down's syndrome in their class. The same research adds that lack of communication between older teachers and new ones played an important role in increasing such concerns. The level of concern was high at the beginning of the year but disappeared in most teachers within a few weeks. This does not mean that this concern affected the inclusion of such children, as it was found that in some cases these teachers were the ones who found creative methods related to inclusion (Fox et al., 2004). Therefore, it is not only individual teachers that are important, but the workings of the entire school community must be addressed.

As regards school principals, there is some evidence that younger school principals are more open-minded regarding inclusion (Center et al., 1991). Certainly, younger principals are often less experienced in education. Similarly, Avissar et al. (2003) found that principals with less experience and seniority were more open to inclusion, as highlighted through other studies (Horrocks et al., 2008; Sharma and Chow, 2008).

In contrast, other research, such as that by Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) and Ramirez (2006), found no link between attitudes concerning inclusion and experience in administration. Similarly, some authors, such as Alqahtani (2003) in Saudi Arabia and Deng (2008) in China, found no effect of length of teaching experience on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. In the study by Alqahtani (2003) carried out in Saudi Arabia, experience of teaching the visually disabled showed no effect on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Similarly, Arishi (2008) found that length of teaching experience did

not affect teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs. A number of studies carried out in various countries reached similar conclusions. In Serbia, Kalyva et al. (2007) conducted a survey with 72 teachers to explore their attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. It was found that there were no differences in teachers' attitudes towards inclusion according to their years of teaching experience. Also, Fakolade et al. (2009) in Nigeria explored the attitudes of 60 teachers about inclusion of special needs children in their secondary schools in general education. In their results, they found no effect on the length of the teaching experience on teacher attitudes towards inclusion. Moreover, long teaching experience does not mean experience in teaching children with special educational needs. In Saudi Arabia, for example, principals of mainstream schools are all non-specialists in special education and have never taught children with disabilities (Al-Abduljabbar and Massud, 2002).

Therefore, it cannot be concluded with any certainty whether the length of teaching experience has any effect on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, as the findings at this time are contradictory.

2.3.7.3. Training

In the view of King (2011), a factor encouraging teachers to implement change is the deliverance of training aimed at encouraging shifts in attitude and practice. In the USA Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) conducted a study with teachers to explore their perspectives towards inclusion. They found that although about half or more of the teachers felt that inclusion could provide some benefits, only one third or less of teachers believed they had sufficient skills and training necessary for inclusion. In addition, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) in the USA relate positive attitudes of teachers towards inclusion with the training they have undergone, particularly while in service. Their study states that increased training for educators leads to positive perceptions. Also, teachers in Greece who received intensive training, particularly during service, on inclusion and on special education, had more positive attitudes compared with teachers who had undergone less or no training (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Symeonidou and Phtiaka (2009) also confirm the importance of training, particularly during service,

in supporting the success of inclusion as it affects the attitudes of teachers positively. To demonstrate the importance of training and its effect on the teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, Fakolade et al. (2009) related the negative attitudes found in their study in Nigeria with the lack of in-service training during service, particularly training related to how to deal with children with special educational needs.

Some authors suggest that training undergone by school principals, particularly in special educational needs, affects the practice of inclusion in their schools (Dessent, 1987). Some link the success of inclusion to teacher training. For instance, Johnson (1987) holds that *"a necessary ingredient to successful mainstreaming is the training and retraining of regular classroom teachers"* (p.231). Arick and Krug (1993) argue that there is a strong need for more training for school principals to improve their knowledge regarding inclusion. In addition, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) found that training, particularly during service, helps to answer teachers' questions, especially in the early stages of inclusion implementation, involving reconstructing the educational environment (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002).

Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010) pointed out that in-service training helps teachers to learn new skills and strategies that will help them to deal with children with special educational needs. In addition, Cousins and Thomson (2001) asserted that training during service helped the teachers to adapt curricula to include individuals with physical disabilities. Furthermore, Ross-Hill (2009) found that general education teachers in the USA felt that they would be more confident in their skills regarding the inclusion of children with special educational needs if they received training during service to help them in their teaching.

On the other hand, Deng (2008) found no effect of training during service on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in China, and attributed this to the short period of training the teachers received. Therefore, it is preferred that training should be an appropriate length and intensive to be more effective and provide adequate information and skills for the staff in schools, and consequently, have a positive influence on attitudes towards inclusion. The same applies for all continued professional development (CPD) delivered to teachers: the quality and intensity of training is important (Ernst and Rogers, 2009).

This may be one of the reasons why Mittler (2000) found that training does not play an important part in affecting the teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Similarly, Arishi (2008) carried out a study in Saudi Arabia and found that, while 80% of the study sample had attended an in-service training course, it had had no effect on their attitudes towards inclusion.

It was established by Avissar et al. (2003) that principals that who had undergone more in-service training in regard to inclusion were more likely to apply greater inclusion. It has also been noted that principals who had little training centred on providing education for such students had a negative perspective (Sharma and Chow, 2008). Therefore, Alkalifa (2002) suggests that the in-service training provided for teachers is not sufficient to meet the requirements of children with special educational needs, and that more high quality training is required to overcome barriers met by teachers. Based on the above, it appears that training plays an important role in influencing the attitudes and practices of school staff towards inclusion because training provides the trainees with information and skills and enhances their self-confidence in dealing with children with special educational needs.

2.3.7.4. Support

Support plays an important role in the success of inclusion. For example, provision of sufficient and suitable support to attract and motivate the education of those with special educational needs. Appropriate support can consequently lead to a reduction in undesirable behaviour in such children, and facilitate their participation in activities (Ali et al., 2006).

Irrespective of the fact that principals provide support regarding the inclusion of young students with disabilities, they have been found unprepared for applying inclusive approaches (Barnett and Monda-Amaya, 1998). For various reasons, principals may feel that there are not enough resources and inclusion is imposed upon them by policy makers without their having been consulted as to their requirements (Forlin, 2004). Moreover, there is a shortage of qualified staff combined with increasing numbers of children with varied disabilities (Brotherson et al., 2001). Moreover, Agbenyega (2007)

suggested that teachers in Ghana were anxious about inclusion because of the lack of support, such as the unavailability of books in large print or in Braille. Similarly, the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome requires the use of specialist materials which are not always readily available, meaning that preparing for lessons can be frustrating and time-consuming (Sadek, 2000).

The provision and availability of resources such as educational aids within the class and similar types of support has been found to have a positive effect on teachers' attitudes (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). For example, Pearson et al. (2003) examined the problems associated with introducing inclusion education into Hong Kong's mainstream schooling system. They found that teachers in schools with extra funding, additional counselling resources and specialist support expressed more accepting attitudes towards children with special educational needs and their admission into mainstream schools. Also, Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010) in Turkey investigated the view of teachers about including students with disabilities into schools. The results of their study showed that when teachers have more knowledge about educating students with disabilities, more conducive classroom environments and more personnel and material support, their attitude toward inclusion usually becomes more favourable. The importance of resources lies in facilitating the education of children with special educational needs. Kibria (2005) concluded that teachers for whom sufficient support such as resources are provided in their classes are more amenable to teaching moderately disabled children than teachers who do not have such resources or suitable additional support.

Lack of specialised services to support them is another reason cited by Glaubman and Lifshitz (2001) and Kibria (2005). According to Molto (2003), the existence of specialised support services makes teachers more willing to accept children with special educational needs. Thus, Lampropoulou and Padeliaadu (1997) pointed out that teachers in Greece are in need of a support service so that their positive attitudes towards inclusion are maintained. In Saudi Arabia, female teachers of children with learning difficulties called for the Ministry of Education to support inclusion regulation by providing female assistant teachers to facilitate their work with such children. They also

requested nurses in mainstream schools, as some children have health problems that cannot be easily dealt with (Alomran, 2010).

Whiting and Young (1996) confirm the strong relation between the success of inclusion and management support. This is confirmed by Villa and Thousand (2005), who state that the support given by school principals and the cooperation of staff are considered important factors in constructing positive attitudes towards inclusion. Support for teachers is also required in terms of the time given to them to liaise with other teachers, develop collaborative networks, observe others and problem-solve (King, 2011).

Still on the topic of Saudi Arabia, Alomran (2010) specified that the most important difficulty for education of children with learning difficulties in mainstream schools is unsuitable buildings, as they were originally built for children without special needs. In this respect, The Consultative Group for Down's syndrome (2004) in Saudi Arabia lists a number of architectural, engineering and constructive obstacles in mainstream schools that negatively affect the inclusion of disabled children. They pointed out that the educational environment is not suitable for such children because of the age of schools, rented (not purpose – built) buildings, narrow corridors and either no playgrounds, or incomplete ones. Therefore, the Consultative group called for the requirements of disabled children to be considered when building new schools, such as suitable toilets and parking for dropping off disabled children. As Tufvesson and Tufvesson (2009) confirm, the success of the success of the inclusive depends on the proper design of buildings for disabled children. Moreover, school buildings must include, for example, suitable space for all facilities (Bloch, 2009), quality building and more safety (Uline et al., 2009).

Based on the above evidence, it seems that Saudi Arabian mainstream schools do not comply with the policy advocated by the World Health Organization, WHO (2001), which is that schools should be suitable for non-disabled and disabled children equally. These guidelines reflect the social model of disability, requiring that existing barriers be removed to enable disabled children to participate equally.

2.3.7.5. Experience with children with Special Educational Needs

Experience and communication with a disabled person is one of the factors affecting the attitudes of staff working in schools towards inclusion (Park et al., 2010). Parasuram (2006) and Hodgkinson and Devarakonda (2009) found that teachers in India who are in continuous communication with a special educational needs individual, through family or friends, have more positive attitudes towards inclusion than those who have no communication with such individuals. Sharma and Chow (2008) also confirm that awareness related to the inclusion of those with special educational needs is greater in teachers whose families have a member with a disability.

Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, Al-Abduljabbar and Massud (2002) indicated that teachers support inclusion when one of the teachers has a special educational needs individual in his or her family. This is supported by Chhabra et al. (2010), who found that teachers in the USA who have a family member with special educational needs have more positive attitudes towards inclusion.

In addition, greater experience with special educational needs plays an important part in the attitudes towards inclusion of staff working in the school. In particular, it was established that positive experiences with disabilities alongside exposure to special education is linked with a more positive outlook in regard to inclusion (Praisner, 2003; Horrocks et al., 2008; Sharma and Chow, 2008). Other studies confirm this finding; for example, in Ghana, Gyimah et al. (2009) conducted a large survey with 500 primary school teachers selected from three of the ten regions of Ghana to investigate their attitudes to including children with special educational needs and disabilities in mainstream schools. The results showed that teachers who had experience were positive towards inclusion. Experience with teaching children with disabilities affected teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in a positive manner. Gilmore et al. (2003) found that teachers with previous experience in teaching children with Down's syndrome held attitudes that were more positive towards inclusion. Kalyva et al. (2007) attributed an important role to experience in teaching children with special educational needs in the attitudes of teachers in Serbia towards inclusion, in that greater experience in solving the problems such children face made their attitudes more positive. They also found that

teachers who had little experience with such children had less positive attitudes towards inclusion.

Similarly, Van Reusen et al. (2000) found that, as teachers gained experience in teaching children with special educational needs, their attitudes towards inclusion became more positive. Such teaching experience removed fears of dealing with children with special educational needs and teachers experienced in teaching such children were able to deal well with them. Therefore, it is not always necessary to change teachers' attitudes first, experience is often an important catalyst for changing teachers' perspectives.

Opposed to this view, some researchers suggest that principals' positive attitudes may be connected to their somewhat limited interaction with students and teaching (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Avissar et al., 2003). In particular, it has been suggested by Avramidis and Norwich (2002) that administrative staff and advisors, who are in less contact with students demonstrate more positive outlooks regarding inclusion than those more involved with such students, i.e. teachers.

On the other hand, some studies found no relation between teaching children with special educational needs and attitudes towards inclusion. For example, Frederickson and Cline (2009) found a limited effect of experience in teaching such children in New Zealand teachers. In addition, Cousins and Thomson (2001) found no effect of relations between teachers and children with physically disabled pupils outside the school on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) found no fixed pattern for attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in relation to the experience of teachers in teaching such children. They attributed this finding to some teachers having had bad experiences, or their feeling that the school environment is not sufficiently adapted to include students with special educational needs.

For teachers, having a family member with a disability tends to lead to their belief that the best place to improve the skills of the children with special educational needs from the social and academic aspects is the mainstream school. In addition, parents of children with special educational needs wish their sons/daughters to be in a suitable

place and they tend to believe that the best place for them is in a mainstream school. However, some studies did not find any effect of experience in teaching children with special educational needs on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion because the fears and barriers of including such children have been largely eradicated in many countries, and teachers have improved their skills in terms of dealing with such children with their increasing experience in teaching them, giving them confidence in their teaching and acceptance of such children in mainstream schools (Catlett, 1999).

2.3.7.6. Gender

Rakap and Kaczmarek's (2010) study in Turkey found that male teachers had more positive attitudes towards inclusion. In Saudi Arabia, Al-Ahmadi (2009) also found that male teachers had more positive attitudes towards inclusion. Lampropoulou and Padeliadu (1997) attributed the positive attitudes of male teachers in Greece to cultural attitudes towards gender roles, since men believe that inclusion will not be primarily their responsibility, it being considered the responsibility of women to care for children. Female teachers are often more reluctant than their male counterparts to accept inclusion, as they are convinced that the responsibility will fall heavily on them.

Conversely, Gaad (2011) found that female teachers in the UAE had more positive attitudes, as women have stronger emotional responses generally towards children and specifically towards those with special educational needs. In addition, they found that teachers who were themselves mothers were more willing to accept children with special educational needs in their class. A number of studies found that female teachers have more positive attitudes towards inclusion. For example, Leyser and Tappendorf (2001) in the USA examined attitudes and practices regarding mainstreaming of 91 regular and special educators in two small rural school districts. They found that female teachers were positive toward students with special educational needs. Also, in Jordan, there is qualitative research that investigates teachers' perspective towards inclusion. Al-Zyoudi (2006) showed that there was little difference between the opinions of female teachers and male teachers. The data suggest that female teachers were more positive than male teachers towards inclusion. Moreover, 73.2% of Australian principals surveyed were seen to be supportive of inclusion. Notably, one-third of the sample was female (Bailey

and du Plessis, 1997). However, their research findings cannot be generalised, and consideration should be given to the sample gender distribution, which was unequal.

However, another study found that gender does not constitute an influential factor in teachers' attitudes. Parasuram (2006) examined the views of general educators in the city of Mumbai, India, toward inclusion of students with disabilities into schools. The results found that gender has no effect on teachers' view towards inclusion. Furthermore, no link between the gender of principals and their views concerning inclusion was identified by Ramirez (2006). It is clear, therefore, that there is inconsistency in the findings about the effect of gender on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion based on many factors, among them cultural differences regarding inclusion or differences in training between the genders.

2.3.7.7. Age

Coutsocostas and Alborz (2010) carried out a study in Greece that revealed that young teachers have positive attitudes towards the inclusion of educationally disabled children. Similarly, Batu (2010) found that young teachers in Turkey are more willing to accept children with special educational needs in their classes (Batu, 2010). Moreover, Alfahili (2007) confirms that young teachers in Saudi Arabia have more positive attitudes towards inclusion than do middle-aged or older teachers. Further, Alqahtani (2003) found that young teachers in Saudi Arabia are better disposed towards the inclusion of visually disabled pupils than those with other disabilities.

Rakap and Kaczmarek (2010) report that age is one of the factors that affect the attitudes of teachers in Turkey, finding that younger and older teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusion, while middle-aged teachers have less positive attitudes. The results of the previous study are similar to those of Kis-Glavas et al. (1996), who found that teachers in Croatia whose ages range between 26 and 35 and between 56 and 65 tend to have positive attitudes towards inclusion. However, in contrast, Cornoldi et al. (1998) found in their study that older teachers had less positive attitudes towards inclusion, although they also confirmed the results of previous studies regarding the positive attitudes of younger teachers. Moreover, Avissar et al. (2003) established through their

research a number of key links between age and inclusion practices in school, where the younger the principal, the more inclusion initiatives were applied.

On the other hand, some studies have found that age has no effect on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. For example; Parasuram (2006) explored attitudes of teachers in India, toward inclusion of students with disabilities into schools through the usage of two attitude scales; the results found that age has no impact on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. In addition, in Ghana, Gyimah et al. (2009) conducted a large survey with 500 primary school teachers to investigate their attitudes to including children with special educational needs and disabilities in mainstream schools. The results of their study showed also the age of teachers has no influence inclusion attitudes. Furthermore, no notable difference was identified by Ramirez (2006) regarding perspectives towards inclusion between younger and older principals.

It can be observed from many studies that younger teachers have more positive attitudes. It could be interpreted that such teachers are at the beginning of their careers and wish to demonstrate to their superiors that they have the skills to teach children with special educational needs. Another explanation may be that younger teachers trained more recently and were exposed to new thinking about special needs and inclusion. Another factor influencing attitudes towards inclusion in Saudi Arabia is that principals of inclusive schools receive a 20% increase in their salary for managing an inclusive school (Allothman, 2014). This financial incentive arguably affects their attitudes towards inclusion, although it would not necessarily impact their inclusive practice.

2.3.8. Summary of Part Three

This chapter has provided a theoretical foundation for this research by reviewing the literature on Down's syndrome and education for children born with this condition. Children with this genetic disorder are identifiable from an early age. The disorder is associated with distinctive physical characteristics, learning difficulties, linguistic limitations and a variety of health issues, which can limit their participation and progress in educational activities. The special education needs of such children were traditionally

met by special schools, although there is a growing trend toward inclusion in mainstream schools.

School inclusion is an international movement calling for the education of all children within general classes without making distinctions among them on intellectual and physical grounds (Ballard, 2003). However, inclusion is still a controversial, complex issue (Ainscow et al., 2006). This is evident from the disagreement on the concept and meaning of inclusion, and on the potential benefits and challenges to all concerned. Although inclusion is a universal question, there are innumerable intrinsic and extrinsic factors that can facilitate or impede its development.

A crucial role in successful inclusion is played by school leadership as agents and supporters of change, but this role depends on the understanding and attitudes of school personnel. Ultimately, it seems that principals' and teachers' perspectives towards inclusion vary according to a number of factors. These include the categories of disability, experience in teaching, and with children with special educational needs, gender, age, support and training. Thus, the experience of inclusion is very personal and success is not an issue of chance but the outcome of the perspectives of all those concerned. For example, principals who are exposed to children with Down's syndrome early on in their careers are much less likely to form barriers to successful inclusion. It is equally important for these initial experiences to be positive and for principals to be given the necessary resources and support.

Since so little study has been undertaken on this topic in respect to Saudi Arabia, it was beneficial to look at studies undertaken in other countries, as well as the numerous theoretical views of academics and researchers. Saudi Arabia is far from being the only country lacking in such studies and much can be learned from a comprehensive analysis and critique of other countries, such as Western countries, which are generally further developed in their understanding and approach towards inclusion.

Based on the reviewed literature on Down's syndrome, inclusion, and school change, and on experiences in other contexts, I have formulated a number of research questions based on: the efforts made so far in terms of inclusion, with the aim of informing

approaches that may be useful for Saudi Arabia to improve its attitude to inclusion of children with Down's syndrome into mainstream schools.

The research questions are:

1. What understanding do mainstream primary school principals in Saudi Arabia have of the concept of inclusion?
2. What is the perspective of school principals regarding the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream primary schools?
3. What are the factors that affect the perspective of school principals regarding the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream primary schools?

The questions will be addressed by analysing the data collected in this study, having information about principals' perspectives towards inclusion can help policy makers and other stakeholder design improvements for more inclusive practices for children with Down's syndrome in mainstream primary schools in Saudi Arabia.

In the next chapter I will focus on the methodology and methods by which this data was collected and analysed, including my philosophical position, the research paradigm, ethical considerations and the strategy within which I was working, as well as data sampling, collection and analysis.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Following the research stages:

Chapter 1	Introduction and Research Context		
Chapter 2	The Context, Theory and Literature Review	Part 1	The Context of Saudi Arabia
		Part 2	Theoretical Framework
		Part 3	Literature Review
Chapter 3	Research Methodology		
Chapter 4	Principals' Understanding of Concept of Inclusion		
Chapter 5	School Principals' Perspectives on Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Mainstream Schools		
Chapter 6	Factors Affecting the Perspectives of Principals regarding the Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome		
Chapter 7	Recommendations and Conclusion		

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the process that was applied in this research, highlighting the methods and methodology used. Before discussing the research methodology, it may be useful to recall the questions to be addressed:

1. What understanding do mainstream primary school principals in Saudi Arabia have of the concept of inclusion?
2. What is the perspective of school principals regarding the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream primary schools?
3. What are the factors that affect the perspective of school principals regarding the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream primary schools?

Those three questions were addressed through practical research, via interviews and observations.

I start with a discussion of the epistemological perspective of this research, with a focus on my choice of the interpretive paradigm. I also provide a justification for using the qualitative approach, before moving to my choice of data collection methods, including the main method, which was the semi-structured interview, and the supplementary methods of participant observation and documentary analysis. A pilot study to test these methods and the associated procedures is reported. The sampling design and procedures for collection and analysis of the data are also presented in this chapter. Issues of validity, reliability and their qualitative counterparts, trustworthiness and relatability, are then addressed. Lastly, ethical considerations and important issues relating to my role as researcher, such as reflexivity and positionality, and being a male conducting interviews with female principals in Saudi Arabia, are discussed.

3.2. Epistemological Perspective

Crotty (1998: p.3) defines epistemology as *“a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know”*. Therefore, epistemology addresses the character of

knowledge, its possibility, extent and overall foundation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). It also clarifies the association presumed to exist between the knower and what is acknowledged or intended to be known, to ascertain that the resulting insight is sufficient as well as valid (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). In this respect, within human sciences, two main paradigms are present: the positivist and the interpretivist (Cohen et al., 2011). Hence, the interpretivist paradigm and positivist paradigms will be discussed in the next sub heading.

3.2.1. Interpretivist Paradigm vs. Positivist Paradigm

Willig (2008: p.3) states that a positivist researcher intends to establish independent awareness that is *“impartial and unbiased”*. Additionally, positivists trust in independent awareness of an external fact. This awareness is logical and impartial to the viewer. Positivism is usually perceived as being identical to the “scientific” approach (Wellington, 2015). As clarified by Travers (2001), when these precepts are moved to the setting of social science, researchers aim to define the social world impartially, applying a scientific viewpoint and disregarding the personal variations among individuals. Thus research is standardised and no attention is paid to people’s settings and knowledge.

However, such an impartial stance may not be as suitable for the social sciences (Bryman, 2016), since individual and institutional issues are of a varied character, necessitating consideration of individual differences, and researchers’ involvement with the individuals under scrutiny in order to investigate occurrences within the social sphere from their perspective. As McNeill and Chapman (2005) argue, people are active, aware agents, whose contemplations, resolutions and actions are affected by their views of the setting and situation. Thus, *“it is the researcher’s task to ‘get inside the heads’ of their subjects until it is possible to see their world as they do”* (McNeill and Chapman, 2005: p.99). This is the stance of the interpretive paradigm.

Whereas positivists perceive social phenomena as comprising neutral beings, regardless of human views, interpretivist perception or ‘awareness’ of the social world is built

subjectively by means of the principles, culture and knowledge of people. Thus, the job of the researcher is to gain an understanding of the manner in which specific people and societies view and experience the world (Walsh, 2001).

The interpretivist paradigm is usually described as relating to research carried out in a natural environment, in which pictures and words are collected and evaluated inductively in an endeavour to interpret the perspective of the participants. Hansen (2004) therefore states that the interpretivist paradigm acknowledges the existence of multiple realities. Furthermore, interpretivist researchers investigate numerous, varied human conducts, perceptions and outlooks (Cohen et al., 2011). Therefore, because of their role in determining the course of the research, researchers within an interpretivist perspective are themselves a critical factor in the study process.

In the current study, it is assumed that each Saudi principal understands and perceives inclusion in a different way. This provides the rationale behind the selection and application of the interpretivist model, which emphasises interpretation (Burr, 2003). I wanted to understand Saudi principals' subjective perspectives and experiences of inclusion and related situations with regard to including children with Down's syndrome in mainstream schools.

Therefore, my study involved interaction with school principals to seek to understand their interpretations of their experience of the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome, rather than independently measuring schools principals' performance. Interacting with school principals in different schools also provided a means of understanding how school principals work, communicate and deal with children with Down's syndrome, and how Saudi culture impacts upon principals' responses to inclusion.

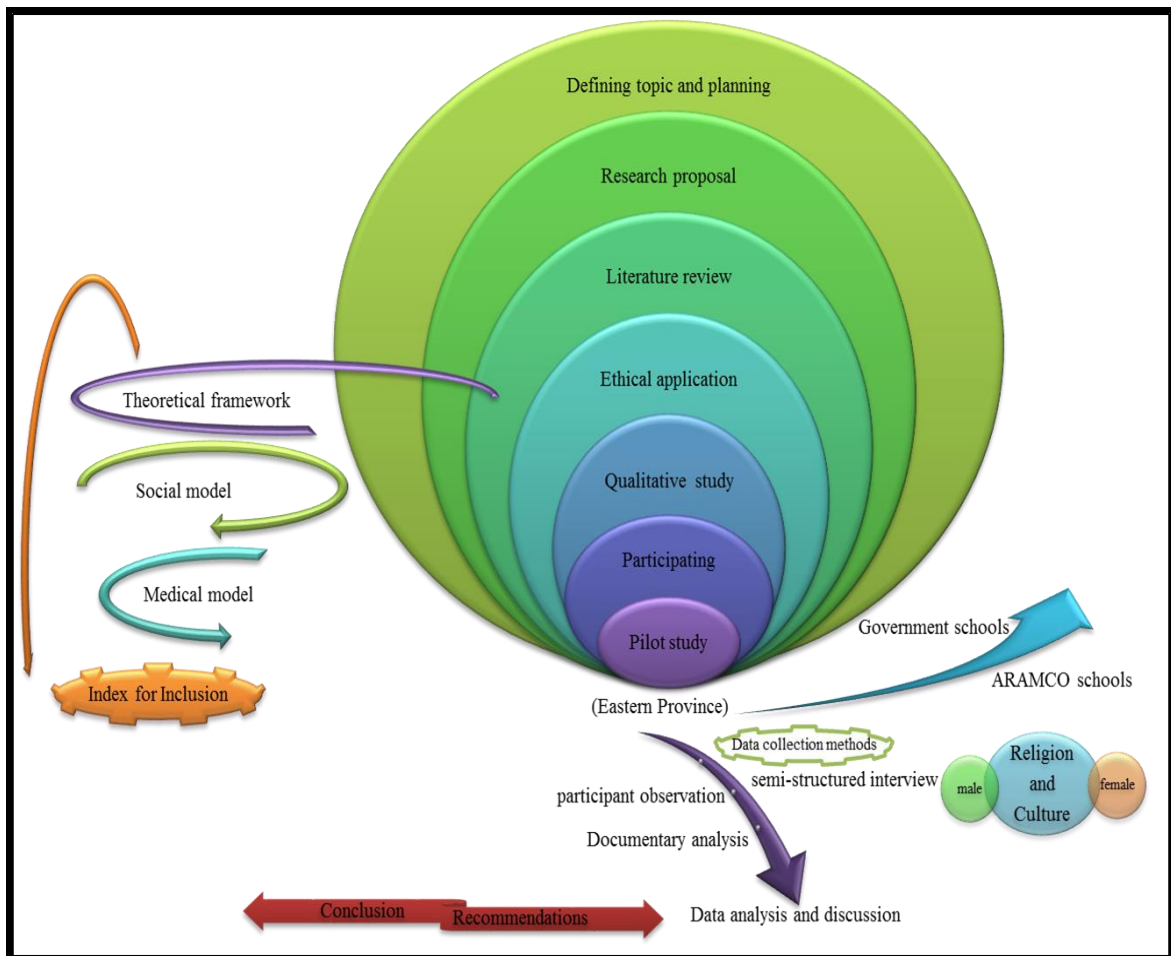
The focus will briefly shift to a description of the design of this research that was followed in addressing the above research questions.

3.3. Research Design

To create the framework of this study, a research design was employed and was used to show the manner in which all the key aspects of the study project are connected (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Yin (2009: p.26) defines a research design as “*the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions*”. Yin (2009) further describes a research design as a strategy for closing the divide separating research questions from their responses. This design comprises a group of actions and resolutions for execution, among them the collection and evaluation of essential data. Additionally, Bryman (2016) notes that a research design is the structure or outline of a research project, which should consist of a plan for collecting and processing data. It is essential to acknowledge that a research design should not be viewed only with regards to methods of data collection, as this would be to limit the concept greatly (Yin, 2009). Although methods for collecting data are indeed central, a research design encompasses a broad idea, spanning the entire duration of an undertaking.

I employed a multi-design strategy (De Vaus, 2014) since this study concerns an issue of high sensitivity that covers a large number of ethical issues, which will be discussed at the end of this chapter. The research design includes a number of levels: for example, identifying the study problem (discussed in chapter one), the research approach (which will be explained in the next section), the data collection methods, and the selection of schools and principals (sampling), which are discussed later in this chapter, as well as the ethical issues of positionality, and being a male researcher, which are examined at the end of this chapter (Bourke, 2014). The research design is presented in Figure 3.1 and highlights the qualitative approach using interviews, documentary analysis and participant observations.

Figure 3.1: Research Design



3.4. Research Approach

It is worth considering the nature of 'educational research' before discussing the data collection methods. Bassey (1999: p.39) states that educational studies constitute

"critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgments and decisions in order to improve educational action... the kind of value-laden research that should have immediate relevance to teachers and policy-makers, and is itself educational because of its stated intention to 'inform'".

Bassey's (1999) explanation implies that researchers' purposes must necessarily inform their research design. As Cohen et al. (2011: p.115) report, "Research design is

governed by the notion of 'fitness for purpose'. The purposes of the research determine the methodology and design of the research".

In this respect, how to address the methodology of a piece of research has frequently been a matter of debate among scholars. The traditional manner of describing approaches to studies in education literature is as either quantitative or qualitative, or a combination of the two. These main approaches chiefly concern the way that data is gathered and analysed (Briggs and Coleman, 2007; Bryman and Bell, 2011). No research approach can be said to be better than another *per se*, as all have their own advantages and disadvantages, while at the same time, they can be used separately and in conjunction with each other in order to achieve research objectives. In this study a qualitative approach, was adopted. As such this approach places emphasis on gaining insight and potentially allowing relatability rather than generalisation, centring on utilising small samples chosen for a particular purpose. (Creswell, 2009; Cohen et al., 2011). Accordingly, a more in-depth understanding of qualitative methods is now provided.

3.4.1. Qualitative Approach

In my study, given my interpretivist stance and the nature of the research topic (i.e., the perspective and understanding of school principals towards the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream schools and an exploration of the factors affecting their perspectives), a qualitative approach was considered to be the most appropriate.

Qualitative approaches are consistent with the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasises the social context and the meanings assigned to beliefs or behaviours (Morrison, 2002), as the qualitative approach concerns the significance, ideas, descriptions, features, metaphors, signs and definitions of items, rather than quantifying their features, qualities and properties (Bieger and Gerlach, 1996).

An important aspect in the selection of approach is the character of the matter to be explored (Flick, 2009; Saunders et al., 2009; Bryman, 2016). As Maxwell (2013) points out, qualitative research aids the researcher in understanding in depth participants'

events, circumstances and activities, it facilitates the consideration of the specific situation within which the participants act, and it discerns unanticipated phenomena and effects that may generate new grounded theories in respect of the phenomenon that is being researched.

As Richardson (1996) indicates, qualitative researchers usually seek to understand the experiences, feelings and views of the subjects they study, rather than imposing a framework of their own which could misrepresent participants' ideas. Data in the form of the participants' own words is included to support the conclusions of a study (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007).

Research methods used in qualitative approach include interviews, observations, documentary analysis and discourse analysis (Flick, 2009). Seeking insiders' points of view from participants is useful in a qualitative study. In the view of Fraenkel et al. (2012), a study that is qualitative in nature necessitates the following:

- Data should be gathered through the use of interviews or observations, carried out in the context under examination.
- Data should be gathered at the scene, with researcher views and interpretations detailed.
- Data should adopt the form of written words as opposed to being numerical.
- The views of people should be the main focus.

One of the key aspects inherent in qualitative research is the intention to consider actions, events, norms and values, amongst others, from the perspective of the study sample (Bryman, 2016).

In what follows, however, the focus is on other justifications for adopting a qualitative approach with regard to the research problem.

Lack of research on Down's syndrome

As noted in chapter one, Down's syndrome has been little researched in the Saudi context, even in those students focusing on inclusion. Cassell and Symon (1994: p.4)

suggest that, for investigative studies, a qualitative approach offers advantages, because it is “*less driven by very specific hypotheses and categorical frameworks and more concerned with emergent themes and ideological descriptions*”. Additionally, Padgett (1998) asserts that when little is known concerning a subject to be studied, a qualitative analysis provides considerable flexibility to gather and appraise data concurrently; thus, what is gathered is up to date with new insights. Likewise, Bryman (2016) is of the opinion that the elasticity of the qualitative approach facilitates the researcher in following different views and lines of questioning, which may cause greater comprehension of what is taking place in the research environment.

Female principals: sensitivity concerning gender

My research is concerned with exploring the perspectives and understanding of both male and female school principals. In practice, the sensitivity of this research provided a challenging context for my research. In particular, for a researcher, gaining access to women’s viewpoints is difficult in the Saudi environment of gender segregation, I could not obtain permission to enter girls’ schools. However, as explained later, I was able to include a female perspective in this study by using a telephone interview strategy.

Certainly, the qualitative approach allowed me not only to build trusting relationships with school principals, but also to gain a greater understanding of the context in which they operate. It allowed me to observe the infrastructure of a school classroom, and to interact with principals, students and teachers in order to explore more deeply the points of view of the participants about inclusion in a regular school. Numerous research theorists regard a qualitative approach as having advantages over the quantitative approach when the research subject involves a sensitive matter (Padgett, 1998). For instance, Padgett (1998) asserts that this approach provides more detailed data than that provided by the standardised and closed-ended queries that are typical of a quantitative approach. Additionally, a qualitative approach has the advantage of the involvement of the researcher with the contributors, allowing the researcher to draw closer to participants and gain their confidence (McCall and Simmons, 1969).

Despite the trusting relationships formed during my research, I had, however, read about the culture of female principals (such as that detailed in the Education Policy in Saudi Arabia, 1970). There exist limitations on men talking with women at work, even by telephone. Official letters are the preferred method of communication between men and female principals and telephones are used only when necessary. According to Saudi regulations, data collection is one of the occasions when telephone communication is necessary. Being aware of this issue from the outset enabled me to remain careful about what was said to me, and to continue to work hard to maintain a good working relationship with all the principals until the end of the research.

To summarise, this research set out to explore the perspectives and understanding of school principals towards the under-researched subject that is the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream schools, in a gender-sensitive context; such considerations made qualitative approaches particularly appropriate for my study, as they favour the growth of in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being researched and of the research context before drawing conclusions and offering recommendations.

To summarise, the nature of the research subject made a qualitative approach the most suitable for this research. This, in turn, influenced the choice of data collection methods (i.e. semi-structured interview, participant observation and documentary analysis). These are explained in the following section.

3.5. Data Collection Methods

In this study, a range of qualitative methods were used to collect the data, the main method being semi-structured interviews with male and female principals who are at the top of the pyramid in the education administrative field. I also used two supplementary methods participant observation in five schools and the analysis of five key documents. Also during participant observation I used informal conversational interviews. I used the supplementary methods in order to complement of the responses of the principals interviewed who participated in my research. The rationale was to use triangulation, not for validation in the traditional sense, but as a heuristic tool for capturing the complexity of the context (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), in order to gain information from different

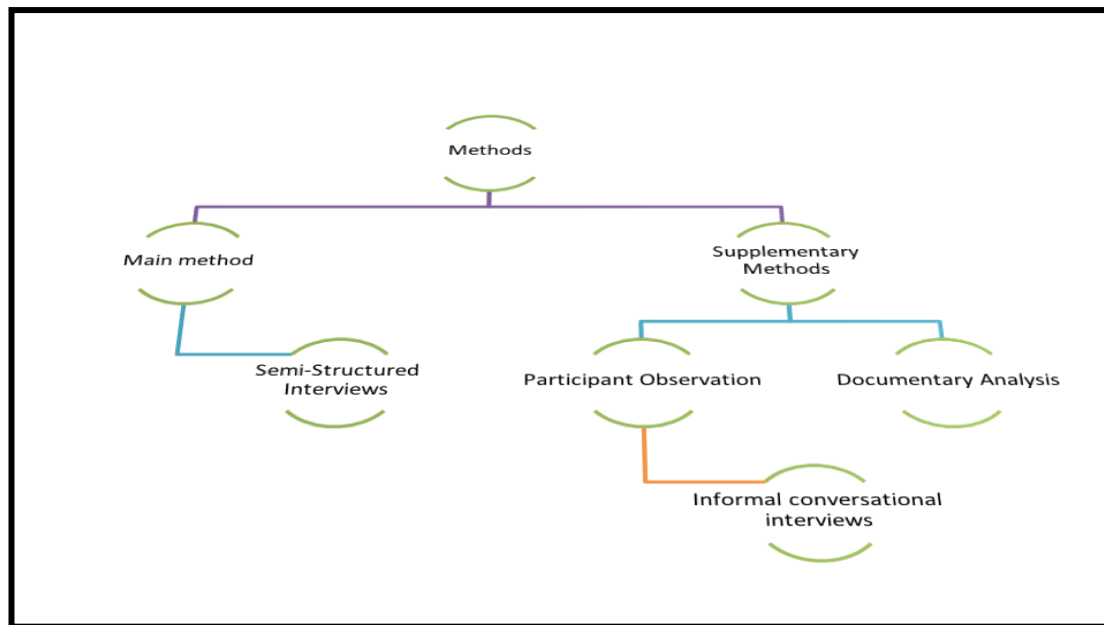
sources, as described in Table 3.1 below. These three methods are fundamental sources for gaining insight into behaviours and human relationships.

Table 3.1: Triangulation of methods and sources

Methods	Sources
Semi-structured interviews	10 male principals and 10 female principals; 18 from government schools and 2 from ARAMCO schools.
Participant observations	4 government schools and 1 ARAMCO school.
Documentary analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Education Policy in Saudi Arabia (1970). 2. The Special Education Policy in Saudi Arabia (2002). 3. The Code for Persons with Disabilities in Saudi Arabia (2001). 4. Minutes of school meetings (meetings taking place between the school principal and the school staff) 5. The Consultative Group for Down's Syndrome in Saudi Arabia (2004).

Triangulation is the use of numerous evidence sources (Yin, 2009). This is advised by Pope and Mays (2006), in order to obtain a holistic picture when using an interpretative paradigm. This approach made it possible to consider the views of different people, such as male and female principals, and Government and ARAMCO principals and to observe different school buildings: Government and ARAMCO. The aim of employing triangulation is to assist the credibility and relatability of the study, see section 3.10 (Robson and McCartan, 2016). The triangulation approach used in this study is depicted in Figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2: Triangulation of methods



The following sub-sections address the rationale behind the choice of research methods.

3.5.1. Semi-structured Interview

Interviews constitute a conversation between two people, the interviewer and the interviewee, with the essential aim of gaining specific information or knowledge from the interviewee. It is an interaction process during which the interviewer assesses the answers with regard to their importance to the proposed research (Cohen et al., 2011). Gubrium and Holstein (2003: p.3) define an interview as a “*conversation with a purpose*” the purpose being to provide researchers with an indication as to what is on or in someone’s mind regarding the topic under investigation. Best and Kahn (2006) report that, in domains where human motivation is shown by behaviour, feelings and attitudes, interviews can be highly effective. Since my research was particularly interested in gaining the perspectives of the principals, as well as simply gathering information, interviews were particularly effective, as they enabled me to explore the stories that principals told beyond simple yes or no answers.

Another reason that I used interviews was the issues of trustworthiness and relatability. As noted by Guba and Lincoln (1992), the interview is a respected and widely

implemented instrument for gathering and exchanging data. According to Hinchey (2008), interviewing is perhaps the most widely used method of collecting qualitative data in educational studies, and in numerous studies it is the only source of primary data. Therefore, it is considered a crucial tool for data collection in a qualitative approach (Coll and Chapman, 2000).

Gillham (2000) claims that the strength of interviews lies in the fact that nuances, which frequently make a difference to research, can be discerned. That is, an interviewee is not limited to specific choices of answers, as in questionnaires, where the participants are restricted by a limited choice of answers. Interviews offer insight into interviewees' minds and responses, and permit the researcher to carry out a deeper and more detailed investigation than would other methods (Robson and McCartan, 2016), as the researcher can have a more personal interaction with the respondent (Kvale, 1996). The nature of my research, as well as its context within Saudi culture, meant that I considered this personal interaction to be very important in achieving a deeper level of understanding of the issues involved. These personal interactions were facilitated by the fact that I already had had contact with some of the professionals involved, from my previous role as a supervisor of school principals.

Moreover, as a data collection technique, interviews possess exclusive advantages for my study. One of the main advantages of interviews is that they are simple to carry out and direct. Many people show a greater desire to talk than to write, particularly in Saudi culture, where spoken communication is very important. In this regard, the interviewer is able to have his or her questions answered and the interview could possibly raise interesting points (Bell, 2005). Furthermore, interviews are flexible and adaptable. For instance, the interviewer can observe the person and all the circumstances in which he or she responds. The interviewer can then employ these responses to adjust the situation of the interview. If the information provided is unrelated to the topic, the interviewer can ask for further information to obtain more data and greater clarity (Bell, 2005). Similarly, if the interviewee does not grasp a question or misinterprets it, the interviewer can either ask it again or try to simplify it by explaining it more detail.

In the context of my own research, it was important for me to gain information from school principals, but since the principals did not have qualifications in special education, the conversational form was particularly important because it enabled me to explain complex ideas as part of the questioning process. Moreover, through these questions I could “*search for depth of understanding*” (Male, 2016: p.180), as they provided the freedom for participants to clarify themes.

With personal contact, I felt that there would be a greater chance that the principal being interviewed would contribute and give the information desired to address the research questions (Bell, 2005). Eliciting information from an interviewee, even information of a personal or private nature, is less difficult once the interviewer establishes a rapport with him or her (Bell, 2005). For example, one question that I wanted to ask was whether the interviewee had a family member who was disabled. This is a highly sensitive topic in Saudi culture, and if this question had been included in a written document it would not have been answered. By developing a rapport with the interviewee, I felt that it would be easier to broach such sensitive subjects. Considering the advantages described above, the interview was chosen as the main of data collection for this study.

It is clear that there are many benefits associated with the interviewing technique; however, it is often difficult to gain access to participants (Kvale, 1996). In my research, arranging interviews with female principals was particularly challenging, but I solved this problem by interviewing them by telephone. Researchers also need to bear in mind the drawbacks of using interviews, such as the time and expenditure involved in conducting them, and the potential effect of the interviewer. Kumar (2011) states that interviewing is one of the more costly and time-consuming methods to implement, particularly when the researcher is required to travel and when subjects are assigned specific periods of time for interviews. Kumar (2011) further suggests that another drawback is the fact that data quality essentially relies upon the interviewer-interviewee interaction, as well as the skills and overall ability of the researcher to conduct an interview. Furthermore, personal bias or the misrepresentation of data by the researcher could occur when it comes to reporting the data gathered (Briggs and Coleman, 2007; Robson and McCartan, 2016).

Nevertheless, these disadvantages can be minimised by the researcher through careful planning, good time management, practising interview techniques, and seeking help from supervisors and colleagues, all of which assist in meeting the challenges of interviewing. In this regard, meetings with my supervisor and fellow postgraduate colleagues were organised in order to seek their advice on managing interviews. I also had practice conducting interviews with the Director of the Centre for Special Education in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. The reason for choosing this person was that he had worked as a school principal in a mainstream primary school for a numbers of years. I benefited from the interview by learning how to manage interviews and timing.

Types of interview

Three main types of interview are discussed in the literature: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Bryman, 2016). Plowright (2011) uses the terms structured and less-structured as styles of interview or asking questions, and challenges the term ‘unstructured’ used by Bryman (2016), arguing that all interviewers have at least some initial idea of what they want to discuss. Hence, his term ‘less-structured’ is used to correspond to Bryman’s (2016) ‘semi-structured’ and ‘unstructured’ categories. However, as both these authors list similar advantages of such interviews, it appears that the distinction is one of terminology rather than substance.

A semi-structured interview is one in which the researcher asks some questions that were decided on in advance, yet also gives participants the opportunity and time to investigate other domains they regard as related (Hinchey, 2008). This form of interview allows questions to be altered if necessary in order to gain desired information, collaboration and better understanding.

For the purposes of my research, I decided to use semi-structured interviews, as these were most suitable for the Saudi culture, enabling a more relaxed conversation which was able to circumvent any difficulties that the interviewee had in responding to particular questions. Hence they are often described as “*soft interviews*” (Longhurst, 2010: p.103).

The semi-structured interview was used in this study, as it gives interviewers the flexibility to explore interviewees' opinions in greater depth, leading to richer information being obtained from the interviewees as they feel free and able to lead the discussion (Briggs and Coleman, 2007; Plowright, 2011). This makes it a suitable tool for collecting data on complicated issues, such as those on perspectives of inclusion. Semi-structured interviews, as highlighted by Reis and Judd (2000), are recognised as being notably more interactional, and also ensure a greater degree of flexibility of 'stimulus' presentation, facilitating the gathering of more in-depth data. They can be used to investigate phenomena that cannot be observed or arrived at by other techniques (Wellington, 2015). Thus, this type of interview was chosen because I considered it to be the best way of eliciting information regarding principals' perceptions of inclusive education for children with Down's syndrome.

I felt that it would be a useful format for my purposes because it helps to avoid the potential limitations of structuring an entire interview; semi-structuring encourages participants to speak freely by offering them the security to express ideas of relevance to a research topic. Moreover, follow-up questions can be employed to obtain a deeper understanding of interviewees' responses (Briggs and Coleman, 2007). Since the goal of my research was to achieve such a deep understanding of the principals' attitudes towards inclusion, a semi-structured approach was clearly the most beneficial.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews typically start with a general question in the broad area of study. For example, in my interviews, after I had put the interviewees at their ease about anonymity and the purposes of the study, I would begin with a general question such as 'How is your school?' I planned an agenda or set of questions included on an interview schedule, which were a starting point for further questions.

It is important to connect the interview plan and design to the researcher's main purpose. Therefore, when I was developing the interview questions, I considered the aims of the interview; the nature of the subject; whether I would be dealing with facts, views or perspectives; whether specificity or depth was required; the respondents' level of

education; the type of information the respondents were likely to have; the extent of my own insights into the respondents' situation; and the kind of relationship I could expect to develop with the respondents (Cohen et al., 2011). Cohen et al. (2011) recommend that researchers who propose to use semi-structured interviews address the topics that will be dealt with in their research and consider certain above factors when formulating interview questions.

Care was taken to avoid questions that might annoy participants, such as details regarding their annual assessment by the Local Educational Authority. Direct and indirect questions were formed, and the focus was on exploring participants' perspectives regarding the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream primary schools and issues relevant to this. Specific and general ideas were covered so that, as far as possible, open and honest answers and opinions could be given (Cohen et al., 2011). The interview guide for the present research comprised some specific questions that were not asked in any particular order. Other questions were formulated based on the participants' responses.

Whilst every effort was made to overcome potential issues related to the interviews, I was, however, also aware that the use of supplementary data collection methods would balance the subjectivity of the interviews and increase the credibility of the study. Therefore, I used participant observation and documentary analysis.

3.5.2. Participant Observation

Bryman (2016) indicates the main types of observation research used in social research (although there is some overlapping between them): participant observation; non-participant observation; unstructured observation; simple observation; contrived observation, and; systematic or structured observation. Nevertheless, it can be argued that social research is a type of participant observation (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007).

Participant observation is a method that involves listening, asking, watching, collecting and recording data (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). It is a data collection approach

involving the observer in the daily lives of those being researched, whether covertly or openly, over a relatively long-term period (Becker and Geer, 1957).

Waddington (1994) shows the merit of using this method for researchers aiming to realise the behaviour, experiences, emotions and thoughts of participants and thus discover novel meanings, dimensions or concepts that cannot be drawn through other methods. Moreover, according to Merriam (2009: p.119), the participant observer sees things in person and, therefore, “*observation is the best technique to use when an activity, event, or situation can be observed first hand*”. In the same fashion, participant observations are direct and thus offer direct evidence (Denscombe, 2007; Yin, 2009).

Cohen et al. (2011) also point out that data collected by means of observing participants can offer a means of cross-checking the material with the responses of participants in interviews. An additional advantage of observation is that it can uncover relevant and unconsidered factors in relation to the research (Cohen et al., 2011).

Participant observation allowed me to gain an insider’s view of the research setting being studied and thus enabled me to gain insight into the participants’ everyday life. This observation was conducted in boys’ schools rather than girls’ schools due to attitudes and customs of Saudi society (see later section).

Furthermore, the observations provided an opportunity to obtain informal access to suitable participants (in the present case, school principals). In the case of senior management granting access to researchers, research success is still dependent on having the cooperation and approval of those at the lower levels of the organisation (Bryman, 2016). It is not enough simply to obtain formal or official access to be able to carry out research with participants from all levels. In my study, therefore, I cultivated a good relationship with all the personnel in the schools and went out with them on some trips. As I will later discuss in more detail, this had an effect on my access to information during my participant observation.

Taking into consideration its benefits, participant observation was chosen as one of the supplementary methods of data collection. Observations were used to assist in the

interpretation of the data that emerged from the interviews and documentary analysis. The observations were useful for the triangulation of my research and for providing another viewpoint on inclusion practices; and, although it is not seen as a main method, like interviews, the use of observation is a valid method for acquiring data in qualitative research.

The role of the observer

There are many roles that can be assumed by researchers *vis-à-vis* participants that affect the results of data generation (Bryman, 2016). The involvement and detachment levels of those under study can be the basis for distinguishing such roles. As such, Gold (1958) identified four roles that researchers can use during participant observation, ranging from complete participant to complete observer. Complete participants are typically covert observers who participate in all activities but without divulging their identity or purpose. However, although complete observers perform the same unobtrusive observation, they do this without social engagement with the participants. Participants-as-observers, however, fall between the two aforementioned types of researcher, as the researchers participate with the subjects of the research but can reveal their identity. Observers-as-participants tell the subjects of their identity but have less participation in their activities.

In this study, the complete participant and the complete observer approaches were ruled out for the following reasons: it is true that a covert role spares the need for permission to access the setting, yet access may become a great problem if the target setting belongs to an organisation, institution or corporation and thus the researcher has to be a member of the target setting. In contrast, a covert role would not have allowed me at a later stage in the research to collect documents, which was key to answering the research questions. In addition, a covert role would not have allowed me to use photography in schools (even with permission from the Local Educational Authority to do so; please see Appendix 1), which was an important part of my research. Finally, it is true that a covert role is able to minimise the potential bias resulting from participants changing their behaviour when aware of being under observation (May, 2011; Bryman, 2016). There

are, however, many ethical considerations and problems with such an approach. Saunders et al. (2009) equate covert observation with unacceptable 'spying'.

The roles of participant-as-observer and observer-as-participant were selected and implemented interchangeably. Such roles, along with their openness, provided the opportunity to help combat any suspicion while gaining the trust of participants, which put them at ease and allowed them to show their real attitudes, feelings and behaviour to me. These roles did, however, present some potential challenges. My role could at times be seen as intrusive, and there was always a possibility that I might inadvertently offend somebody by my participation and conversation. In the study, I did not hide my identity, which satisfied academic trustworthiness and social legitimacy and also allowed me to interact with the participants; thus, it was the most appropriate and effective way of helping me gather invaluable information.

In the same way, Bryman (2016) points out the likely stress involved in the observation of participants, which can be aggravated by the anxiety of being observed. In the study, I felt that my overt status permitted me to behave more naturally and enabled me to ask questions, carry out informal interviews and take notes freely and easily. Essentially, I adopted the role of advisor, friend and researcher owing to my positionality in this study. Importantly, I used to work with all of the male principals who participated in this study, meaning that some of the participants would have viewed me as an insider (Mercer, 2007).

Informal conversational interviews

Informal discussions or informal conversation interviews arise from the immediate context, with no predetermination of question topics or framing (Coll and Chapman, 2000; Patton, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Informal discussions with the participants take the form of a casual discussion with a friend.

According to some researchers there is a connection between participant observation and informal conversational interviews. As Gall et al. (2003: p.239) point out, such informal interviews rely "*...entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in a natural*

interaction, typically one that occurs as part of ongoing participant observation fieldwork". In addition, Rubin and Babbie (2013: p.123) reaffirm this, defining an informal conversational interview as "*an unplanned and unanticipated interaction between an interviewer and a respondent that occurs naturally during the course of observation*". Informal conversational interviews have been used in several studies projects conducted in special education (for example; Sing-you, 2009; Almotairi, 2013; and Suleymanov 2014). However, from an ethical perspective, when I began an informal conversation, if participants offered a good idea, I asked them if I could use it in this research, and thus gained verbal permission, which in Saudi culture is more valid than obtaining signed consent.

Given the lack of qualitative research in Saudi Arabia, I am compelled here to speak from experience. From what I know of Saudi culture, particularly in the Eastern Province, the Islamic religion urges anyone when passing a group of people (men only) to greet them and for them to respond to that greeting. As mentioned earlier, I had already worked with the majority of the principals whom I interviewed for this study, so I was obliged to acknowledge them; not only to shake hands with them, but to kiss them on the cheek. I also had to make a point of addressing any questions from the staff, for example: What news do you have? How is your family? How is your study going? More importantly: What do you have here? Thus, it was more beneficial to talk to individuals at school during participant observation than to be a silent participant-observer. Therefore, at various instances during this study, informal interviews were carried out as part and parcel of continuing participant observations with teachers, parents and principals.

In addition, these interviews were unstructured and general in nature and were used to obtain clarity and understanding. In most cases, I instigated the interviews; however, there were times when staff members or parents approached me. I capitalised on the opportunity to gather data, grasping every chance to conduct informal conversations during the participant observation, as I did not have enough time to visit all the mainstream schools in the Eastern Province.

The lack of consistency in the questions causes some researchers to describe informal interviews as undependable and untrustworthy. It can also be difficult to code data since direct comparison may not be possible (Creswell, 2009). Another shortcoming associated with informal interviews is that the data collected can be difficult to analyse, as interviews are not carried out in an orderly manner (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Nevertheless, informal interviews are capable of collecting a large amount of data on a specific topic (Kitchin and Tate, 2013). This can create a background within which to analyse the rest of the data gathered through methods such as semi-structured interviews, participant observations and documentary analysis.

A benefit of informal conversations is that they are very specific and can give rise to new information and ideas that the researcher had not previously considered (Robson and McCartan, 2016). The unstructured nature of informal interviews is said to be an advantage as it makes room for flexibility in the questions asked (Gall et al., 2003), so the researcher is able to act in a way that is *“appropriate, depending on what emerges from observing a particular setting or from talking with one or more individuals in that setting”* (Patton, 2002: p.342). The combination of flexibility and focus on actual events, bring about a detailed understanding of the participant’s conduct, thoughts about the topic.

During informal conversations I tried my best to relate to the interviewees’ feelings. According to Merriam (1991: p.40), empathy is the basis of understanding, *“a researcher is better able to have a conversation with a purpose... in an atmosphere of trust”*. Hence, I made the decision not to record the informal conversational interviews (the semi-structured interviews were recorded) even though I had a digital recorder with me, as I feared that it would ruin the spontaneity of the ‘moments’ as they took place in the staff room, between classes and in corridors (Patton, 2002). Nevertheless, this proved difficult as I was often unable to remember all of the conversations I had had word for word. To resolve this issue, I would immediately go to my car after conducting an informal interview and write down the important points from each interview. I did this irrespective of whether the conversation occurred in the staff-room or in the playground.

Confirmation bias was, of course, a particular risk for my research, since I had entered into the research with my own particular perspective, and this process of note-taking relied more on my own interpretation, since I could not record the conversations verbatim. Yardley (2000) states that research project transparency is fundamental in ensuring the quality of a study. Furthermore, qualitative researchers maintain that all studies encompass some degree of bias and value. It is essential, therefore, that biases and values are identified at the onset of a study (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Whilst there may have been a possibility of bias in my recorded notes, by recording each conversation as it took place, and offering transparency about my process of data collection, I hope to have minimised the impact of any such bias.

These conversations were crucial as they allowed me to obtain clarity on certain matters. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggested such interviews provide an in-depth look into the manner in which participants view matters relating to the research. This helped by improving the understanding of the topics raised by the parents, teachers and principals, especially as I left the Local Educational Authority approximately ten years ago, and so I had very little new information about inclusion. I learned a great deal about inclusion from the conversations I had.

In order to gain an understanding of their views on inclusive education, I had informal conversations with the parents, teachers and principals of the schools I observed. An example drawn from one of the schools that I attended occurred when I had an informal conversation with a teacher after breakfast. During our conversation I asked him wide-ranging questions about the subject matter. I let the “*conversation develop within this area*” (Robson and McCartan, 2016: p.285). I found this conversation to be useful as it provided me with the most recent information regarding the dispute on whether or not children with Down’s syndrome should be included in mainstream classrooms. In addition, I obtained recent information on the pupils in the inclusion class.

I managed to have discussions with all the staff members as well as the parents in a relaxed way. I was able to establish a rapport with the participants through the use of this informal method. This then allowed me to carry out observations and probe for more detailed responses, depending on their answers to the questions. I was then able to use

these conversations as a source for data examination, in order to support the findings following the verbal permission of participants.

Recording the observations

Field notes are a major element in observing participants (May, 2011). In this study, field notes denote briefly written notes that I took at the time of observation to help follow-up recall. When possible, a notepad was used. As detailed note-taking was not always possible, Fielding's (2008: p.273) "*jotted notes*" technique, in which the observer notes only key words, phrases and quotations, was useful. Such notes, which characterised wider pieces of verbal and non-verbal behaviour, refreshed my memory when I restructured events in more detail. This technique saved time, which allowed me to give greater attention to the activity I was observing.

I preferred not to reveal the written notes during the observation in order to be as unobtrusive and discreet as possible when taking notes, thereby putting the group at relative ease by not reminding them that they were being observed and, as such, they behaved in a natural way without being self-conscious. This was in line with Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias's (2008) caution that research participants may be affected and influenced by recording methods and, as a result, the participation of the researcher in group activities may be affected. I took notes in private places, for example, in my car during break times, in order to avoid attracting attention to the note-taking. I took photographs out of school time after the students had left for the day.

The field notes were written up soon after each observation round, since, as Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) mention, any delay between observation and recording can lead to recall loss. The field notes were jotted down in a reflexive way, which permitted the inclusion of my responses and feelings regarding the occasions described. Keeping a fieldwork diary was beneficial for recording impressions about progress which, in turn, reminded me of the problems faced during data collection, and thus enhanced the analysis of the data, an examples of research diary notes (observations) can be seen in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3. Also, an examples of research diary notes (informal interviews) can be seen in Appendix 4 and Appendix 5.

Limitations of observations

The purpose of my study was seen in some instances to be of concern to some participants, leading them to behave in a way that was not natural to them. Nonetheless, engaging with them in social and informal activities facilitated the overcoming of any suspicion and helped win their trust, thus mitigating the distortive impact of my presence. Moreover, it was beneficial to have a letter of official permission from the local educational authority to carry out the research, as this helped to alleviate their anxiety. Hence, these procedures helped overcome any potential limitation of observation. The benefits of undertaking participant observation notwithstanding, there is still a chance that the participant observer knowingly or unknowingly affects the participants and the setting (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Bryman, 2016). Moreover, according to Simpson and Tuson (2003: p.55), observing someone “*is the most intrusive of all techniques for gathering data*”. This problem was encountered in the early stages of the fieldwork.

Participant observation is known for its subjectivity, since the findings are the interpretation of the researcher. Therefore, my role was an inextricable part of the process of data collection. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that such a problem can be controlled by training. Regarding this point, discussions with my supervisor and attendance at several lectures on research at the University of Lincoln, as well as the Study School (a programme held three times a year at the University of Lincoln) all expanded my understanding of the field of research, particularly with regard to my positionality as a lecturer and a researcher who has a child with Down’s syndrome and the impact on observation, in order to exclude bias of my research (see later discussion of positionality).

Furthermore, participant observation has the limitation of being time consuming. Unlike observation, which often takes weeks to uncover data, spending a short time interviewing can reveal attitudes and behaviours within a few minutes (Seale et al., 2001). While this is true in many aspects, it was balanced out due to my acquaintance with the organisational and national background of the research, with little need for long participant observations. This is consistent with Vidich (1955) and Frankfort-Nachmias

and Nachmias (2008), who note that participant observation is easier in one's own society since there is a common symbolic system and language to facilitate communication.

Lastly, a major limitation of participant observation is gaining access (Saunders et al., 2009; Bryman, 2016). This difficulty was faced in the study owing to a delay in the approval letter from the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia and also the denial of access to girls' schools. Nevertheless, after obtaining official permission, participant observation was greatly beneficial in helping gain informal access to the male schools.

I was aware that using another supplementary means of data collection would help level the degree of observation subjectivity and improve the study's trustworthiness. For this reason, a number of documents were collected in order to assist in the explanation and understanding of inclusion in a Saudi context. This supplementary method will now be explained in detail.

3.5.3. Documentary Analysis

The second supplementary approach adopted in this research was analysis of documentary data, which is an essential source of data for qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). According to Yin (2009), documentation is an important method of data collection as a means to enhance evidence from other sources. The use of documents was useful for triangulation of this research or as another viewpoint on inclusion practices.

Sources such as official documents are significant because they can illustrate organisations' and state agencies' areas of interest (Padgett, 1998). From documents, there is a great deal to be learned and understood about society (Pole and Lampard, 2002). In this present research, such documents provided a description of the policies and practices of inclusion. The documents consulted for this research were the Education Policy in Saudi Arabia (1970), the Rules and Regulations of Special Education in Saudi Arabia (2002), The Code for Persons with Disabilities in Saudi Arabia (2001), minutes of school meetings (2012/2013 and 2013/2014), and minutes of the Consultative Group

for Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia (2004). The codes used throughout the analysis related to the five documents are shown in Table 3.2, where 'D' is used to represent 'document'. The documents have a number of different articles within them, to which reference is made. In this case, 'A' is used. The code to D1A1, for example, signifies D1 for the first document and A1 for the first article.

Table 3.2: Document information

Documents (cods)	Document title
D1	The Education Policy in Saudi Arabia (1970)
D2	The Special Education Policy in Saudi Arabia (2002)
D3	The Code for Persons with Disabilities in Saudi Arabia (2001)
D4	Minutes of school meetings
D5	The Consultative Group for Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia (2004)
Related to some documents (codes)	Description
A1, 2, 3, etc.	Articles taken from the documents

Documentary analysis criteria

Cohen et al. (2011) maintain that there is a need to conduct documentary analysis in a systematic way while setting defined criteria for document selection and analysis. I therefore used a categorisation system to develop the themes that emerged from analysing the interviews in order to highlight the history of the issue clearly, concentrating on the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream schools. The criteria for document analysis are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Documentary analysis criteria

Criterion for documentary analysis	Applied to
Looking for the key words “inclusion”, “integration”, “mainstreaming”. Also, “Down’s syndrome”, “learning difficulties”, “special educational needs” as well as “disability”. In addition, “implementation” and other words such as “gender” “Ministry” “training” “support”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Education Policy in Saudi Arabia (1970). 2. The Special Education Policy in Saudi Arabia (2002). 3. The Code for Persons with Disabilities in Saudi Arabia (2001). 4. Minutes of school meetings. 5. The Consultative Group for Down’s syndrome (2004).

One of the criteria for documentary analysis in this research was the presence of terms such as “inclusion”, “Down’s syndrome”, “learning difficulties”, “special educational needs”, and “implementation”. This process was adopted because these terms indicated whether the documents were directly related to this study. In addition, documents were analysed if the issue of inclusion was addressed and looked at a school’s willingness to cater for students with Down’s syndrome.

Before embarking on the research project I undertook to test these methods in a pilot study, which I will explain in the next section.

3.6. Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to identify any problems with my research design. Five male principals (who were also involved in the main study later, due to the limited number of inclusive schools in the Eastern Province) answered the interview questions to ensure that the phrasing and terms used were clear and that the questions were appropriate. It is recommended that research questions should be piloted (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Piloting provides an opportunity to examine the clarity of the questions and the design in terms of the way in which the questions have been presented (i.e., on paper, electronically, or verbally). Pilot studies also provide “*valuable feedback on the content, flow, and clarity of the questions*” (Bartholomew et al., 2000: p.292).

Through the pilot study, new ideas were discovered and added to the final design of the interview schedule. For instance, a question comparing the difference between two types of school building, government and ARAMCO, was added. Some questions were also merged and others deleted to make better use of the time available. I also learnt about how to manage the time of the interview schedule, because I had limited time when I conducted the official interviews. Based on what I gained from the pilot study, I decided to interview 20 principals.

Having described the pilot study in my research, I will now address the sampling design of the study.

3.7. Sampling Design

The study was conducted in the Eastern Province of the country with 20 male and female school principals taking part. I also analysed five key documents regarding inclusion. The observations took place in five selected schools: four inclusive government primary schools and one inclusive ARAMCO primary school. Saudi Arabia is still committed to observing cultural constraints and, above all, religious restrictions. Thus, the research observation was limited to boys' schools in order to avoid infringing these restrictions, as no man is allowed in Saudi Arabia to enter girls' schools for any reason. This limitation could not have been overcome.

As was highlighted when I explained the Saudi school structure (see chapter two), schools consist of three groups of people. The first group are those who occupy the highest position in the school, known as principals. A principal has considerable responsibilities and power in each school, as he/she is the one who manages and is responsible for the school. All contact made with the Local Educational Authority must be through him/her. With regard to any suggestions by the Local Educational Authority for developing schools (in this research, inclusive schools), particularly with regard to fieldwork, the principal must be present at any meeting. Any visitors to the school or any discussion about problems in the school must also go through the principal.

The second group represents staff, such as the deputy head teacher, teachers and student advisors. They perform duties which they are given by the principals and they do not have any power in school management. The third group is that of pupils and their parents who are considered to be external to the discussion of any development in education. This is because the culture of education in Saudi Arabia does not have school governors or school boards which would allow parents to participate in the running of the school. The absence of any power among the second and third groups in matters of inclusion meant that it was unlikely that inclusion of representatives from these categories in the sample of the current research would have any significant influence on its outcomes (Alsimbel et al., 2006). This is not to deny their importance to the educational outcomes for children with Down's syndrome. As Aboela (2008) explains, considering the perspective of teachers is important because they are the ones who deal directly with pupils in schools and in the classroom, as well as being knowledgeable about the children's behaviour.

Moreover, Al-Habdan (2001), who has conducted research on family participation in schools for children with Down's syndrome, recommends that researchers ask parents about the reasons why their child likes or dislikes the school. Alanazi (2012) also confirms that it is essential to consider including pupils in the sample of study; therefore, one of the research samples was with children with learning difficulties. Alanazi (2012) gathered data from these children using drawings in order to learn their views on inclusion.

Nevertheless, despite the important role of teachers, parents and pupils, I decided to focus only on school principals in the interview stage of my research because principals can provide in-depth details based on their experiences, as they work in educational organisations and with students with and without Down's syndrome and because they are heading schools at a time of the implementation of an inclusion policy in Saudi Arabia. Another reason that led me to choose principals is that my research aims to make recommendations for the development of inclusive education policies, and, in a Saudi context, principals have the power to influence such policies directly because they can persuade decision makers to introduce a more realistic practice through their

expertise in this field, such as their knowledge of schools, students, curricula and other issues. Principals are also well placed to offer an understanding of the perspectives of the other participants, such as teachers, parents and pupils, due to their position within the school community. During my interviews, the principals frequently volunteered information relating to the perspectives and opinions of teachers, parents and pupils.

There are, of course, limitations in choosing to work only with school principals. As leaders in positions of responsibility, school principals have a vested interest in presenting a particular viewpoint. Crotty (1998) stated that knowledge, and thus meaningful reality in a manner of speaking, is dependent upon a variety of human practices and is thus formed during the interactions that occur between humans and the world itself. These are then transmitted within a context that is essentially social. Moreover, they can only speak for the other participants, such as parents, teachers and students, to a limited extent. Nevertheless, on balance I decided that this group would be the most fruitful to work with for my study.

While I did not interview teachers, parents or pupils, these groups were included in the participant observation stage through the means of informal conversations. Such conversations were culturally appropriate, since in Saudi culture, observations are expected to take the form of participation and conversation.

The sampling strategy

Researchers need to choose a part of the wider research population as their sample. Sampling is fundamental across all research, whether qualitative or quantitative in nature, although different connotations can be inferred from the two approaches. Collis and Hussey (2009) state that a sample constitutes some of the members of a population understood to be a body of people or set of items under consideration for research objectives. This population can be divided into sampling units, which constitute a sampling frame (Vogt, 1999).

There are two main types of sampling: probability and non-probability (Briggs and Coleman, 2007; Plowright, 2011). The former is where researchers have access to each

individual person in the population, each of whom has the same opportunity of being chosen. By selecting a sample in this way, researchers can generalise their findings to a group outside their specific study because their sample is representative. In contrast, in non-probability sampling, access to the entire population is not possible; therefore, it is not possible to ascertain the likelihood of an individual being selected (Briggs and Coleman, 2007; Plowright, 2011). Consequently, Fink (2009: p.51) states that researchers should “*select only those respondents who are nearby and willing and available to complete the survey*”. This implies that researchers may not be able to generalise their findings if they use this approach.

Non-probability sampling was chosen for this study for a number of reasons: it facilitates analysis; it is difficult to include all mainstream school principals in the Eastern Local Educational Authority due to lack of time and because the Eastern Province is the largest region in Saudi Arabia; furthermore, Local Educational Authorities in Saudi Arabia are administratively independent from each other and each region has a Director of Education. Hence, I preferred to use the non-probability sampling method in this study. To produce the necessary data for this study, I used purposive sampling. The reason for choosing purposive sampling was that I wished to explore a specific type of population in greater depth (Neuman, 2014).

According to Cohen et al. (2011: p.156), in purposive sampling, “*researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs*”. When using a purposive non-random sample, the criteria employed to choose the participants for interviews are more significant than the number of individuals interviewed (Patton, 2002; Cohen et al., 2011). Choices are normally based on the features of single group of people, usually to mirror the variety and extent of the sample populace (Cohen et al., 2011).

To determine a sample at the start of the current study, I returned to the literature review, methodology and also to my own experience, time and resources. Keeping this in mind, the next step was to decide the size of the sample. The size of a sample is determined by the method of research. Plowright (2011: p.42) claims that “*non-probability sampling*

involves selecting cases that do not necessarily represent...” a wider population but “...*have information that will contribute directly to answering the research question*”. This statement offers guidance for researchers on the use of non-probability sampling by stressing the abilities of chosen cases to contribute towards research enquiry.

However, to enhance the current study’s viability, criteria were established in order to ensure that the purposive sample answered the research questions and satisfied the research objectives. Furthermore, regarding practical geographical considerations, there were other selection criteria for schools, namely primary schools, schools from cities, towns, villages, and hamlets, and schools which have children with Down’s syndrome that needed to be considered in terms of logistics. The sample criteria included the influence that individuals have on inclusion policy and practice (see the reasons for choosing principals given at the beginning of this section).

An additional criterion was the condition for the sample to contain a range of perspectives on inclusion by involving male and female principals who manage governmental and ARAMCO schools. In my study, 20 principals from 20 different mainstream primary schools in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia participated in this study. Ten of the participants were male principals of boys’ mainstream primary schools, and the other ten participants were female principals of girls’ mainstream primary schools. It was believed that this number would provide a sufficient amount of in-depth detail. Despite the potential limitation to the degree of generalisation due to the limited number of interviews that were conducted (Burton et al., 2008), this was to some extent compensated by interviewees’ significant experience and background in special educational needs management. Moreover, I do not aim to generalise my findings, but to use them to make a series of recommendations, which may have relevance to others based on the principles of transferability and relatability.

Having outlined the sampling design of the research, in the next section I will discuss the data collection process.

3.8. Data Collection Process

The fieldwork was conducted in two stages: the first was conducting the interviews; the second focused on participant observations (including informal conversation) and collection of documents. The first stage of the fieldwork took place during the second semester of the academic year 2012/2013. The second stage of the fieldwork took place in the first semester of the academic year 2013/2014. Thus, although spanning two academic years, the two phases reflected the same conditions, in that there were no changes in policy, legislation or personnel between the two.

Before the data were collected, I completed a demographic information sheet with the principals using tick boxes (see Appendix 6). The aim of this was to provide demographic data about the principals such as experience in the educational field, training, age, and gender, experience with children with special educational needs support and categories of disability, as well as the type of school (government or ARAMCO). When the form was completed, I assured the participants that information gathered in it would be confidential and would not be used in any way that could identify them to any third parties.

During the data collection period, I encountered a number of issues, including participants' reluctance to add their signature to a consent form (discussed later). However, I successfully completed all the interviews with the principals and the observations in the mainstream schools. I had had a great deal of experience dealing with principals as a former Special Education Supervisor; therefore, I felt that collecting data from principals would be achieved without great difficulty. Each principal presented a special challenge and each principal had his or her own story regarding that challenge.

The respondents were informed about the purpose of the interview and how it would be conducted, and their permission for it to be recorded was gained. Tuckman (1999) claims that interviewers should avoid expressing their opinions concerning the research issue during interviews, although they may need to control the interview by politely

steering respondents back to the point if they deviate from it. Thus, I needed to be sensitive, careful and able to communicate well.

Collecting data through interviews can be an arduous task if the researcher is not trained in this. Bryman and Bell (2011) state that the language used in interviews must be completely understandable for the interviewee so that he or she can answer in the most efficient manner. Kvale (1996) also suggests that a successful interviewer should have sufficient knowledge about the topic as well as possessing good interpersonal skills.

Interviews offer participants freedom to discuss desired topics. This being the case, the duration of each personal interview will differ greatly, from short to considerably longer, determined by the interviewee's cooperation. Therefore, I made sure that I was flexible with the time allowed for each interview.

In conducting the interviews, I followed Smith's (2008: p.58) recommendation that the interview "*be guided by the schedule rather than be dictated by it*". This approach guided me to follow the interests and thoughts of informants, which are considered to generate the richest data (Smith, 2008).

A digital audio recorder was used during the semi-structured interviews, with the prior verbal approval of the participants. I did this for cultural reasons but the informal conversational interviews were not recorded. Using the digital recorder during the interviews was convenient as it offered me the opportunity to focus on the interview rather than noting down the responses. Moreover, the recordings could be replayed as many times as necessary for analysis.

The observations took place between 6 am and 1 pm, which are the official working hours for inclusive primary schools in Saudi Arabia, from Sunday to Thursday, the weekdays in Saudi Arabia. Although the observations were spread over all the official working hours, I was respectful of the culture of the participants in the research. I accepted requests from some of the principals for their participation to take place sometimes in the evening and/or at weekends. Indeed, I found this effort useful to the research, since it helped to increase the observation time by several additional hours.

This provided an excellent opportunity to carry out informal conversational interviews with other members of staff, as I will explain later. It also allowed me to observe the relationship between the principals and the teachers. For example, I went out with some principals and school staff to sit on a *corniche*, a place to sit by the sea; I went with others to farms as well as to a *kashtah* (a picnic). It is in the culture in Saudi Arabia to sit on the sand and eat dinner together and then all return home at night; this often takes place at the weekend. All of this helped me gain information covering many aspects of the main themes and sub-themes of my study. A key purpose of participant observation is that it requires researchers who use this strategy to become involved in different activities, such as participation, documentation, informal interviewing and reflection (Willig, 2008).

I gathered data from all the principals who participated and, at other times, from teachers and parents, through informal interviews in school and in other places such as on trips. These interviews took place throughout the observation time, as the opportunity presented itself. This is an approach supported by theories of research methodology. Guest et al. (2013: p.84) confirm that, “*informal interviews are almost always part of participant observation*”.

Thus, the focus of the observation was on how the principals conducted their daily work, but with a particular focus on issues related to the inclusion of children with Down’s syndrome in mainstream schools. This included, for example, observing the process of the principals performing at a mainstream school, how the principals regarded inclusion, how they used equipment and facilities at their school, as well as their fears of such programmes, and how religion and culture affect principals at work, and dealing with the inclusion of children with Down’s syndrome.

In addition, observations that focused on the process of inclusion enabled me to establish the nature of the relationships and cooperation within the school between, for example, the principal/deputy head teacher, principal/resident supervisor, principal/students and other relations, as well as how they worked together in a mainstream school. Moreover, I tried through observation to gain an insight into the nature of the cooperation between the principals and the beneficiaries of inclusion (in this case the parents of children with

Down's syndrome). Furthermore, through observation, I learned a great deal about the school environments and the extent to which they are suitable for the educational process of the inclusion of these children. Break times in the school were also observed, as well as the classroom, where, besides aiming to observe the exclusion or inclusion of children with Down's syndrome, the activity was also designed to observe the friendships between children, which can be illustrated by playing, eating breakfast together and other activities. My visiting, attending classes, and observing the pupils and teachers did not interrupt the pupils, since most of them were familiar with visitors from the Ministry of Education or universities.

During the observation process, I observed various practices that encouraged the performance of inclusion and some that hindered its implementation, such as the exclusion of children with Down's syndrome in a separate wing in one school. I also observed how children with Down's syndrome were involved or otherwise in activities such as art and physical education class. In another example I noted during my observation of classrooms the use of some teaching aids that helped students to understand the lessons, while, in others, there were bare walls, which is a practice that hinders the implementation of inclusion. This reduces the development of children with Down's syndrome in academic subjects, because posters help their learning processes, as well as being beneficial for other children (Al-Khatteeb, 2008).

Participant observation provided useful opportunities for discussion. For example, I was able to observe a principal's visit to a special education teacher in one of the classrooms, which enabled me to ask the principal how he evaluated the performance of these teachers.

In the observations I also used a digital camera to take photographs of some parts of the interiors and exteriors of the school buildings, some of the furniture in the school, facilities such as toilets, and any other element that could support the interview results.

These data collection process meant that I accumulated data that need to be analysed. The process of data analysis will be described in the next section.

3.9. Data Analysis

In my research, the qualitative study methods of data collection used were interviews, documentary analysis, and participant observations (including informal conversation) in combination to provide answers to the study questions. The interviews were transcribed manually and then typed on a computer for the purpose of analysis. This was done to ensure that accuracy was guaranteed and for coding purposes. The recorded interviews and field notes on participant observations were transcribed in Arabic. It is not easy to translate from Arabic into English, as some nuances cannot be conveyed completely in other languages. Arabic is often described as a language with a substantial vocabulary, and many Arabic concepts do not have an English equivalent. Some examples are *wasta* (an Arabic word translated as the use of ‘social connections’ to acquire particular favours, the preferential access to facilities, as well as privileged dealings with public institutions); *nakhweh* (an Arabic word which means giving help and assistance when required to anyone who needs it and often involves deeds rather than words); and *kashtah* (a type of picnic often taking place at the weekend in Saudi Arabia where people sit on the sand, eat dinner together and then all return home at night).

Indeed, I was faced with great difficulties in rendering concepts from Arabic into English. Hence, the translation into English was undertaken only for the interview quotations and observation extracts that were selected for inclusion in the final text of the study. I translated the first draft; however, to ensure a high level of accuracy of translation, I asked a professional in English translation at King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia who holds a bachelor's degree in translation and works as a written and oral interpreter and an independent translator for a second opinion. I made some changes to the translation based on the suggestions provided by these two language professionals.

Reis and Judd (2000) opine that excerpts from written interviews should be marked for coding purposes. Each interview was, therefore, coded with a letter and a number. For example, all interview data collected from male principals was coded as MPG1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (for the government schools) and MPA1 (for the ARAMCO school); all data from female principals was coded as FPG1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and FPA1 (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Information on principals

School principal (code)	Gender	Job description	Type of school
MPG1	Male	Principal	Government
MPG2	Male		Government
MPG3	Male		Government
MPG4	Male		Government
MPG5	Male		Government
MPG6	Male		Government
MPG7	Male		Government
MPG8	Male		Government
MPG9	Male		Government
MPA1	Male		ARAMCO
FPG1	Female		Government
FPG2	Female		Government
FPG3	Female		Government
FPG4	Female		Government
FPG5	Female		Government
FPG6	Female		Government
FPG7	Female		Government
FPG8	Female		Government
FPG9	Female		Government
FPA1	Female		ARAMCO

Further, each observation was also coded with a letter and a number. For example, all data collected from schools was coded as OSG1, 2, 3, 4 and OSA1 (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Observation information

Observation (code)	Observation	School	Type of school
OSG1	Observation	School	Government
OSG2			Government
OSG3			Government
OSG4			Government
OSA1			ARAMCO

Moreover, throughout the observations in the five inclusive schools, informal conversations were carried out with principals of the government schools and one ARAMCO school, as well as amongst teachers and parents. Informal conversation codes using the designations P for principal, T for teacher and F for father as detailed in Table 3.6, were given to these and used throughout the analysis. Then, the data was stored on my personal computer under password protection and saved on a memory stick and in the Dropbox software programme as a backup.

Table 3.6: Information on informal conversations

Informal conversations with principals, teacher and parents (codes)	Type of interview	Job description	Type of school
IPG1	Informal conversations	Principal	Government
IPG2		Principal	Government
IPG3		Principal	Government
IPG4		Principal	Government
IPA1		Principal	ARAMCO
ITG1		Teacher	Government
ITG2		Teacher	Government
ITG3		Teacher	Government
ITA1		Teacher	ARAMCO
IFG1		Father	Government
IFA1		Father	ARAMCO

The interviews, participant observations, informal conversations and documents generated a large amount of data requiring careful analysis. The first challenge was to reduce the texts and information to an amount that still met the objectives of the study. According to Merriam (2009: p.171), *“Without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed”*. In this study, I analysed the first interviews and then supported that analysis by analysis of observation and documents.

With the above in mind, I began data analysis at an early point in the data collection stage. As McQueen and Knussen (1999) point out, the analysis of qualitative data is a continuous process that is best commenced early, as soon as the data collection begins. In reality, there are, of course, potential drawbacks to such an approach, such as the possibility of confirmation bias. It is also possible to be mistaken in identifying the importance of certain themes, as these might not be prominent in data collected later. Nevertheless, the benefits of this are that the data that are to be collected in the future will depend on the information that emerges from the material gathered earlier in the process. In other words, this enabled me to consider any new issues so that I could collect subsequent data to address them. Thus, it was possible to collect more data as it emerged from a consideration of the themes (Richardson, 1996).

When transcribing the first interview, I made notes of what the participant had said. Thus, after transcribing the second interview, I was able to make comparisons to check whether any of what they said was the same and to begin to prepare tentative categories. This was done for all the transcripts and, by the time the interviews ended, the majority of the collected information had been analysed.

This led to an analysis of the mainstream primary school principals' understanding of the concept of inclusion and observations of mainstream schools, as well as an analysis of the perspectives of principals regarding the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream primary schools in Saudi Arabia and the most important factors affecting principals' perspectives regarding inclusion. More specifically, however, postponement of the analysis of the data would have created a burden for me that would not have been easily managed.

Consequently, the first analysis took place in the field, and included careful examination of interview texts, observations, conversations and documents on a daily basis. I read and re-read all the sets of data, making records that captured my reflections, tentative themes, opinions, and aspects to follow up when collecting the next set of data. This "*simultaneous and recursive process*" (Ruona, 2005: p.237) of data collection and mini-analysis continued during the research in a cyclical form of development.

After the fulfilment of the investigation phase, the data were analysed in a more objective way and this stage comprised the main analysis. As Merriam (2009) states, although data gathering and evaluation is a concurrent and recursive procedure, it does not signify that evaluation is concluded when all the data have been gathered. In fact, when all the data have been collected, the evaluation may become more focused (Merriam, 2009). This concerns a three-fold thematic analysis approach which is summed up by Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) as a) classifying and coding, b) acquiring and investigating, and c) demonstrating.

Classifying and coding involves decreasing the data by splitting it into classes, each of which can include a number of sub-themes, allocating portions of data to suitable classes and sub-themes (Merriam, 2009). Coding is the central link between collecting data and developing an evolving theory to provide an explanation of the data (McQueen and Knussen, 1999).

I preferred to carry out categorisation and coding manually, as I wanted to read, view and maintain control over my data. Nevertheless, the considerable amount of study data gathered was a significant reason for considering employing computer-aided data evaluation software such as the NVivo software program. Ozkan (2004) highlights that great and differing amounts of data necessitate the employment of a software program to increase speed and flexibility in coding, extracting and linking information. In contrast, the employment of electronic methods has generated substantial debate regarding the advantages and issues related to coding qualitative information (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

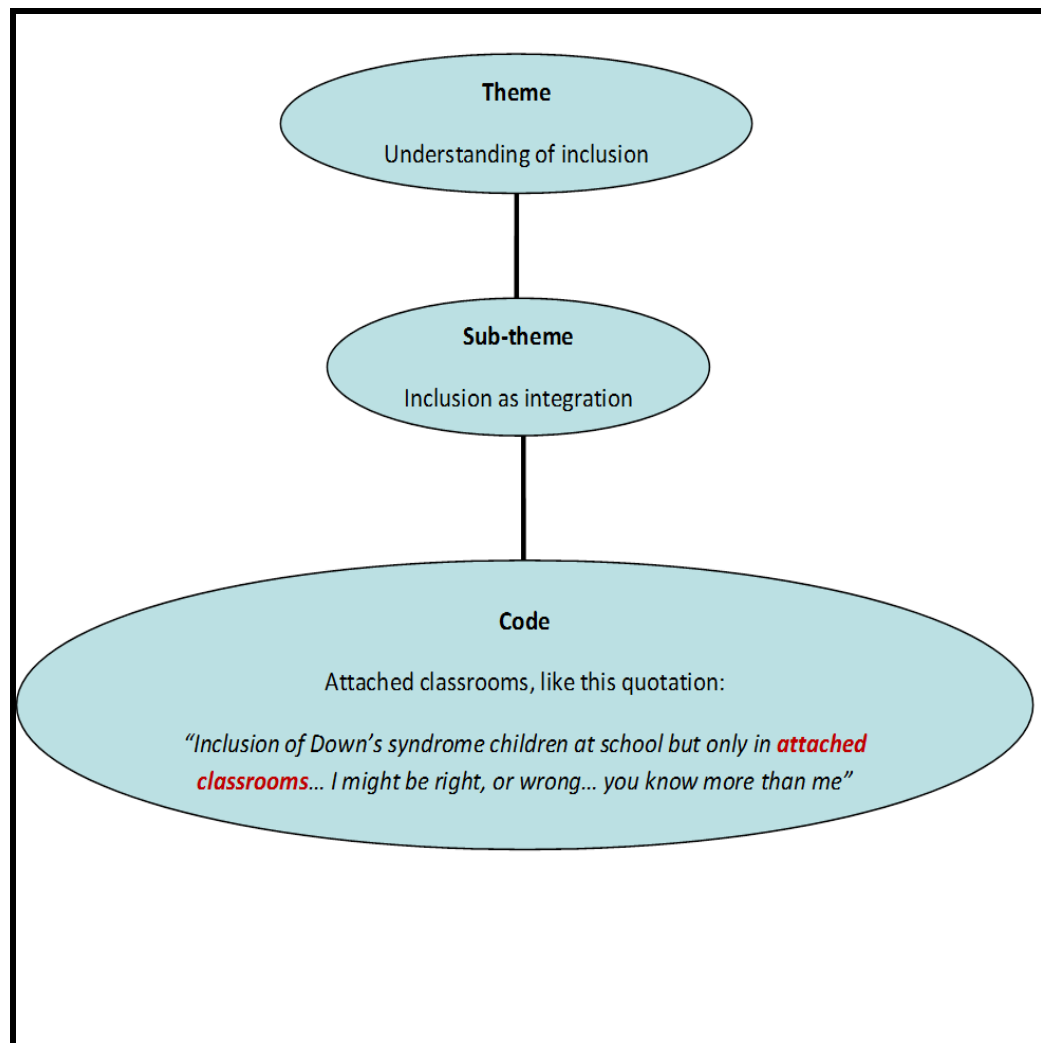
The key justification for not opting to utilise qualitative data analysis software was that a number of features are not included in NVivo. Moreover, software is prone to technical issues and can ultimately result in the loss of data and analysis efforts (Elsayed, 2008). Furthermore, software is no substitute for the academic function of the researcher. This view is supported by Spencer et al. (2003: p. 217), who assert, *“There is strong advice that these [for example, NVivo] should be seen only as an ‘analytic support’ to aid the process of analysis and not as a replacement for the intellectual role that is required of the researcher”*. Thus, by employing manual coding for themes, I became more closely

involved in the lives and worlds of the principals and their schools, and, in addition, did not disregard any factors that influenced the perspective of the principals.

I categorised the data manually using a traditional paper method, as I then felt more confident that no key data would be missed that might have been of importance in my research and in answering the study questions. Excerpts from the texts were printed out, labelled and assigned to the relevant category. I used coloured markers to code categories that were alike. This procedure allowed me to identify relationships between the data in the initial phase, as well as noticing contrasting data in order to assign extracts appropriately and check whether new categories were necessary. In this process, writing notes that recorded the development of the categories and the relations between them helped to ensure that ideas, notes and goals that arose through the process were not lost, and provided matter for more reflection as the analysis proceeded.

The coding and categorising stage ended with the reorganisation and re-evaluation of all categories and sub-categories, and the building of provisional conclusions that could then be confirmed by returning to the observation notes and interview texts. The second stage of the analysis was the recovery and review of the reduced and categorised data to identify the similarities and differences between respondents and to detect and refine any new ideas, themes or sub-themes. For the last step, I displayed the data, categorised into themes, sub-themes, similarities, and differences. By showing data on a single page as opposed to in an extended state, it was simpler to identify associations and sequences and discover novel concepts, and thus draw and corroborate conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Accordingly, for all data highlighted with the same colour, I cut and pasted the most appropriate category or theme below. For example, all the participants' problems with inclusion were put into the category "principals' problems with inclusion". These three stages were repeated iteratively, resulting in several productive and novel findings which called themes, sub-themes and codes. (See example of themes, sub-themes and codes in Figure 3.3 below).

Figure 3.3: Example of themes, sub-themes and codes



Moreover, it should be noted that analysis can be based on two strategies, a theoretical or descriptive approach to the data (Yin, 2009). My research was based on a theoretical plan; the social and medical models of disability and the Index for Inclusion, as a practical application of the theoretical framework (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) (see chapter two part two). I approached my data collection with this theoretical basis in mind and it provided me with a means of organization, an effective aid in structuring the analysis, indicating where, and on what, I should focus.

Having outlined the data analysis, in the next section I will discuss the impact of these research methods on questions of validity, reliability and the alternative quality criteria: trustworthiness and relatability.

3.10. Validity, Reliability, Trustworthiness and Relatability

Traditionally, the benefit of a piece of research depends on its validity and reliability (Devellis, 2012), as these reflect the quality of the study. Validity “*refers to the accuracy of a result. Does it capture the real state of affairs?*” (Robson and McCartan, 2016: p.105). Validity also refers to an assessment of whether a piece of research and its design accurately depicts the theory or theme that it is intended to illustrate (Briggs and Coleman, 2007).

Reliability traditionally “*relates to the probability that repeating a research procedure or method would produce identical or similar results*” (Bush, 2007: p.92). Moreover, an estimate of reliability is defined as the evaluation of the stability of measures managed at diverse times with respect to the same participants or implementing the same standard, or “*the equivalence of sets of items from the same test (internal consistency)*” (Kimberlin and Winterstein, 2008: p.2277).

However, the processes of assuring validity and reliability can differ according to the research approach or how the data are collected. Writers such as Lincoln and Guba (1985), Sandberg (2005) and Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) argue that the traditional understandings of these concepts are not consistent with the ontological and epistemological stance of qualitative research and they must be reconceptualised or substituted with alternative criteria. In qualitative studies, therefore, reliability and validity are replaced with the ideas of trustworthiness, comprising credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), and relatability (Bassey, 2001).

Since this study was intended to yield qualitative data by involving people who could change their opinions or beliefs due to social or political influence, it was difficult to achieve a high level of reliability in the traditional sense. It is not feasible to accurately

duplicate an interpretative study, owing to the differences and individuality inherent in the research context (Cohen et al., 2011). Moreover, Briggs and Coleman (2007) claim that when using semi-structured interviews, it might be difficult to guarantee replicability, since participants are deliberately treated as potentially unique respondents. In research that recognises participants' subjectivity, and the impact of context and experience, consistency of outcomes over time is not expected. Therefore, instead of conventional reliability, writers propose the criteria of dependability, understood in terms of integrity on conducting and reporting the research, a reflexive stance, and openness about one's own values and positionality (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Dependability was enhanced by ensuring the willingness to participate of the participants and the schools, by means of initial telephone contact and careful explanation of the research issue and study aims, stating the need for willing participants and to be able to observe their classroom practices. Moreover, respondents' convenience was considered a high priority when scheduling interviews, in order to ensure that they would be comfortable and not feel rushed. As advised by Hair et al. (2003), I carefully read the transcripts of the interviews when inputting the data to verify that there were no logical flaws and that the answers provided by individual participants were not contradictory; also, I used the same strategy when conducting observations along with informal conversational interviews, when I chose only five schools for purposive sampling in order to obtain a great deal of information within the limited amount of time granted by the Saudi Embassy, and this led to no logical flaws.

Moreover, as advised by Miles and Huberman (1994), I have also retained all materials used in retrievals from (documents, transcripts and recordings). As for reflexivity, since researcher bias can be an issue, I have been open about my positionality (chapter one, section 1.8) and my approach to dealing with issues encountered in the research (section 3.11.3 in this chapter).

Another problematic notion in qualitative research is internal validity, traditionally understood in terms of how well the research outcomes match reality. The reason this is problematic is that research rooted in interpretivism rejects a realist ontology and accepts the possibility of multiple (and sometimes conflicting) "realities". An alternative

is credibility, which concerns the presentation, not of a single absolute “truth” but of a reflection and meaningful interpretation of participants’ experiences and perceptions.

Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) claim that qualitative research is capable of achieving credibility by using certain means, such as member checks and triangulation. In this study, I used appropriate means, consistent with the qualitative approach, to ensure that my research was credible. For example, I used three data collection methods – interviews, observations (and informal conversational interviews) and documents –, which contributed to the credibility of my study. All of these methods provided in-depth data that enriched my understanding of how inclusion works in Saudi Arabia and, in particular, the way it is subjectively perceived and interpreted by principals in schools. Since I also used observation (and informal conversational interviews) in this study, for example, I was able to compare the interviewees’ responses with the results of the observations (and informal conversational interviews) in order to achieve credibility. Triangulation approaches in the social science sphere enable researchers to outline or describe in greater depth the complexity and richness of people’s behaviours through examining a phenomenon from various perspectives (Cohen et al., 2011). Thus, it can be seen that combining methods enhanced the accuracy of the data obtained (Robson and McCartan, 2016).

In order to support the trustworthiness of the data gathered in this study, I also discussed the interview questions and observation strategy with my supervisor, other experts, such as the Director of the Centre of Special Educational Needs in Saudi Arabia, and school principals and professionals involved in the special educational needs field, to seek their advice in terms of improving the data collection. Furthermore, since the interview schedule was developed in English, an English-language specialist assessed the appropriateness of the wording of the questions and their face value. These questions were then translated into Arabic. The semantic correspondence of the Arabic and English versions was verified by experts and an independent translator, as I mentioned previously who holds a certificate in translation. Subsequently, I showed participants their interview script before using it (member checks).

There is a need to recognise that qualitative approaches have been questioned with regard to generalisability or external validity (Yin, 2009); it is commonly suggested that, regardless of the depth of understanding reached in a certain case, this does not mean generalisability as traditionally conceptualised can be achieved. The problems associated with generalising results have been touched upon with regard to utilising only a limited number of cases (Punch, 2005). However, generalisation is not the concern for my research; the emphasis is instead on understanding the cases under examination in their specific context (Punch, 2005).

In consideration of the above discussion, the present research does not intend to generalise the findings to other schools in other areas of Saudi Arabia; rather, the objective is to deliver insight into a very specific context. The example of the Eastern Province was not viewed as a representative sampling unit, owing to the fact that there are several large ARAMCO schools in the area, meaning this particular locality is unique. Accordingly, this choice was made bearing in mind the provision of a real-life context with the purpose of analysing and gaining insight into the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia, facilitating the fulfilment of the research's aims and objectives.

This does not, however, preclude the possibility of wider application, subject to the principle of transferability, a judgement by the reader of the appropriateness of transfer, based on similarity of context. The researcher's role is to inform such judgement by providing detailed contextual information; this is done in chapter two, part two, and through the rich verbal and pictorial information in chapter 4, 5 and 6.

A similar concept to transferability is relatability, which was introduced by Bassey (2001) specifically in the education context (Blaikie, 2010). It is defined as the extent to which the research findings are sufficient and appropriate for others working in the same field (such as school principals) to relate their own experience and decision-making to the case(s) described (Bassey, 1984, 2001). In other words, it concerns whether the situations described are sufficiently in harmony with readers' experience for them to benefit from the findings (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993), or the extent to which they find relevance in the researcher's interpretations (Pound, 2000). Relatability combines

the notions of resonance (meaning recognisability) and transferability (Sanger, 1994), and also bears comparison with Stake's (1995) idea of "naturalistic generalisations", which are not predictable regularities, but guiding inferences drawn by readers, depending on the fit between what Lincoln and Guba (1985) call the sending and relieving contexts.

Relatability is a useful concept in studies where it is not possible, because of the small number of cases and/or the particularity of the context, to claim generalisability. Indeed, in Bassey's (1984, 2001) view, it is more important than generalisability. It allows readers to evaluate the research findings, with full awareness of the methods and sample used (Bassey, 2001), and use them for their needs (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Examples of relatability could include schools of the same type (e.g. primary, urban or rural, public or private), similar size and with similar ethnic, cultural and socio-economic characteristics (Bell, 2005).

There is no guarantee that the findings can be applied, but by providing relatable empathetic insights (Bassey, 2001), a study may stimulate worthwhile thinking (Bassey, 1999), allowing readers to adapt the research findings and implications to their own contexts (Davey, 2015), opening up possibilities for action (Andrew, 2003).

As with transferability, therefore, the first step in facilitating relatability is to provide a rich account of the study and its context (Blaikie, 2010), including the physical, organisation and social factors influencing policies and practices (Andrew, 2003). Such particularisation can provide readers with a vicarious experience that can contribute to the social construction of knowledge (Stake, 2000). In this thesis, for example, I provided a detailed account of the research background in chapter 1 and in chapter 2, I described the Saudi context of the education of children with Down's syndrome and the move towards inclusion, including legislation, the structure of the education system, social and religious attitudes towards disability, the role played by ARAMCO, and the cultural phenomenon of '*wasta*'. In the three findings chapters, I make extensive use of quotation to illustrate practices and conditions in the selected schools, and in chapter 6 in particular, I provide rich details on the physical environment.

Relatability is also promoted by the use of triangulation of methods and data sources as a heuristic tool (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), providing different and complementary information (Gray and Malins, 2016), in order better to capture the richness and complexity of the research setting. This approach reflected in the ways in which issues of language, culture and personal experience influenced my data collection and interpretations (Blaikie, 2010). In all these ways, I have afforded opportunities for readers to evaluate the relatability of this study.

Having discussed trustworthiness and relatability, let me now conclude this chapter by discussing ethical considerations, specifically informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality and issues regarding my own position as a researcher.

3.11. Ethical Considerations

There are various ethical matters to be considered when performing a study. Research ethics provides direction concerning how studies may be performed in an ethically correct manner (Pring, 2004). Among the key moral issues is the acquisition of informed consent from participants, discussing availability, protecting identity and privacy, and providing the right to withdraw (Pring, 2004; Cohen et al., 2011). In addition, within this study there were other matters that arose prior to or during the data gathering procedure, such as positionality and reflexivity, my being a male researcher, and other matters.

3.11.1. Informed Consent

All the principals who took part in this research were adults and, therefore, consent was sought directly from them. However, I now work as a lecturer at King Faisal University, so I did not have any relations with the Local Educational Authority in the Eastern Province in Saudi Arabia, nor any power to support or influence the school principals. All 20 participating principals were fully informed about the research, the reason behind it and what it aimed to accomplish, before the interviews or observations started. I followed Collis and Hussey's (2009) advice that interviewees should not be forced to participate in research and should not be offered any reward for participating, because it

may cause embarrassment to the interviewee and thus lead to him or her giving the answers desired by the researcher.

Moreover, the principals who participated were made aware that the data collected was for research and that the Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia (King Faisal University) and the University of Lincoln in the UK would be informed of the findings of the research. Furthermore, they were informed that data from the research might be used in future seminar presentations or publications. After being made aware of these issues, they were free to consent to the interview or to choose not to participate. The principals gave verbal consent, having seen the written consent from the local educational authority, which was considered the most culturally appropriate procedure.

However, approval had to pass through several stages. Regarding gaining access to participants, application for ethical approval was submitted to the Ethics Committee of the Centre for Educational Research and Development at the University of Lincoln. Following their deliberation and approval, a letter was then sent to the Saudi Cultural Bureau in London (see Appendix 7). In 2013, a letter in Arabic was then issued by the Saudi Cultural Bureau in London to King Faisal University and to the Local Educational Authority in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, which stated that I was registered as a PhD student at the University of Lincoln and wanted to carry out my research in Saudi Arabia (see Appendix 8).

The Local Educational Authority in Saudi Arabia was then informed of my intention to conduct research at 20 mainstream schools in the country. An introductory letter was sent to the Director of the Local Educational Authority introducing me and my research and requesting permission and authorisation for me to visit the selected schools and carry out interviews with the interested principals. As a result, a letter was issued by the Local Educational Authority that allowed me to access the schools required and was given to the principals of the schools in order to proceed with the interviews. Approval from the Local Educational Authority in the Eastern Province was important because the school principals asked for evidence of approval (see Appendix 9). This process did not, however, involve ethical approval, nor was there any other process in Saudi Arabia requiring such approval.

After approval was given by the Local Educational Authority, I travelled to Saudi Arabia on what is termed by the Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia an academic trip to make appointments by telephone to meet the principals of the 20 mainstream schools selected for interview. Once appointments were arranged, I met the school principals, informed them of the research, and gave them a copy of the information sheet explaining the research, also giving them a copy of the approval from the Local Educational Authority. Then I discussed their agreement regarding participation in my research. After that, suitable dates and times for the interviews were set. I met the male principals face to face and spoke to the female principals by telephone. Participants also were given an opportunity to review their response after I transcript the interviews. The same process was undergone for a later trip I took to undertake observations (see Appendix 10, Appendix 11 and Appendix 12). The next trip I took to Saudi Arabia was to observe the five selected mainstream schools.

Obtaining the consent of the research participants was essential, as it demonstrated that their rights as participants were valued and offered them the chance to make informed decisions for themselves rather than being in any way influenced by the recommendations of the Director of the Local Educational Authority. At the outset of my research, I brought with me consent forms for the participants to sign. All the participants felt uncomfortable at signing the consent document, although they expressed willingness to participate in the research. This attitude surprised me, although such an approach to written and verbal contracts is deeply rooted in Saudi culture (Hutchings and Weir, 2006); I observed the participants usually felt some freedom when I did not give them anything to sign in writing. Principals felt uncomfortable with providing a written signature, because it would identify them as part of the research, and they preferred the sense of anonymity available from giving only verbal consent, which I recorded using a digital recorder (Ahmed, 2007; Alzaghibi, 2010; Al-Zyoud, 2011). I decided to proceed with this method of recording verbal consent as a more culturally sensitive approach.

A similar approach was implemented when conducting observations within a school setting. Contracts are commonly concluded in this manner in daily life in Saudi Arabia.

In addition, principals are not willing to sign documents because of the likelihood of incurring liability, a perception acknowledged by Alzaghibi (2010) when making videos, conducting interviews and using other data gathering methods in Saudi Arabia. Ahmed (2007), carrying out research in Bahrain, which is only 25km from to the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, and Al-Zyoud (2011) in Jordan, similarly found a preference for a verbal approach with respect to Arab culture.

3.11.2. Anonymity and Confidentiality

Accordingly, researchers must protect research participants by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Although there are only a small number of inclusive schools in the region, I took particular care to ensure confidentiality. From an ethical point of view, confidentiality and privacy were assured during this research: the principals were informed that no names would be mentioned and their schools would not be identified when reporting the findings. At the scheduled dates and times, I met the principals and each of them was given a code. This gave the principals confidence that the anonymity of the information would be maintained, and that the material would be used only for research purposes.

Nevertheless, there were concerns about the possibility that the principals who participated would be identified by their respective Directors. As a precautionary measure, due care was taken when reporting the findings of this research in order to minimise the possibility of the participants being recognised. Hence, the anonymity of the participants was completely respected. Only my supervisor and I had access to the information related to the research. I had to acknowledge all legal requirements such as data protection.

Confidentiality was centred on my own responsibility to provide the sample with assurance that all information would be kept secure and confidential (Walker, 2007). This was ensured by providing the subjects with my promise of anonymity (Denscombe, 2007). This meant I gave paramount importance to data protection, meaning the sources of any comments made should not be identifiable. In this study, I carried out a number of actions to protect the data. Specifically:

- data were anonymised and stored electronically on a protected computer using passwords;
- data collected in this study were not used for any other purpose;
- when this study was completed, the data were kept on a password-protected computer for a length of time in accordance with the policy of the university;
- data were not left unprotected on the computer;
- the computer was set to lock after five minutes of inactivity;
- the interviews were transcribed and anonymised shortly after they were conducted; and
- any hard copies of the information (for example, forms containing demographic information) were kept securely in lockable drawers.

Fulfilling these ethical requirements enabled the participants to answer openly and honestly.

3.11.3. Issues regarding the Research

Issue of reflexivity and positionality

Reflexivity is a process described as viewing all angles, internal as well as external, in association with the positionality of a study and the study technique (Shaw and Gould, 2001). Reflexivity is also acknowledged as a feature of knowledge provision (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). It appears that academics will always influence the area they are studying due to their having their own perceptions, awareness and experience of the environment under review. In addition, they have a key function in the scrutiny of the data produced.

As a researcher, I was both an insider and an outsider in relation to the principals I interviewed (Mercer, 2007). As a Saudi, I was an insider in the sense that I was of the same nationality as the participants. In addition, since I have a daughter who has Down's syndrome, I share with the participants a particular experience of the responsibilities of caring for children with Down's syndrome. As well as providing a positive benefit in

putting interviewees at their ease, the participants' knowledge of my own family situation risked affecting their responses, since they might have responded more positively knowing that I have a daughter with Down's syndrome. I took care to mention at the beginning of each interview that despite my personal experience, it was very important to the research that they should respond honestly, including anything that was either good or bad.

I was also frequently considered an insider by the male principals of inclusive schools, who often included me by using language such as 'we' and 'us'. This sense of my being an insider was partly due to our common gender, but also to the fact that I used to be one of their colleagues in my work as a Supervisor of Special Education. This established a sense of trust between myself and the interviewees.

Reflexivity is, of course, an important context in my research, since the male principals that I was observing and interviewed were all people whom I had prior experience of working with before the beginning of the research project. Reflexivity is described by Lawson (1985) as turning back on oneself, or a type of self-awareness. In the context of academic research, reflexivity can be applied as a way of ensuring that subjective bias, such as in interviews, is not present, or as a way of ensuring the gap between practice and research is filled (Etherington, 2000). I was particularly aware of the interaction between my research and my pre-existing opinions, but I did not find that these affected the course of the data collections.

The issue of subjectivity can be addressed by researchers remaining reflexive throughout the interview and observation process and hence providing their audience with the opportunity of evaluating them as active participants in the meaning creation process. This reflexivity skill was enriched by exercises in the Study School programme in my university, including feedback and comments given on a reflexive essay I wrote. PhD candidates who join the Study School programme are trained in data collection skills, such as data recording, data coding, note-taking and communication skills.

However, I was an outsider as I did not have a position in a school, and all the interviewees spoke to me as if I had come from outside; when they said 'you', they were

excluding me from school society. I was also an outsider by virtue of the fact that I currently work the Ministry of Higher Education. I was an outsider, too, in that my research was conducted under the auspices of an overseas university: The University of Lincoln. The most important aspect of my outsider status was in relation to female principals, as I am not of the same gender as them.

It is reasonable to assert that a researcher having an insider's role assists subjects in communicating freely and supports them in sharing their issues (Gibson and Abrams, 2003). Nevertheless, the role of an insider had some challenges for me. As in my previous job I was a colleague of the principals, it was sometimes difficult for them to see me in my new role as a researcher, rather than in my old role as their colleague.

With regard to my position, not only am I the father of a child who has Down's syndrome, I had also worked as a Special Education Supervisor at the Special Education Department, as well as being a lecturer in the Department of Special Education at King Faisal University, so I had supervised the field training of university students in these schools. Thus, I knew most of the principals.

This study was being conducted in a society with which I have associations, and which from my individual viewpoint, provided me with specific benefits concerning acquiring access. In addition, it enabled me to pay attention to and interpret the language and phrases employed, in addition to the manner in which people communicated with one another as well as the services provided. This assisted me in the conclusion of the secondary phase of data collection when carrying out the observations that comprised a significant feature of the research data.

Another aspect of my identity was my willingness to understand the principals' perspective regarding the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome through their experiences with such children; not only because I am interested in change in education policy and practice, but also because I believe that all of us are human beings. Having a baby with Down's syndrome has changed my life. As a father, I began to view these children from another perspective. This practice made me feel closer to children with Down's syndrome and afforded me additional understanding of their experience.

Between the social model and the medical model, I therefore found myself an activist for these children's rights and wanting to work towards equal opportunities for each individual child, regardless of his or her abilities. The participants were aware that I have a child with Down's syndrome. In order not to influence the version of events and perspectives that they shared with me, I followed all the requirements, including the use of triangulation in order to balance the research and better capture the context by collection of different and complementary data from different sources.

Professional and emotional issues

Throughout the study, I encountered several professional and emotional challenges. Firstly, conducting interviews with individuals I knew presented a problem because of the discomfort and challenges concerning the discussion of different matters; this was a challenge also encountered by the participants. For example, at times, comprehensive responses were not provided, as the respondents believed I was already aware of special events or circumstances.

In addition, there was a certain reticence with regard to talking about more personal perceptions with someone the participants knew. For example, one principal was very shy when speaking about his brother, who has special educational needs, and when I asked him to explain further he was reluctant to elaborate beyond the basic facts. In this case, the principal was likely to have been unwilling to speak about family problems because of the social connection between us, and the possibility that what he said might reflect badly on his family. In such a cultural context, it is common for family members with special needs to be viewed as bringing social stigma on their families and the families often tend to deny such disabilities (Shin et al., 2008). Social stigma is still one of the most significant problems faced by students with special educational needs. It is arguably the reason that the medical model still pervades in Saudi society.

This issue was nonetheless mitigated by offering assurances of privacy, and by asking all the participants to try to answer as though I had no knowledge of anything concerning them. I chose the most suitable technique to pose queries, and attempted to keep sensitive matters until the conclusion of the interviews when the participants were

more relaxed. In addition, numerous prompts – such as, ‘Could you tell me more, please?’ and ‘Could you explain in greater depth?’ – were utilised to collect rich information. As a researcher, I was able to obtain a considerable quantity of information, following a predefined process with my research. Thus, I actively attempted to assume the role of researcher at all times.

A number of different matters were recognised during the fieldwork due to my previous position as a Supervisor of Special Education. In spite of making it clear that, to an extent, I had no power over the findings of the fieldwork, it was also a challenge to process emotions and discard these when certain circumstances arose. However, in this respect, several authors have proposed that research may not be free of a clash of principles, signifying that the researcher has a function in the evaluation and scrutiny of the results (Denscombe, 2007; Bryman, 2016).

An example of my position of power as a researcher can be seen from an experience during one day of data collection. On this day, one of the principals approached me with a request for assistance in a case related to the father of a child who has Down's syndrome, as the principal knew that I meet many parents of such children, as the father of a child who has the same condition. The assistance concerned an attempt to persuade the parent to give permission for the principal to send a referral letter regarding his child to the Centre for Special Education in order to start a programme of behaviour modification for his son, as the principal explained that he had been having difficulty addressing the behaviour of this pupil. From my experience with my daughter, I was able to persuade the parent to start this process and that this would help his son now and in the future. This situation could have constituted an ethical dilemma.

For example, when I was working with the school principal as a Supervisor of Special Education at the Ministry of Education, his school was among those I used to visit. This example shows that the power dynamics in my encounter with this school were complex. The wish to ask me a favour might have altered the response of the participant in the interview, who could have been cautious about what he said in an attempt to keep me ‘on side’ for the favour. All in all, I did not consider this to be a serious risk, since

our relationship was good already, and he would have known that I would have been likely to agree to this favour, regardless of the content of the interview.

There is also a cultural expectation of *nakhweh*, which means helping relatives or friends. It was, therefore, inappropriate to refuse the request. As Bryman and Bell (2011) have observed, in using an ethical value of reciprocity – an ethical value based on the balance of power between the researcher and the participant that is subject to scrutiny – there is the immediate concern of the level of interpersonal association throughout the fieldwork stage. This resulted in the appearance of several queries regarding the benefits to be gathered by participants in return for providing aid, data and time to the researcher. The reciprocity principle comprises one way of addressing this issue.

In one inclusive school that lacked preparation in the classroom, the principal, who had previously been subject to my supervisory responsibility, asked if students with educational challenges could be helped with no learning aids. I queried the reason for the lack of equipment in the room. The response was that it was based on affordability and the absence of resources. I then suggested that the principal should make simple learning aids, with old boxes or juice cartons, for instance, which could be employed to make a cardboard model city with the objective of creating knowledge of space. I also suggested that the principal should make every possible effort to equip the classroom and allocate a portion of the school finances for this. From my own knowledge, I am aware this is possible; it is the obligation of the principal to ascertain that pupils are assisted as much as possible.

I was prepared to address particular issues due to my previous position as a Special Education Supervisor in Saudi Arabia, and thus I interacted with principals during the pilot research in an endeavour to appraise the data collection methods. Using this technique, in addition my individual knowledge, I was able to identify that the most appropriate data collection instrument would be semi-structured interviews, in addition to supplementary interviews if necessary to ascertain that research gaps would be filled and an appropriate degree of involvement would be attained. Any issues recognised were addressed by in-school observations.

Issues regarding the logistics of data collection

Data gathering and the logistics of this were, to an extent, a challenge in terms of time scales. Before the commencement of the fieldwork, it was accepted that selecting schools would not be an easy task due to the low number of inclusive schools within the Eastern Province, as the inclusion policy has only recently been implemented. This number also alters every year for several reasons. For instance, people within the province are prone to moving from one area to another, such as to industrial towns from villages and hamlets, which results in the commencement of new inclusion schemes and the closing of others.

It had been planned to discuss and agree upon suitable schools with the Director of the Special Education Department at the Local Educational Authority. However, when I spoke to the Director, no schools had been selected and no letters signed. After I asked the Director for these letters, he told me he would finish what I wanted the following week, but, over the coming week, he did not manage to accomplish this. This prompted me to send one of my colleagues to see him in order to speed the process and the selection of schools was made the same day. As regards the possible use of the internet such as sending emails, in Saudi Arabia, the Internet is not widely used for communication such as sending e-mails. However, the Director was sure that all the inclusive schools would be supportive, so a letter was sent to all these schools and he allowed me to select the ones I wanted.

After a short period of confusion in the face of this unexpected response, I decided to assess inclusive schools, and, from my experience, 20 schools stood out as being particularly suitable. As the Eastern Province was the area where I had worked as a Special Education Supervisor, I was somewhat familiar with the locations of the boys' schools. Gaining permission to undertake fieldwork was also straightforward. However, I was staying in my home city Dammam, so I had to travel every day to cities, towns, villages, and hamlets after fulfilling my domestic responsibilities in the morning and then returning in the afternoon. The logistics involved in this presented a challenge.

In addition, identifying schools with differences between them, such as education centres in cities, towns, villages, and hamlets resulted in different types of issues, particularly in the instance of girls' schools. In spite of the fact that a school had been identified as being located an estimated 120 km outside Dammam, there were challenges in physically locating the place as a result of the absence of signs or road names. Therefore, different issues relating to the logistics of locating inclusive schools within the Eastern Province, combined with the fact that girls' schools are not accessible to men, meant that there had to be a degree of reliance on female family members to help me to identify and to arrange access to these schools. These females took on part in any data collection.

Eventually, school visits were performed and carried out in a timely manner for interviews as well as observations. Indisputably, the absence of information associated with girls' inclusive schools, time limitations, as well as extended consent processes from King Faisal University, the Education Ministry and the Saudi Arabian Cultural Bureau in London all represented obstacles.

Issue of the researcher's gender

There is a cultural sensitivity regarding gender within Saudi Arabia. Women are not expected to meet face-to-face with a man to whom they are not related, unless they are in the company of a male relative. Conducting interviews by telephone was suitable in my situation. This was justified by Walliman (2001: p.238) as follows: "*there are two main methods of conducting interviews; face-to-face and telephone*". The reason for using such an interview method was to respect Islamic law as applied in Saudi Arabia, which does not allow any man to enter a girls' school. Thus, I used a particular strategy during the telephone interviews with women, using certain words (such as "Allah (God), yes, uh, ok") to make them feel I was with them in person. As a Saudi male, I took into account the cultural norms where women from very traditional backgrounds would most likely not approve of the idea of being interviewed by a man, and, if the interview was audio-recorded, permission from their father or husband might be required (Metcalf, 2006).

Because of the importance of kinship in gender interactions in Saudi Arabia, I anticipated that there would be a requirement for me, as a male, to employ fictive kinship, a term “*used for relationships that are determined by neither blood nor marriage*” (Andreatta and Ferraro, 2013: p.170). For example, I often used the term ‘my sister’ when I had a conversation with a female principals I used this term for the purpose of gaining the confidence of female principals. This approach is widely employed within Saudi Arabia, and it is a way of creating shared kinship and trust, referring to the kinship of shared religion and signifying that all dealings with different individuals have to be carried out with deference to tradition (Ahmed, 2007).

Carrying out telephone interviews has the drawback of being unable to observe female participants’ body language, which can be a valuable source of information on respondents’ attitudes and feeling. However, I had to respect the particular culture of Saudi Arabia. This made it possible to carry out interviews with female principals rather than abandon a potentially important source of data.

3.12. Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology and design used in this research. I have explained my use of the interpretive paradigm, rather than a positivist approach, as being the most suitable framework for addressing the complex, subjectively experienced issue in the mainstream education of children with Down’s syndrome. This stance led to the adoption of a qualitative approach (semi-structured interviews, together with participant observations and documentary analysis) to capture deep and rich data. It was noted that the research involved a purposive sample of 10 male and 10 female principals drawn from government and ARAMCO schools in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia.

The process of conducting interviews with male and female mainstream primary school principals (my study was of both government and ARAMCO schools in Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia) was outlined, as were the observations that were also carried out in mainstream primary schools. It was recounted that during this research, no face-to-face interviews were conducted with female principals and no observations were conducted at any girls’ schools, due to issues of access for religious and cultural reasons.

The use of manual thematic analysis was explained and the justification for not using NVivo was given. Issues of research trustworthiness, reliability and ethics were addressed. Specifically, it was explained in detail how gender issues affected the data collection from female principals, as well as the issues of reflexivity and positionality.

In the next three chapters (chapters four, five and six), I will present the findings of the research.

Chapter Four: Principals' Understanding of Concept of Inclusion

Following the research stages:

Chapter 1	Introduction and Research Context		
Chapter 2	The Context, Theory and Literature Review	Part 1	The Context of Saudi Arabia
		Part 2	Theoretical Framework
		Part 3	Literature Review
Chapter 3	Research Methodology		
Chapter 4	Principals' Understanding of Concept of Inclusion		
Chapter 5	School Principals' Perspectives on Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Mainstream Schools		
Chapter 6	Factors Affecting the Perspectives of Principals regarding the Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome		
Chapter 7	Recommendations and Conclusion		

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to providing answers to the first research question, which investigates the school principals' knowledge and understanding with regard to inclusion as a concept. Principals were asked what inclusion meant to them, in order to clarify the multiple meanings of the concept and their own personal understanding of inclusion. The main finding was that each of the research participants, without exception, had a different personal concept of inclusion according to his or her previous experience. These findings support those of other scholars, such as Black-Hawkins (2014), who recognise the concept of inclusion as being a complicated one, that could be interpreted in various ways, Hodkinson and Devarakonda (2009) make the same point. The results of the interviews also show that a number of principals did not know what inclusion means.

I have noted verbatim the expressions used by male and female principals during the interviews; any necessary explanation or interpretation is given within square brackets. For example, during an interview, when a principal said '*children with learning difficulty*' I knew that they meant children with Down's syndrome, as I had previously explained in the aims of the research, so I wrote Down's syndrome in brackets, e.g. '*children with learning difficulty* [Down's syndrome]'.

In addition to the interviews, this chapter draws on a detailed analysis of the data gathered from observations at five boys' schools, and from the analysis of documents. The findings will also be discussed in relation to relevant literature in the light of my theoretical framework.

The theme which relates to understanding the concept of inclusion includes a number of sub-themes, each consisting of several codes as well as sub-codes. Those sub-themes, which are presented in turn in this chapter, are:

- Those who do not understand inclusion
- Inclusion as integration
- Inclusion as education for all students
- Full inclusion vs. partial inclusion

4.2. Those who do not understand inclusion

Educational policy and community culture

Principals in general schools in Saudi Arabia, who have been assigned roles as heads of inclusive schools, were educated in an era when the inclusion of students with Down's syndrome was not a part of teacher training. Moreover, there is a lack of ongoing professional development in this respect, meaning that principals' training requirements are not fulfilled (training will be discussed further in chapter six). It may be suggested that principals are attracted to such roles in inclusive schools by the salary; however, there is a lack of responsibility and accountability in the education system, and a complete absence of on-going professional development initiatives (Aboela, 2008). Despite giving principals the extra salary, no work has been undertaken to improve their understanding of the issues surrounding inclusive education.

It should be noted here that the Rules and Regulations of Special Education in Saudi Arabia (2002) recommend providing information on inclusion to principals. However, in this study, during the exploration of principals' understanding of the concept of inclusion, a principal who had recently been transferred to manage an inclusive school without having any information regarding inclusion stated, *"Is it right that a principal shouldn't know anything about Down's syndrome or inclusion? Whose fault is this? Please tell me... the Local Educational Authority should at least, provide us with some information leaflets"* (FPG7). Thus, some principals blamed their limited knowledge on the policy whereby principals are transferred by the Local Educational Authority from one school to another every four years to gain wide experience.

Moreover, in an informal conversation principal IPG4 stated, *"On some occasions a principal is transferred to an inclusive school but has no information about inclusion and children with Down's syndrome, or how to deal with them"*. This is confirmed by a principal who declared, *"I was transferred to such a school and I didn't have a good enough idea about inclusion... for two years I have been trying to absorb the aims of inclusion, but in vain..."* (MPG3). Male and Male (2001) suggested that there are a number of new principals who want to be mentored by principals who have more

experience of leadership in schools for children with special educational needs as a kind of support for the principals in their new position.

The reasons for this lack of knowledge were apparent in informal conversations with two other principals, who attributed their unfamiliarity with the concept of inclusion to a number of factors. One stated, *"Inclusion is a recent policy in my school"* (IPG2), and another, *"I have only recently taken this position in such a school"* (IPG1). Such findings support Hodgkinson and Devarakonda (2009), who assert that 'inclusive education', as a term, lacks detail and comprehension, and, therefore, is difficult to define. It is certainly problematic that principals are appointed without having either knowledge or a commitment to inclusive education.

During the interviews, I received other answers indicating a lack of awareness of the concept of inclusion. For example, principal MPG1 highlighted his lack of knowledge when he asked me, *"What do you mean by inclusion?"* He also enquired, *"... do you mean teach those [students with Down's syndrome] who are coming to our school?"* (MPG1). Further, FPG7 stated, *"I'm not very sure what you mean"*, before inquiring *"... do you mean the education of children with learning difficulties... or Mongoloid [students with Down's syndrome] in our school...?"* (FPG7). Similar results are also found in other non-Western contexts (Aboela, 2008), perhaps reflecting the effect of policy borrowing from a Western cultural context.

For example, Aboela (2008) analysed the various obstacles facing inclusive education in Saudi Arabian nursery schools, and suggests that most school principals lack adequate understanding of inclusive education. Accordingly, it was to be expected, although unsatisfactory, to find that Saudi school principals' understanding and knowledge of inclusion is inadequate and limited to the medical model of disability. This was clear, for example, in principal MPG8's comment that *"Indeed, such children [with Down's syndrome] are included with us from their special school... they have their own teachers and resident supervisor, I never really deal with them"*. Principal FPG5 commented on the *"inclusion of children with Down's syndrome to teach them in school in order to give them allowance to help their families... I might be right, or wrong... you know more than me"*.

In Saudi Arabia, encouraging inclusive education is the responsibility of the Local Educational Authority, which has the task of assigning school principals to inclusive schools, but does not specifically consider their suitability and qualifications regarding inclusive education generally and education for those with Down's syndrome in particular. It is highlighted by Alfahili (2007) that the majority of the principals of inclusive schools within Saudi Arabia are assigned because of a combination of general education experience and social links (the phenomenon of '*wasta*', explained in chapter two, part one). From a cultural perspective, there may be a preference to hire relatives or individuals known personally, as opposed to candidates recognised as having the relevant skills or abilities (Mohamed and Mohamad, 2011).

Although '*wasta*' is opposed by Muslim teachings (Abuznaid, 2006), it is not considered a social aberration by a large portion (79%) of the population (Al-Faisal, 1993). However, Makhoul and Harrison (2004) note that '*wasta*' could induce poor job performance; a system of role assignment as favours to individuals who are known by members of the appointment panel is not always a productive approach, even for the principal assigned the position. As noted by Alfahili (2007), school principals with inadequate qualifications and experience in the domain of special education encounter higher levels of stress than colleagues with higher qualifications. Arguably, when it comes to the lack of understanding of the issues surrounding inclusive education, it is therefore in the Local Educational Authority, where the difficulty lies.

In consideration of this project's findings, as well as the literature examined, it would be reasonable to posit that school principals do not have positive views of inclusive education as a result of their lack of knowledge and experience. (The principals' perspective will be discussed further in the next chapter). Similarly, Hodgkinson and Devarakonda (2009) found that teaching staff in India had more negative views when they lacked experience. In line with this, it may be suggested that in Down's syndrome education, professionalism, together with certification in inclusive education, would be fundamental in supporting the concept of inclusive education for students with Down's syndrome in general schools (Ainscow et al., 2006). Leaders' knowledge is also essential to facilitate their adoption of a more encompassing social view of inclusive

education. Such understanding would make principals better positioned to encourage school members to employ more inclusive practices and redirect attention away from a medical model of inclusion (Batu, 2010).

Nevertheless, despite lacking such knowledge, such principals have been assigned a role with considerable responsibility and authority in their inclusive schools, where they are pivotal in encouraging and facilitating change (Friend and Bursuck, 2012). It is, therefore, of concern that the Local Educational Authority employs principals with inadequate knowledge and expertise, and whose views are limited only to the medical model of inclusion. In moving towards achieving understanding in regard to disability, in line with the social model, the principal's role is critical: for instance, principals with appropriate qualifications may feel more equipped to understand inclusion and know what to do with the students with Down's syndrome; in turn, principals' openness to inclusion could affect teachers' and parents' views. Accordingly, principals could be well positioned to advise and implement actions with regard to students with special educational needs, including those with Down's syndrome, creating educational opportunities for all students (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2004).

The above quotations from the interviews indicate that the principals lacked a deep understanding of the meaning of inclusion. Analysis of the Rules and Regulations of Special Education revealed that it did not clearly discuss what the inclusion of children with learning difficulties in general schools should be. There were only vague references to this subject, such as the following: "Inclusion means the education of students with learning difficulties [including Down's syndrome] at the inclusive schools as well as providing them with special education services" (D2A1). This article in a policy may be a reason why some principals did not mention the classroom attached to their school in the above quotations, although such classrooms are mentioned in the policy. This discussion will turn now to the second sub-theme, which demonstrates a view of inclusion as integration.

4.3. Inclusion as Integration

Attached classroom

The previous section highlighted the stark lack of knowledge of inclusion, on the part of school principals. Vaughn and Schumm's (1995) study also found that school principals consider themselves as lacking knowledge about students with special educational needs. However, one dimension of this ignorance was a common perception that inclusion means placing students with Down's syndrome in "inclusion" schools, but in separate classrooms (see part three in chapter two). The "inclusive classrooms", which the principals cited below speak about, are mentioned in the Policy for Special Education, which states, "Inclusive classrooms: are a classroom at the inclusive school in which a limited category of the students with learning difficulty [Down's syndrome] receive their education for most or all of the school day" (D2A1).

It may be that some principals are not enthusiastic about placing students with Down's syndrome in inclusive schools. As principal (MPG2) said, "*We must apply the system ... whether we are satisfied or not satisfied as regards the attached classrooms*". It is argued by Oliver (2009) that inclusive schools need to direct attention to providing inclusive learning, which necessitates the application of a more social model of disability. However, it seems from the above assertion that principals are likely to implement the medical model and accordingly place emphasis on the disability of students more than on their requirements for inclusion and education.

In this regard, when I posed a question on the education of children with Down's syndrome within the general classroom, MPG3 stopped me and said, "*Wait a minute ... I'm not a specialist and I can't answer these questions ... the only system applied here is inclusion classrooms ...*". Later, when I left that school, I found two signs over the school door: the first sign read "... [school name] *Primary School*" and the second sign read "*Inclusive attached classrooms at [school name] Primary School*" (see Photo 4.1). Anyone seeing the signs might think that there must be two schools, but in fact, there is one school, managed by one principal. In fact, this is contrary to the Index for Inclusion,

which encourages schools to reduce discriminatory practices, of which this was an instance (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

Photo 4.1: Inclusive school with two signs



A similar practice was observed with the principal IPG4, who stated, *"This way the work will be easier for me because I have no idea about inclusion"*. So, inside the school I found a sign pointing to the inclusive education section. The principal was, in fact, using exclusion to separate the administration of general and inclusive education. Nevertheless, school meeting minutes (D4), revealed that the special supervisor at the Local Educational Authority had urged principals to remove anything that contributed to distinguishing between students with learning difficulties [Down's syndrome] and general students. This advice is consistent with Ainscow et al.'s (2006) exhortation to remove obstacles to inclusive learning.

The confusion of inclusion with integration was further supported through documentation and observation. On the subject of ‘inclusive classrooms’, the Rules and Regulations of Special Education state: “Regarding the inclusive classrooms, the students should be given the opportunity to be included in classroom activities and non-classroom activities with their general peers as much as possible” (D2A3). However, observation in one of the schools revealed that it did not follow recommendations. In OSG1, it was observed that children with Down’s syndrome were not included in the activities, as the principal was concerned about their potential negative influence on other children; such a finding is expected according to the medical model of understanding disability. In informal conversations, principal IPG2 said, “*The reason that made me do this [i.e. maintain separation] is that the articles of the Rules and Regulations of Special Education are unclear about inclusion*”. In the literature, it has been noted that, regardless of international declarations concerning the adoption of inclusive education, there remain a number of obstacles in developing and developed countries, including a lack of information pertaining to practices and policies (Kibria, 2005; Hornby, 2010).

Participate in activities with other students

Although the above cited principals placed with children with Down’s syndrome in separate classrooms most of the time, some did their best to enable these children to participate in the general classrooms in non-academic lessons, such as art and physical education in boys’ schools and art and home economics in girls’ schools. Therefore, more than half of the principals declared that inclusion means the participation of children with Down’s syndrome with their general peers to help them cope within the community. Black-Hawkins (2014: p.391) defines participation at a number of levels, including: “*participation and access: being there*”, “*participation and collaboration: learning and working together*”, “*participation and achievement: supporting everyone’s learning*” and “*participation and diversity: recognizing and accepting difference*”.

In this regard, principals described inclusion as the transfer of children with Down’s syndrome from special schools to inclusive schools to be with other children. MPG8 commented, “*Inclusion ... enables children with Down’s syndrome to leave the special*

school and join our school". This principal identifies with Black-Hawkins' (2014) definition of "participation and access: being there" – that students should be able to be physically present in mainstream schools, suggesting the social model of disability. MPG2 remarked on the *"inclusion of children with Down's syndrome to obtain information from their teachers and their general peers at school"*. However, MPG8 thought that it is difficult to include such children in a general classroom: *"...children with Down's syndrome can only be partially included... yes only in activities"*.

A number of other principals also mentioned "activities", meaning practical, non-academic subjects. For example, one female principal referred to *"including children with special educational needs [Down's syndrome] at an inclusive school, to participate and to learn side by side with their general peers in non-academic subjects"* (FPA1). In this context 'non-academic subjects' meant home economics, which is taught in all girls' schools. However, I could not verify this impression, due to the prohibition on men entering girls' schools [see chapter 3]. However, I found during observations at the boys' schools that there was general agreement on inclusion for non-academic subjects. In school OSA1, I saw a child with Down's syndrome participating in art lessons along with his general peers. The teacher paid attention to him and encouraged other students to interact with him. This observation identifies with Black-Hawkins' (2014) definition of "participation and collaboration: learning and working together".

Similarly, another principal said, *"I encourage ... all general students to participate with children with learning difficulties [Down's syndrome] ... I always use strategies ... to promote acceptance of these children... [such as] participation of all children on trips"* (FPG6). As Barton and Armstrong (2008) emphasise, ordinary, everyday experiences shared with friends can have advantages for all children, such as gaining fundamental life skills, including communication, respect for diversity and teamwork (MacArthur et al., 2005).

Observations and interviews revealed that some principals involved all children in activities. For instance, in one school (OSG3) a teacher had organised a school trip that involved a journey by ferry. This trip was planned originally for children with learning difficulties, but on the principal's recommendation was extended to include a mix of

general and special teachers, as well as children with learning difficulties, including some with Down's syndrome, and general education children. I observed the children's happiness when they returned from the field trip, which represented a positive kind of participation. In another example, a principal defined an inclusive school as one that *"educates and allows the participation of all children ..."* (MPG2). In school OSG2 I observed children with Down's syndrome, participating side by side with their general peers; for example, in a school broadcast, where one such student recited a short '*surah*' of The Holy Quran. This observation corresponds with Black-Hawkins' (2014) definition of "participation and achievement: supporting everyone's learning" – that principals should be able to care for education for all children in mainstream schools for all children.

Principals adopting this approach highlighted the ways in which schools benefit from such participation. For example, FPG9 said that children with Down's syndrome would become more sociable as a result of inclusion and commented, *"Participation in activities ... helps break down social and psychological barriers and enables such children to react and benefit from each other's skills and abilities"*. This comment is in line with Black-Hawkins' (2014) idea of "participation and diversity: recognizing and accepting difference". Another principal, FPG2, argued that *"registering a child with Down's syndrome in an inclusive school ... to learn and participate with general children... is really good in both the social and psychological aspects"*. However, Sadek (2000) argues that there is a risk of over-emphasising social interactions at the cost of acknowledging and fulfilling individual learning needs.

Accordingly, many principals and teachers were keen to create and encourage opportunities for participation in social activity, sport and art for all students, without going beyond this, which is consistent with the Rules and Regulations of Special Education in Saudi Arabia. However, one principal declared, *"... Our teachers help these children [Down's syndrome] to develop their skills ... like other general education children..."* (MPG4). According to the Provision Code for Persons with Disabilities, the government ensures the provision of several services for children with special educational needs, including children with Down's syndrome. For example,

participation in sports is provided for by the Local Educational Authority. This has helped to crystallise the concept of inclusion among principals as meaning the participation in such activities of children with special educational needs. In this respect, the Provision Code states: “Participation in cultural activities and sports ... includes benefiting from ... facilities adapted to enable the disabled person to participate in these programmes...” (D3A2). This appears to correspond with Black-Hawkins’ (2014) definition of “participation and collaboration: learning and working together” as the students can benefit from working together in cultural and sporting activities.

In the course of the observations, particularly in the ARAMCO School (OSA1), I observed inclusion of all students in sports lessons. For example, I watched a football match where the team included general education children and children with learning difficulties. This finding is consistent with various researchers, including Ali et al. (2006), who reported evidence that inclusive education improves social interactions. In contrast, however, Priestley (2003) suggested that inclusion would not benefit those with disabilities. Consistent with Priestley’s (2003) concerns, I observed some instances of included children being isolated. For example, during an observation (OSG4), it was observed that a child with Down’s syndrome sat alone and was not included with other children during the football session. When I asked the physical education teacher (ITG2) why he excluded this student, he replied, “*The child is obese and is only able to move slowly, so I ignore him as he needs more assistance. I need someone to help me to involve such children*”. This comment clearly shows that the teacher has adopted the medical model of disability.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the concept of inclusion for some principals focuses on the participation of children with special needs in selected activities with general students. As principal MPG6 stated, “*The inclusion of such children [Down’s syndrome] is only in non-academic activity... to avoid embarrassing them in front of others when they learn in the general classrooms*”, thus demonstrating the principal’s low expectations of children with Down’s syndrome. All the above quotations confirmed that in inclusive schools in Saudi Arabia, at present, children with Down’s syndrome join their general education peers in art classes, on the football ground, in the

kitchen during home economics lessons, and for the noon prayer, but not for academic subjects. Thus, there is a gap between the rhetoric of inclusion and the reality of implementation. However, education for all children was mentioned by some principals, as I will discuss in the next section.

4.4. Inclusion as Education for all Students

The right to education

As we have seen, while policy in the Saudi Arabia states that general schools are the best environment for providing students with special educational needs with education (The Rules and Regulations of Special Education, 2002), for those with learning difficulties separate classrooms are provided in such schools (Al-Mousa, 2008). Providing this facility means that student educational rights are acknowledged, whilst also accepting that a different approach, with additional support, is available whenever necessary. This implies a 'least restrictive environment' approach, which aims to meet the learning requirements of students with difficulties while providing education alongside students without disabilities to the greatest possible extent (Stephens et al., 1988).

Ensuring educational access is the first stage to achieving inclusion within Saudi Arabia, although the process of facilitating the education of children with special educational needs in this domain is still in progress through what is referred to as 'partial inclusion'. In this respect, it is noted by Al-Khatteeb (2008) that all children are entitled to education in general schools, alongside other students, with disabled students' education forming one critical aspect of Saudi policy. Consistent with this view, one of the principals also commented, drawing on his experience as being a father: "... *there are children with learning difficulty [Down's syndrome] ... who need to learn at an inclusive school*" (MPA1).

The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is directly challenged by the rights culture of all people, through its requirement that all children attend inclusive schools. Essentially, it may be extended to the idea that no child should be educated separately owing to a

disability or impairment (Hodkinson and Devarakonda, 2009). Nevertheless, the education of all children fails to deal with inclusion challenges, as it does not specify the education content with which children should be provided. Difficulties of inclusion were observed in observation OSA1, when the principal distributed invitations to parents of children with Down's syndrome to attend the parents' night at the school. Although, the principal had invited parents of children with Down's syndrome to attend the school's parents' night, when children's development would be discussed, a father (IFA1) stated that "*the school is open for all children whether they have learning difficulties or not*", few fathers of children with learning difficulties attended; only eight out of approximately 40 parents. Education is a controversial and complicated philosophical issue (Ainscow et al., 2006), and recognising difference has both negative and positive aspects (Norwich, 2013). In Saudi Arabia, where Islam advocates understanding and tolerating differences, some local traditions, particularly those adopted in villages, are very old and perpetuate the idea of disability as a family shame or possibly punishment for sins (Afeafe, 2000).

Nevertheless, some principals defined inclusion of children with Down's syndrome as their right to obtain a suitable education to meet their needs, for the sake of their future independence. One principal emphasised, "*The right to learn suitable skills that will assist them within the community and to reduce the gap between them and their general education peers*" (FPG8). Parents and schools are both involved in providing children with support in developing their abilities and, according to Batu (2010), should provide children with support in selecting the capabilities they wish to develop. Educational inclusion is, therefore, inextricably linked both with providing children with opportunities for facilitating development and maximising capabilities, as well as with parents developing and exercising capabilities both for themselves and as a means of further supporting their children.

Observations in OSG3 revealed a large sign in the school yard raising awareness of the rights of all disabled persons, including the right to education, demonstrating recognition of this right, which is also enshrined in the Education Policy as "The government has the right to educate children and provide them with adequate resources" (D1A188). A

wealth of resources is aimed at assisting those recognised as requiring more help, but this means the resources available to others are reduced, creating issues of equality and equity in resource distribution to be raised. According to Miles and Singal (2010), attention should be directed towards the contextual and cultural suitability of educational initiatives dealing with inequity, whether educational or social. Equitable access to education is seen to support views such as that of Al-Mousa (2008), who emphasises the part played by special educational institutes for children with multiple complex physical and psychological needs, which cannot be suitably met in inclusive schools.

In addition, the Islamic standpoint on equity is that those who are both wealthy and strong should ensure that the poor and weak are cared for, while equality is applicable to all living beings, who warrant equal respect as Allah's (God's) own creations. Clerics and academics in Saudi Arabia maintain the Islamic principle of 'equal but different', where all individuals are recognised as having been created by Allah (God), and, therefore, valued in the same way as any other human being (Afeafe, 2000).

However, different roles and needs in practice, disabled students' rights faced obstacles like observation in OSA1, I noticed that the teachers parked their cars in the parking areas allocated for people with disabilities (see Photo 4.2). This meant some fathers of children with Down's syndrome were obliged to park at a distance from the school and cross the road with their sons. When I asked the principal (IPA1) about this, he replied, *"This attitude removes the simplest rights of children with learning difficulties and their families and I am unable to do anything except give advice and guidance, as this is the responsibility of the traffic department"*. The principal himself did not park in the disabled parking space, modelling the practice he wanted his teachers to follow, but nevertheless he was unable to influence his staff to solve this problem. In contrast, Batu (2010) suggests that school principals need to encourage staff to solve any issues in their schools.

Photo 4.2: A car parked in a disabled parking space



The rights of children with special needs was one of the concepts that emerged in the principals' perception of inclusion. One of the rights, as some principals noted, is the right of children with Down's syndrome to education in an inclusive school, although on the other hand, they said that this education should not go beyond the "inclusive classrooms". This reflects a conflict among educators in Saudi Arabia regarding inclusion. As principal IPG1, commented, *"General teachers reject inclusion and special teachers embrace inclusion... I do not know who has the greater right to education: special students or general students"*. This remark reflects Wilson's (2000) argument that inclusion for all children can result in a risk to the rights of other children.

When analysing the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, it was clear that it supported the previous responses in the following way: "If the right of education is a necessity for general children, it is more of a necessity for special children" (D2A3). However, the right to education should include a sense of belonging, which was the next code associated with this sub-theme.

A sense of belonging

A sense of belonging is a code that emerged when the principals talked about the concept of inclusion. As defined by Miller and Katz (2002), the feeling of ‘belonging’ is a measure of the degree to which a school or society may be considered inclusive. This was mentioned many times by participants. Analysis of the language used reflected a sense that inclusion meant all members of the school community belonging together. This was reflected in the frequent use of phrases, such as “*our school, our students, and our teachers*”. These phrases suggested an understanding based on the social model of disability, in which the school is a microcosm of the wider society in which students with disabilities should be able to participate.

Such a view is supported by Islamic values (Afeafe, 2000), in each school, and in Saudi Education Policy. Islamic values encourage staff to perform Allah’s (God’s) will first, then what they are required to do by policy. Thus, the idea of ‘belonging’ appeared several times in documents, expressed in the word ‘connectedness’, the Islamic word signifying ‘belonging’ or community, recognising Black-Hawkins’ (2014) idea of participation and diversity, as a community that recognises and accepts difference. For example, documents referred to “[taking] care of [students] through a complete Islamic education for ... their belonging to the Islamic nation” (D1A73) and “Enabling lives belonging to the Islamic nation...” (D1A96). Moreover, there is an Islamic requirement that all people should be loved for themselves, which complements the principles of empathy and compassion (Al-Mousa, 2008).

According to Male and Male (2001) school principals at institutions which deal with special needs children must have the ability to form good relationships. These relationships include developing a suitable understanding of the child as an individual as well as appropriate people skills, which are vital to encourage and develop positive relationships with fellow stakeholders in the school. During the interviews, principals expressed this sense of unity, in quotations such as: “*As for my school, I feel that we are like a big family...*” (MPG2). The strongest demonstration of this sense of belonging was observed in school OSA1 when I attended a lunch party arranged by the principal to celebrate the success of an operation undergone by one of the teachers. The party was

attended by both general and special teachers, who were clearly considered as one family in the school. Photo 4.3 shows the dining table. Sharing food in this way is perceived in Saudi culture as a sign of generosity, love and a wish to reinforce relationships and connectedness. This party demonstrated how shared values help to build and maintain a sense of belonging (Van Kraayenoord, 2007).

Photo 4.3: Traditional Saudi party food



Observations revealed further insight into this ethos of belonging. In a classroom observation in school OSG3, I noticed the strong relationship between the teachers and the children with Down's syndrome, which helped to foster their sense of belonging. The children liked their teachers and were fond of them, because they used many educational games to encourage their understanding. In another school, principal IPA1 commended a teacher who *"spends money from his own pocket on buying educational aids and going with such children on trips"*. It is shown in the literature that this kind of teaching develops both confidence and skills in learners with disabilities (MacArthur et al., 2005); as part of a social learning process where people work together to achieve inclusion within schools (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010).

Other observations provided a new perspective on the sense of belonging. For example, at school OSG2, it was noticed that one of the general students had a behavioural

problem and was having sessions with a psychologist. This specialist had been assigned originally for the inclusive education at the school, but the principal wished to extend his services to benefit all students in the school. The psychologist (ITG2), when I asked about his helping general students, said, *"No problem, we are at the same school"*. The situation reflected the pronounced sense of community in the school, which would enable the children to experience a shared purpose and sense of belonging, allowing everyone to value diversity and care for one another (Booth et al., 2003).

The inclusion of those with Down's syndrome is socially beneficial to students without disabilities as it encourages their compassion towards students with disabilities. In this study, those without disabilities were seen to be helpful and friendly to those with Down's syndrome. For example, a group of general children who called themselves 'friends of children with special educational needs', were seen having breakfast, side by side with their Down's syndrome peers. In informal conversation, a special teacher (ITA1) explained that *"having breakfast together represents social cohesion in the school. We have been doing it since we came to this school, and we have convinced general teachers to do it"*. Accordingly, those without disabilities are taught to respect and value those with different abilities in general schools, and also to see past impairments and social stereotypes (Loreman et al., 2005). As Vitello and Mithaug (1998) argue, the goal of inclusive education is to remove social exclusion. Accordingly, it is essential that parents, teachers, students and the wider community collaborate in order to facilitate a sense of belonging (Bazna and Hatab, 2005).

Such a stance was maintained by a principal who stated, *"Inclusion is good as it has helped the children with Down's syndrome to go out with their general peers at the school"* (FPG3). She added, *"Inclusion means for me a place which does not make the children with Down's syndrome feel ridiculous next to their general peers... who consequently increase their feeling of connectedness to the school"* (FPG3). The Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002), also emphasises the importance of one of the indicator of inclusion is that everybody is made to feel more than welcome in mainstream schools.

In spite of this, elements of the medical model were observed in the schools. For instance, OSG4 revealed that there were difficult moments, contradicting the principals' claim that the inclusive school is one in which all feel a sense of belonging. In one of the school corridors I overheard three general students describe children with Down's syndrome and those like them with negative words such as '*stupid*', '*crazy*' and '*mad*'. Such words can only lead to a lack of any sense of belonging. Negative language use has been highlighted as potentially detrimental to inclusion (Thomas and Corker, 2002). One father said in an informal conversation, "*These derogatory words consequently lead to such children not wishing to attend school*" (IFG1).

In general, a very small number of male principals defined inclusion as a sense of belonging to a group; elements of the social model were more evident in statements from female principals, who, viewed 'belonging' as one of the most important matters which they associated with their quasi-maternal role, as indicated in these statements: "*They are like my children*" (FPG6), and "*I am the same as their mother*" (FPA1). In Saudi culture the woman plays an important role in the family (Afeafe, 2000). As FPG4 stated, "*Whether we are working women or housewives, many responsibilities lie on our shoulders and we are responsible for the family's connectedness and for helping all of our children individually*". She applied the same ethical principles towards children with Down's syndrome at the school.

From the above analysis, it is proposed that inclusion, for many principals, means enabling children with Down's syndrome to have a sense of belonging in school and within the community in which they live. Therefore, some principals showed an understanding of concept of inclusion, as I will discuss in the last sub-theme.

4.5. Full inclusion vs. Partial Inclusion

Global trend vs. Islamic trend

Principal FPG1, who has a Master's degree in education, argued that: "*... to apply inclusion inside classrooms, the Local Educational Authority should meet the needs of all students and also equip all teachers to assess individual differences among students*

... and before this, modify the special education policy [the Rules and Regulations of Special Education]". This quotation is the closest of all the principal comments to the concept of inclusive education generally adopted in Western countries. This definition is consistent with Ballard's (2003) claim that inclusive education implies non-discrimination between students in the school's community, regardless of differences, and their right to equal treatment and provisions in one inclusive school. This implies that principals need to recognise the educational rights of students with Down's syndrome to be accepted and taught in one environment, alongside their peers, as an issue of equal of all children (Guralnick and Groom, 1988; Falvey, 1995).

The understanding expressed by the highly educated participant cited above calls to mind evidence from a variety of studies that principals with high levels of education - particularly special education needs-related qualifications - are regarded as being more understanding of inclusive education in comparison to those without such qualifications (Elhoweris and Alsheikh, 2006). In fact, I found that most principals did seem to have a suitable understanding of the concept of inclusion. However, a number of the principals admitted that there is a dispute regarding the inclusion concept. For example, MPG9 described the differences in the concept of inclusion based upon the information he had obtained from his participation in a meeting at the Special Education Department: *"I believe that there are two definitions of the inclusion concept ... the Western concept of inclusion means the inclusion of children with special educational needs [Down's syndrome] within the general classroom ... on the other hand, there is our [Saudi] definition of inclusion, which means the inclusion of such children in the school, but only in separate classrooms ..."*

The same principal added that inclusion as applied in Saudi Arabia is preferable at present: *"... yes ... the inclusive classrooms attached to the inclusive school must be retained ... if we want to achieve individual learning, which is difficult to achieve for those children [Down's syndrome] in general classrooms ... under the current circumstances"* (MPG9). Similarly, FPG1 stated that there is a dispute regarding the inclusion concept: *"... but I know that our concept of inclusion differs totally from that of Europe and America ... but we have our own special religious and cultural values ..."*

and we have the right to formulate a definition which suits such particularities ... in fact, we are not the only country in the world that applies inclusion in this way [in a reference to inclusive classrooms]". This contrasts with the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002), as one indicator urges reduction of exclusion.

In this comment, the concern of policy borrowing is raised by the participant, who shows a disinclination for borrowing international experience in the Saudi context, owing to the fact that Saudi Arabia has its own culture. Mention is also made of the fact that national practices are influenced by national belief systems (Gabel and Danforth, 2008). This point is recognised by Barton and Armstrong (2008), who note that this is not only a cross-national issue, but also has resonance within a country. Barton and Armstrong (2008) say, *"We cannot just apply the language of 'inclusion' uncritically, assuming that meanings will be shared across cultures – or even within the same national context or education authority"* (p.1). Essentially, it is pivotal to take into account how policy can be aligned and to further examine the issues that could occur prior to transferring a policy to a new context (Auld and Morris, 2014).

It should be noted that principal FPG1 was the only female participant who knew about the wider concept of inclusion. However, both she and MPG9, quoted earlier, refused entirely to consider co-education. Principal FPG1 stated, *"Yes, such inclusion is worldwide ... but it is impossible to manage a school which has males and females ... yes, for religious reasons"* (FPG1). She added, *"Also, could you please tell me why some Western countries still keep single-sex schools?"* (FPG1). This is consistent with Miles and Singal (2010), who stated that the implementation of inclusion differs from one country to the next.

In the same context, another principal, MPG4, when I discussed mixed schools and their relation to inclusion, asked, *"Would you be happy for your daughter to study in the same school as boys? ... We need to discuss the inclusion of children with disabilities, not the inclusion of girls with boys ..."*. It is interesting that in this context, inclusion is seen as specific to pupils with special educational needs, rather than being relevant to other factors of difference, such as gender. The Education Policy is in agreement with the views of MPG4 and FPG1 regarding coeducation, which it states is illegal at all levels of

education, except in nurseries level (D1A155). This illustrates the impact of religion on Saudi education in the sense that there is gender segregation in education (Metz, 1993). Moreover, these opinions of principals are supported by the Saudi Court (2014) which passed a judgement against the Ministry of Education when it proposed to allow coeducation in years 1, 2 and 3 of primary school. However, a more detailed discussion of coeducation is beyond the scope of this study, which focuses on the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in inclusive schools.

With regard to knowledge of and insight into learners with special educational needs and inclusion, school educator with greater skills and experience in this domain demonstrate much more understanding about the concept of inclusion of such students (Rakap and Kaczmarek, 2010). Such understanding was shown by Principal MPG6 [with 35 years' experience in education] who called for changing the name from 'inclusive school' to 'school for all', which, in his opinion would solve all problems of inclusion. He stated, *"... in Qatar, when I visited, they call inclusive schools, 'schools for all' ... and it's a fact that if we used such a name for our schools, we wouldn't have problems such as 'wasta' in order to admit those children, because all children would study together ..."*. The above-quoted principal implied that, in the admission of students with Down's syndrome in school, regardless of whether acceptance criteria were met, *wasta* continues to be used. As a result, people who have a personal connection with any staff in the student assessment centre [in reference to *wasta*] may be able to get their child accepted to the school, despite a low assessment result (Hutchings and Weir, 2006).

Parents may resort to '*wasta*' because of the difference between inclusive schools in Saudi Arabia and other countries in that inclusive schools usually only have an inclusive class for one type of disability, for example, learning difficulties. Whilst this does happen in some other countries, many schools have children with varied disabilities attending their inclusive classes. Schools are, therefore seen as a small part of society (Afeafe, 2000).

Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) emphasise the importance of understanding inclusive education by school principals and teachers, to facilitate and encourage inclusive education development. However, the interviews with principals revealed a disparity in

understanding about inclusion. For example, FPG4 said, *“For me, inclusion means the education of children with special educational needs [Down’s syndrome] by giving them the opportunity to be educated at an inclusive school”*. Further, she disagreed with the form of inclusion currently practised in inclusive classrooms in inclusive schools, even though it was applied in her school. She complained, *“Exclusion, exclusion, exclusion ... since we are still excluding them [children with Down’s syndrome] in their inclusive classrooms ... in some schools there are exclusion buildings too ... it is not true inclusion! Is it?”* (FPG4). It is noteworthy that the enthusiasm of this female principal was informed by her personal experience, both in managing an inclusive school, and as having a brother with special educational needs.

The view of principal FPG4 is consistent with Parasuram (2006), in the context of India and Al-Abduljabbar and Massud (2002) in the context of Saudi Arabia, who both found that the presence of a disabled child in the family of one of the school staff is closely linked to disability awareness. It should be noted that, in the culture of Saudi Arabia, it is common for sisters to adopt the role of mother (Afeafe, 2000); as such, this principal could have experienced a very close and supportive relationship with her brother. She was not concerned about stigma, although stigma is one of the pressing issues experienced by students with special educational needs, and causes various social problems for them, extending to their families (Clements and Read, 2008), inducing denial, guilt, and sometimes a decision to keep such children out of societal life (Wall, 2006).

As stated in the social model, all issues potentially responsible for the exclusion of students with Down’s syndrome must be eradicated if a society is to develop inclusive schools, with the principal modelling how society should behave regarding inclusion (Oliver, 2009). For Oliver (2009), the issue of disability is not disputed but is, rather, perceived as being located within society, inflicted upon disabled people, in addition to their impairment, through discriminating and oppressive institutional and social structures. As such, the problems experienced by those with Down’s syndrome are a direct result of society, and not of the individual’s own limitations. In a similar vein, the Index for Inclusion complements the view of the social model in terms of aiming to

eradicate obstacles facing exclusion through decreasing discriminative practices in schools in an effort to assist such individuals in learning (Booth and Ainscow, 2011).

In contrast, it could be argued that some Saudi inclusive schools' principals view students with Down's syndrome through the lens of the medical model, focusing on their disability, which necessitates the presence of experts. Accordingly, in general schools, principals' involvement with students with Down's syndrome was not common. School principals were frequently seen to be intentionally excluding those students with Down's syndrome due to lack of understanding, as the majority of the sample had little or no knowledge of inclusion. Hence, their idea of inclusion was to have children with Down's syndrome within the inclusive school but in separate "inclusive" classrooms. In contrast, one participant had a clear idea about inclusion generally; for example, defining education as a part of the actual concept of inclusion, although with strong reservations as to the applicability of coeducation in Saudi Arabia, related to the Islamic religion as practised in the country. As the Education Policy stresses in one of its articles, thus: "Coeducation is banned [illegal] at all levels of education, except in nurseries and kindergartens" (D1A155).

The stance adopted by Islam makes clear why it is common thought that those with learning difficulties should be given their own classrooms, as well as why students should be carefully assigned to the most suitable programme. This is not concerned with labelling students, but rather about establishing and fulfilling their needs, with plans customised to provide the appropriate educational, psychological and social support. Accordingly, in Saudi Arabia, it is widely considered that educating children with learning difficulties in inclusive classrooms in inclusive schools is acceptable, as this acknowledges both equity and difference, consistent with Islamic culture (Al-Mousa, 2008). Indeed, although children with Down's syndrome were in their own classrooms, during observation OSG3, I found that the principal of this school distributed the school budget between general education and special education to buy stationery. In informal conversations with teacher ITG3, he indicated that *"the principal considers the two groups to be part and parcel of the same school"*.

Due to the importance of the rights of individuals, which are supported by Islam for all children, this issue has been addressed in various places in the Education Policy, and is consistent with the interview findings in this present research. Thus, the policy urges that individuals be given their rights: “Confirming the rights of individuals and providing suitable opportunities to develop their abilities so that they can contribute to the nation’s rebirth” (D1A36). Moreover, the United Nations declared the Salamanca Declaration of Education Rights as an absolute standard to be achieved by all nations and peoples (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, 1994). In recent years in Saudi Arabia, special education has undergone significant changes, as Government policy responds to international agreements concerning disabled individuals’ rights (Al-Mousa, 2008). The declaration has had an influence on a number of the principals who linked the concept of inclusion with the Islamic trend. Moreover, the impact of Islam was observed in documents such as school meeting minutes (D4), where participants called for kindness to those children as exhorted by Islam.

Consistent with Islamic principles, I found the culture of rights was invoked to defend children with Down’s syndrome. For example, MPG9 maintained that he was a defendant of such children’s rights: “*I acted in defence of the issue of inclusion in the corridors of the Authority [the Local Educational Authority]*”. When asked why, he replied, “*It is right and proper for them [children with Down’s syndrome] to have their neglected rights*” (MPG9). In the domain of Islamic law, dignity, education, people and life in general are all given importance and consideration. Given this, inclusion should be regarded as an educational right afforded to all people, including those with Down’s syndrome to lead an equal life, although exclusion remains an issue in society, together with the existence of various special schools, by which students Down’s syndrome are still excluded (Aboela, 2008). However, as Ainscow and Sandill (2010) have argued, the Western concept of inclusion is “*increasingly being embraced on the grounds of social justice and human rights*” (p.402).

4.6. Summary

In conclusion, principals lacked a common understanding of the meaning of inclusion. Some admitted to not understanding the concept at all, while among many who showed

a limited level of understanding, their definitions tended to centre on the medical model. The majority understood inclusion in terms of its relation to special educational needs. The Rules and Regulations of Special Education, similarly, associated the term 'inclusion' with special educational needs in several places.

In general, I found a difference in knowledge and understanding about inclusion between male and female principals. However, one of the female principals showed more knowledge and understanding than her male counterparts because of having a brother with special needs. Also, one of the male principals showed the poorest knowledge and understanding, which may be due to his lower level of qualifications which was less than bachelor degree level.

Most principals saw inclusion as partial inclusion; only one principal remarked that inclusion means full inclusion. The principals understood inclusion as putting children with Down's syndrome in 'inclusive classrooms', separated from others but in 'inclusive schools', to be fully included only during non-curricular activities such as art, physical education and home economics. The principals who were enthusiastic about partial inclusion ascribed this to their day-to-day experience of work in such a context, or to previous dealings with children with special educational needs. A few recognised that the current Saudi practice was not full inclusion, but even those who favoured full inclusion applied the idea only to pupils with disabilities. They rejected coeducation on religious and cultural grounds. The findings show how principals' understanding of what inclusion means influences principals' perspectives. These principals' understanding of inclusion will affect the effectiveness of inclusion in the future, including the dimensions of the Index for Inclusion. The next chapter addresses the perspective of principals concerning the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in inclusive schools.

Chapter Five: School Principals' Perspectives on Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Mainstream Schools

Following the research stages:

Chapter 1	Introduction and Research Context		
Chapter 2	The Context, Theory and Literature Review	Part 1	The Context of Saudi Arabia
		Part 2	Theoretical Framework
		Part 3	Literature Review
Chapter 3	Research Methodology		
Chapter 4	Principals' Understanding of Concept of Inclusion		
Chapter 5	School Principals' Perspectives on Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Mainstream Schools		
Chapter 6	Factors Affecting the Perspectives of Principals regarding the Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome		
Chapter 7	Recommendations and Conclusion		

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides insight into the findings concerning the different perspectives of school principals about the inclusion of students with Down's syndrome in mainstream education. This chapter is divided into three main sections, presenting detailed analysis of three sub-themes. Each sub-theme consists of codes (for details of how the data was analysed, see chapter three). The sub-themes are as follows:

- Those who support full inclusion
- Those who wish to keep partial inclusion
- Those who wish to return to special schools

For each sub-theme individually, I will provide the responses of some principals, supported with observations and documents, which are interpreted with reference to the medical and social models, and also with consideration to the Index of Inclusion, as well as drawing upon wider literature.

5.2. Those who Support Full Inclusion

The results of data triangulation from various sources showed that a small number of the participants had positive perspectives toward the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in general classrooms. For example, FPG1 indicated, *"Using the home economics school curriculum for the Down's syndrome girls made the general pupils appreciate the abilities of such pupils more than before"*. She also added, *"These children [children with Down's syndrome] who study the same curriculum were able to develop the same house tidying skills as the general children do"* (FPG1). Support for full inclusion centred on interaction, acceptable behaviour, and the special education allowance. Booth and Ainscow (2002) in the Index for Inclusion confirm that students are should be given equal value.

Interaction

The literature suggests that inclusion needs to be initiated in the early years, as students with disabilities are less likely to assimilate into society if they have been segregated throughout the first 18–20 years of their lives (Smith et al., 2014). The literature also

emphasises that students, on reaching adulthood, will need to live, play and work alongside their peers in inclusive settings. Without the opportunity to learn and grow alongside non-disabled individuals, they will be less likely to achieve their goals as adults. On this rationale, some principles did their best to enable these children to participate in non-academic lessons in the general classrooms, consistent with the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002), as this indicator stresses that ‘Lessons are made accessible to all students’.

Some participants created and encouraged opportunities for social, sport and art interaction among all pupils, as one principal declared in the following quotation: “... *Our teachers help new students in our school [children with Down’s syndrome] to develop their skills and to participate in the different activities to develop their skills like other children [children without special educational needs] ...*” (MPG4). As stated in the Index for Inclusion, this will help new pupils to settle in school (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

Participants with positive attitudes to inclusion often spoke of the school as a family. Principal FPG8 recalled her advice to all pupils, “*to feel that they are like one family*”. Similarly, principal MPG7 stated, “*I advise all children in the general school to deal with all pupils at the school in a friendly manner, especially those with learning difficulties [children with Down’s syndrome]; also, I encourage them to feel that they are like one family*”. One of the female principals referred to a child with Down’s syndrome as “*like my daughter ... it is a matter of rights, which is encouraged by the Quran*” (FPG6). Generally, the Saudi Arabian education policy motivates and encourages specialists to help solve societal issues, for example, “Developing the pupils’ feelings of social, economic and cultural problems, and preparing them to help solve them” (D1A35). This perspective in Saudi education policy and amongst principals seems to suggest a general agreement that education should be recognised widely, as a critical/ human right for everyone, as first outlined in 1948 in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Almalq, 2004).

Principal FPG4 mentioned the possibility of full inclusion if there is cooperation and support from everyone at the school, including the general education children: “... *Other*

children in the general classroom can help children with learning difficulties [children with Down's syndrome]". The same participant talked about her family experience of such help: *"I have a number of siblings and we don't have any problem taking care of my brother who has a chronic disease"* (FPG4). This view is in agreement with Al-Abduljabbar and Massud's (2002) finding that teachers in Saudi Arabia show support for inclusion when one of the teachers has a family member with special educational needs. A similar finding was reported by Parasuram (2006) among teachers in India.

One further rationale for the significant degree of encouragement of interaction in the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, however, could be the effect of religious values, which emphasise the development of all students, as religious culture urges individuals to display patience in order to reach Paradise (Ibn-baz, 1999). Such emphasis is apparent across Saudi Education Policy (1970) as a whole, with Islamic studies a compulsory aspect of teacher preparation, regardless of teaching specialism.

Acceptable behaviour

Proponents of inclusive education saw it as advantageous to all students, as non-disabled students are positioned to care for and assist their peers. Deng (2008) suggests that supporting one another enhances all students' psychological experience. In a similar vein, Ali et al. (2006) argue that inclusive education improves social behaviour whilst decreasing negative stereotypes. The positive influence of typically developing peers on the social skills of those with disabilities has been reported by Wishart (2005). However, in Saudi Arabia, support from peers is seen to be directly linked with the Islamic perspective of assisting those in need of help (Alanazi, 2012).

Some participants believed that the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in non-academic subjects, alongside their peers, broadened the minds of such pupils and gave them an idea of the real world. In contrast, as principal FPG3 declared, *"When these children [children with Down's syndrome] are excluded and sent to special institutes [special schools] or even in special classes in the general ... their experiences of people are limited to their peers with the same disability, and consequently they do not know how to deal with the general children"*. However, to send these students to special

school is contrary to the Index for Inclusion, which encourages the admission of all students to schools in their community (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

Indeed, the observation in school OSA1 supports the view of the above principal, as, when children with Down's syndrome were included with general pupils in the art class, all knew what they had to do and how to behave in different situations. This was in spite of one father IFG1, who expressed concern that "... *the general children are not ready to receive my child who has Down's syndrome in the school*". Possibly, it is advisable to start adjusting the behaviour of children with Down's syndrome early in their school life which may help other children to accept them in mainstream schools (Afeafe, 2000).

The viewpoint of female teachers towards inclusion was notably more positive than that of male teachers, with women considered more positive and sensitive, as prior research has reported (Gaad, 2011). Similarly, Fakolade et al. (2009) found that female teachers hold more positive perspectives than males. Indeed, I found that most female principals considered that general classrooms are important places for children to develop and improve their behaviour, as reflected in the following quotation: "... *It is obvious that the attendance of such girls [with Down's syndrome] in the housekeeping class helped improve their behaviour...*" (FPA1). The results are in line with reports by Wolpert (2001), that students with special educational needs were better positioned to learn and study in inclusive environments. Generally, this focus on behaviour reflects the general aim in Saudi education policy of encouraging pupils to "... [develop] constructive behavioural trends, ... to prepare the individual to be a beneficial member in constructing his/her society" (D1A28).

Special Education allowance

One factor influencing support for inclusion, in school principals' perspective, was that there are associated financial advantages. For example, (MPG9) stated, "*I'm with full inclusion ... but do not cut down the allowance...*". The same was true of teachers who are considered key individuals in the adoption of inclusive education (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). This emerged in school observations when I witnessed non-cooperation between general teachers and special education teachers, for instance, general teachers'

refusal to enter special classrooms when special education teachers were absent. Teacher ITG2 explained, *“Non-cooperation can be attributed to the 30% salary allowance paid to us [special education teachers] as a result of our work with learning difficulties children, which is to attract and to encourage us in our efforts with these children”*. This allowance is provided in the Rules and Regulations of Special Education (D2A72). However, this was a cause of discontent among the general teachers, who are expected to manage inclusive classes, so one teacher (ITG1) complained, *“This requires more effort with more pupils and more lessons without training and without allowances in our salaries”*.

When I interviewed the principals, one principal declared, *“... The general teachers cannot agree with the teaching of these children [children with Down’s syndrome] in the general classrooms without receiving a 30% allowance equal to their colleagues... you know that this is not within my authority”* (MPG5). As Alanazi (2012) noted, teachers in Saudi Arabia have less autonomy compared with their Western counterparts, although they are able to influence the adoption of inclusion. Accordingly, observation at school OSA1 revealed cooperation between the general teachers and the special educational teachers was rare. Principal MPA1, an ARAMCO school principal, wanted to set up a fun party programme for children with Down’s syndrome. He said, *“I use my authority to motivate the general teachers to cooperate with the special education teachers in the festivals set up in the school... Yes, I have authority, such as sending teachers to the training set up within the ARAMCO campus”*.

The Rules and Regulations of Special Education document agrees that “general school principals can enable teachers to participate in meetings and refresher programmes...” (D2A27). Evidence of this practice was provided by teacher ITA1 who commented that *“in ARAMCO the training providers are professionals ... indeed this training motivates me to upgrade my career”*. This is an example of how, as King (2011) suggested, school principals can assist teachers in the adoption of inclusive practices, thereby encouraging the involvement of those with Down’s syndrome in the mainstream environment.

Based on the above data concerning the difference in salaries between general and special education teachers, there is a barrier to full inclusion as the discontent felt by

general teachers could negatively affect the perspective of principals towards full inclusion, as suggested by Alfahili (2007). Therefore, the second sub-theme concerns why principals feel the need to keep partial inclusion.

5.3. Those who Wish to Keep Partial Inclusion

Many participants preferred children with Down's syndrome to be taught in special classes attached to general schools. One principal explained, *"I believe that we cannot include the children with Down's syndrome in the general classrooms as they have many academic problems ... if the gap between them and the general pupils were just one or two years then no problem, but the gap is very big"* (FPG2). Another principal was worried about inclusion within the general classroom, as he feared it would prevent the teacher paying sufficient attention to other children: *"... I believe that these children have to stay excluded in the school as they have individual differences, [that] require great time and effort from the general classroom teacher"* (MPG3). The lesson is that, as stated in the Index for Inclusion, developing the understanding of difference may be appropriate in order to solve the gap between students, and this will help to achieve more inclusion for children with Down's syndrome (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

Pupils with learning difficulties who attend general schools, including children with Down's syndrome, are currently included in classes such as art and physical education for boys and art and home economics for girls (Alquraini, 2011). The Rules and Regulations of Special Education urge school principals "to find an educational environment that enables the special education pupils to be included with general peers in classroom activities and activities outside the classroom" (D2A26). It is also stated in the Rules and Regulations of Special Education that the general school is the natural environment educationally, socially and psychologically for pupils with Down's syndrome, with "special education services ... provided as per the type and degree of disability and individual needs of the pupils across various types of special class" (D2A18).

My work agrees with Alanazi (2012), in finding that the Rules and Regulations of Special Education in Saudi Arabia encourage inclusive education but that this is

locational, i.e. children with and without disabilities are taught at one school but in different classes (Alkalifa, 2002). During my observations in schools, such arrangements applied to children with learning difficulties, including children with Down's syndrome. For example, in an ARAMCO school (OSA1) I noted that the special classes were in the same building but in separate corridors. This is clear in Photo 5.1, where all of the classes shown are 'inclusive education' classes, while the general classrooms are in other corridors, perpetuating a kind of exclusion (Afeafe, 2000). In government schools, the majority of general classrooms are on the higher floors of the school, while the special classrooms are on the ground floor; as one father (IFG1) said, "... well, floors are a means of separation".

Photo 5.1: Special classes on a separate corridor



Elements of the medical model were especially apparent in school OSG1, where special classes were in a separate building. In an informal conversational interview, principal IPG4 told me that: *“In this way the inclusion programme management will be easy for me”*. This is contrary to King’s (2011) suggestion that principals should have the ability to develop new ways of management in order to overcome obstacles. Also, it is contrary to Male (2006: p.3), who suggested, *“Any organization needs a combination of leadership, management and administration in order to run effectively and efficiently”*. It is clear from what has been mentioned that each principal interprets education policy as he/she sees fit, as the policy is not conclusive on inclusion within the general classroom, and that this is a controversial issue.

The views of principals who wished to retain partial inclusion were related to three issues: teaching methods, advance preparation and the curriculum.

Teaching methods

The difference in teaching methods was one reason given by principals for preferring children with Down’s syndrome to be taught in special classes in general schools. As noted earlier, teaching in special classes is based on individual teaching plans, according to education policy (D2A85) reflecting the capabilities of every child (Al-Herz, 2008). In contrast, as principal MPG3 explained, *“In the general classrooms teachers uses one method for all students in the class”*. This means that in general schools, pupils are taught as a whole unit, regardless of individual differences. Owing to the dominance of the medical model in Saudi Arabia, students with learning difficulties are taught away from the mainstream settings in exclusive classrooms. Such segregation is contrary to the social model, which emphasises measures to facilitate interaction and education. Moreover, one of indicators in the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) is that inclusive education of Down’s syndrome in mainstream classrooms needs to be thoroughly organised by using individual teachers for each child.

The majority of the participants held the view that they were lacking in practical knowledge about how to teach those with Down’s syndrome in an inclusive setting. Similar findings are reported by Chhabra et al. (2010). Their concerns were reflected by

teacher ITG2 who argued, *“With the collective teaching method pupils with Down’s syndrome will not be able to work well in the general class”*. The literature suggests a cooperative learning method for use with students with disabilities and a variety of learning needs (Schmidt and Harriman, 1998). In these approaches, students work together in small groups and are reliant on one another to carry out tasks.

It was observed that, despite the participants generally showing somewhat negative perspectives towards children with Down’s syndrome within general classrooms, they supported partial inclusion in general schools. One principal FPG5 had tried unsuccessfully to include some children with Down’s syndrome in the general classroom. She explained, *“I observed that one of the children with Down’s syndrome was able to keep up with her colleagues in the general classroom... after taking advice from the programme supervisor, for her to be included in the general classroom ... But after a period the general classroom teacher told me that this pupil could not interact with her classmates correctly because there are different teaching methods between them”*. This is contrary to the Index for Inclusion, which indicated that in inclusive schools, *“The school arranges teaching groups so that all students are valued”* (Booth and Ainscow, 2002: p.40).

As a result of such difficulties, another participant said that the children with Down’s syndrome participate with general classes but only in non-academic activities. She declared, *“Some of these children [children with Down’s syndrome] face difficulties with the language or cannot express their ideas correctly ... but we can provide them with the chance to learn with general children, in the arts class for example ... this ... is enough”* (MPG6). Perspectives such as these are centred on misapprehension and misjudgement of the needs of those with Down’s syndrome, consistent with the medical model of care without cure (Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000). Similarly, the challenges facing students with special needs have been discussed by Pijl and Frissen (2009), who emphasised that, in order to understand the educational requirements of those with difficulties, we need to recognise their individuality.

Advance preparation

One principal criticised the Ministry of Education because *“In trying to include children with Down’s syndrome in the general classroom, the Ministry of Education should educate and train me and the school staff... and this hasn’t happened”* (FPG9). Previous author (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002) reported a link between more in-depth training and more positive perspectives surrounding inclusion. Without it, principals who supported attached classes did not wish to proceed with full inclusion. This emphasises the lack of clarity concerning the social model, which encourages eradicating obstacles to meet students’ needs. Thus, principals need to acquire adequate knowledge about Down’s syndrome in conjunction with inclusive education and the Ministry of Education should ensure that principals have sufficient knowledge and understanding.

In the same direction, some participants claimed that inclusion in general schools worked for children with Down’s syndrome, but only when these children were ready and the school was ready for them. As principal MPG2 claimed, *“Inclusion of children with Down’s syndrome ... depends upon the suitability of facilities and the presence of additional staff”*. The previous principal agreed with the Index for Inclusion by making the building suitable for all people (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). In this respect, I found differences in the conditions observed between government schools and ARAMCO schools. School OSG3, a government school, lacked the minimum safety requirements; for example, some drainage covers were open, which represents a big danger for children with Down’s syndrome.

On the other hand, the ARAMCO School (OSA1) observed high safety standards. For example, emergency exits are well signed, see Photo 5.2. Since ARAMCO schools are generally located in cities, the greater suitability of their buildings for students affects teachers’ viewpoints. Glaubman and Lifshitz (2001) found teachers from cities to be more positive than those in suburban locations.

Photo 5.2: Emergency exits at the ARAMCO School



The poor facilities in some government schools conflict with the Rules and Regulations of Special Education. For example, I found that the policy requires principals “to inspect the establishments ... and their facilities,... [for]... cleanliness, safety and good appearance, and prepare a register of [required] maintenance works, and to report to the Education Department about any architectural or dangerous construction issues” (D2A25). Even in the ARAMCO School, however, there were staffing issues: “*We have a problem with the special education staff, as they are not complete up until now ... It is not ARAMCO’s responsibility, but the responsibility of the Ministry of Education*” (FPA1). Accordingly, providing schools with additional facilities and specialists in Learning Difficulties could bring positive changes in principals’ perspective towards inclusion (Alfahili, 2007).

School curriculum

In the literature, it is suggested that providing a distinctive curriculum for those with disabilities in schools results in more exclusion and isolation. However, Carlberg and Kavale (1980) found teachers and staff support a curriculum where students with special needs are kept separate. Similarly, some principals in this research did not support the use of the general curriculum for children with Down's syndrome, whether in the general classroom or the special class, as they thought children with Down's syndrome should have a separate and different curriculum and that each child should have his/her own programme. For example, principal MPG1 highlighted the difficulty of applying the curriculum for all children: *"We have children with moderate, severe and profound learning difficulties ... It is impossible to teach these children the same curriculum as the other pupils and so I think that it is impossible to teach them within the general classroom"*.

Socially, "wasta" is applied when Arabs feel responsible for their family and network overall (El-Said and Harrigan, 2009). Therefore, it was suggested that "wasta" was invoked to waive the conditions of admission to mainstream schools as, if there are no specialised programmes for children with severe or profound learning difficulties, such children, if not accepted, will probably stay at home. The waiver of admission conditions conflicts with the Rules and Regulations of Special Education requiring that: "The child [is] diagnosed by a specialised team..." (D2A6). In observations in school OSG3 I found that several pupils with Down's syndrome had difficulties in general classes because the curriculum did not suit their disabilities. For example, the art curriculum requires pupils to do some tasks individually, such as drawing a circle and also holding a pen. As teacher ITG2 said, *"Such tasks are suitable for the children with Down's syndrome who have moderate difficulty but not for those children who have profound difficulty"*.

This perspective is not in line with previous findings that academically disabled students can benefit through involvement in activities with non-disabled students (Forlin, 2004). On the other hand, teachers' negative views are related to inability of children with academic difficulties to deal with the academic demands of mainstream schools (Miles

and Singal, 2010). However, Hughes (2006) shows that adjustments to the curriculum, and more varied opportunities to evidence learning, could improve attainment for all students. According to the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, equipping classrooms is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, and includes “preparing the classroom with the educational aids required ... which use with the curriculums in class” (D2A6).

The art teacher (ITG2) was not familiar with how to deal with these children because he is not a specialist and does not have a special education diploma, although according to the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, the art teacher “should preferably, in addition to a relevant university degree, have a diploma in Special Education in the learning difficulties area” (D2A6). It is emphasised by Ainscow et al. (2006) that teachers need to adapt activities and plans to personalise lessons and promote the involvement of all students.

In the Index for Inclusion, flexibility is also paramount (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). In Dimension C, Orchestrating Learning, for example, the first indicator is ‘lessons are responsive to student diversity’. This necessitates that, in order to support the learning of all children enrolled in the school, as opposed to delivering the curriculum, teaching should be planned, and the curriculum adapted to reflect children’s various backgrounds, interests, experiences and needs. The difficulty of such change led some principals to request a return of those children to special schools, as discussed next.

5.4. Those who Wish to Return to Special Schools

Some participants had more negative opinions. They rejected the closure of special schools and called for returning those children who attend general schools to special schools. Among them, for example, was principal MPG2 who thought this trend to inclusion was misdirected by emotional reactions. She said, *“I believe that ... our emotions are aroused regarding inclusion of children with Down’s syndrome at general schools”*. I asked her why she had such a perspective and she answered, *“I did not find the results I expected from their inclusion ... the results in the special school were better and more positive”* (MPG2). Accordingly, negative perspectives towards inclusion have

been seen to be linked with the degree and nature of the disability. One study carried out in the UK context has shown that teachers viewed individuals with behavioural and emotional problems as responsible for more stress than those with other disabilities (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002) and with comparable findings garnered in the United Arab Emirates (Gaad, 2011). Such views reflected concerns about communication difficulties, children's behaviour, and additional responsibilities.

Communication difficulties

A number of the participating principals talked about sending children with Down's syndrome to special schools. One reason for these negative views towards inclusive education was a lack of communication with the children. Other research supports the view that this might affect teachers' perspectives (Kibria, 2005).

In various work, it has been established that the perspectives of educators towards inclusion depend on the characteristics of their students (Friend and Bursuck, 2012). In this respect, principal MPG5 said, *"If the pupils with Down's syndrome are not able to communicate with their teachers, how can we teach them? The Ministry of Education can keep the special schools and put them in it/them, as there are trained staff there"*. This view reflects a failure to recognise students with Down's syndrome as having their own understanding and distinctive forms of communication (Jarrold et al., 1999). Moreover, it contradicts the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, which state that "The principals can play a major role to make the children with special educational needs [children with Down's syndrome] more responsive to the school through more flexible school management, more learning options diversity and supporting the pupils who suffer from a difficulty or a problem" (D2A3).

Evidence shows that children with Down's syndrome who study in general schools succeed in improving their communication skills (Guralnick and Groom, 1988). However, I found an example of difficulty in communication in my observation of school OSG1, where I saw the principal trying to explain to a pupil with learning difficulties that the break was finished. However, he was unable to do so and asked the special education teacher to take the pupil to his class. Such an observation gives insight

into principals' difficulty in working with these children, which contributes to their negative perspectives towards children with Down's syndrome.

As principal FPG1 declared, *"In the general schools we do not have experience of how to work with children with Down's syndrome, especially those children who have speech problems ... those who require help from others ... what will they do? There should be an additional person in the general classroom, but the Ministry of Education does not provide that"*. An additional person is meant to be a speech therapist, who was not provided by the Ministry, although the Rules and Regulations of Special Education discusses such provision: *"The speech therapist (communication disorders specialist) is the person responsible for diagnosing the communication disorder cases for the pupils at school and to make the necessary training treatment plans ..."* (D2A46). However, principal IPG1 said that this article *"is not implemented by the Ministry..."*. In this respect, Pueschel and Hopmann (1993: p.350) indicate that, *"in the absence of normative data about the communication... of persons with Down's syndrome,... professionals wonder about reasonable expectations..."*.

Several schools suffered from lack of a speech therapist. For example, in school OSG2 the fifteen pupils with learning difficulty requiring speech sessions had to a Special Education Centre or nearby special school to see speech trainers. According to teacher ITG1 the problem is due to *"the rarity of this specialisation and even if available they find better jobs with higher salaries in the specialist hospitals"*. In the schools observed, most specialist professionals, including speech therapists, were not available, causing principals to refuse to accept severe and profoundly difficult cases and sometimes even moderately difficult cases. The perspective of school principals' regarding Down's syndrome were centred on the medical model, which emphasises the impairment and the need for care (Villa and Thousand, 2005).

Children's behaviour

Another issue concerning principals was children's behaviour. Principal MPG3, when talking about his experiences with inclusion, argued *"[inclusion] depends upon their behaviour... for example, we cannot accept profoundly difficult pupils as the effect of*

inclusion will be negative on the children with Down's syndrome as well as on the other general children...". The results of my research are consistent with other research. For example, it was noted by Miles and Singal (2010) that the majority of teachers are less inclined to work with children with behavioural difficulties. One common concern behind this perspective is that teachers are reluctant to take responsibility for managing difficult behaviour.

I also heard about principals' negative views towards inclusion of children with Down's syndrome who suffer from behavioural problems, such as verbal or physical aggression, as they do not comply with the school rules. Principal MPG1 said, *"Yes, children with Down's syndrome are at the stage of childhood where it is natural to have aggressive behaviour... but their aggression is different from other children's and I cannot bear it in our school"*. Another principal stated, *"Honestly these children [children with Down's syndrome] are like my sons, but they use aggression and I am unable to punish them ... do you believe that, I couldn't tell them what is good and what is bad? They don't know what I'm saying to them"* (FPG4). Such findings are in contrast to the findings by other scholars, such as Loreman et al. (2005), who found that teachers are more positive towards children with disability in education.

Indeed, during observation at school OSA1, I observed that in most cases the children with Down's syndrome were not able to control their behaviour. For example, I witnessed a behavioural problem when a student with Down's syndrome pulled the hair of a student from the general school. Contrary to my expectation, a Pupils' Advisor came to take action in this case. When I asked principal IPG3 about this he answered, *"The Pupils' Advisor doesn't do much to amend the behaviour of these children... he is busy with his own private business"*. In contrast, principal FPG3 declared that *"we need to understand why these children behave in such a way"*. Such different views support Alanazi's (2012) claim that leadership is essential in instigating change and to encourage everyone to work with such children to achieve more inclusion in school.

Moreover, principal MPG4 perceived Down's syndrome as intrinsically problematic because *"children with Down's syndrome are often more active than other children. They often cause me some trouble in the absence of the teacher, even for a short period*

... really it is not easy to show them what is wrong and what is right". Perhaps this is due to the delay in the inclusion of such children, as Wade and Moore (1992) suggest that students with special needs who begin their education in mainstream environments early are better positioned than those who make the transition from special schools.

The literature suggests that negative views towards inclusion are associated with the lack of experience, awareness and knowledge of principals regarding the inclusive education of those with Down's syndrome. For example, as stated by Norwich (2013), both external information and knowledge available to schools, and internal resources affect the perspectives and beliefs of staff. In the view of Dessent (1987), the skills and knowledge held by school principals are fundamental to their practice and are the most noteworthy of factors underpinning individual change. It is demonstrated by Gilmore et al. (2003) that perspectives are founded in both past and present experiences. Principals' apparent difficulties made me look at the Rules and Regulations of Special Education for the duties of the Pupils' Advisor, and I found that one of the duties is to "study the individual cases of the pupils who have negative behaviour and understand their needs" (D2A51). However, it seemed this was not happening in practice.

Additional responsibilities

School principals have to intensify their efforts through leadership, in order to ensure adequate provision for children with special educational needs (Law, 1999). However, the additional responsibilities for the school principals of special teachers and their students was another reason for negative attitudes towards inclusion. For example, principal FPG7, whilst accepting that theoretically, *"Inclusion within the general school is good for children with Down's syndrome"*, added, *"... but these children will need their special schools as these schools provide what they need"* (FPG7). She felt unequipped for including such children, as *"Children with Down's syndrome require well trained principals that can manage and deal with ... these children ... they also need suitable equipment to be provided for them"* (FPG7).

According to the Rules and Regulations of Special Education (2002) and Al-Mousa (2008), principals are compensated by promotions and additional wages for the

additional time and efforts needed when implementing inclusive education for those with special needs. However, I found that principals believed that this additional salary is inadequate to compensate for the additional work burden. For example, principal MPA1 claimed, *“The effort I make with these children [children with Down’s syndrome] in the school is not compensated by the special education allowance”*.

The additional work involved also was explained by principal MPG1 who complained, *“I manage eight special classes, a big number of general classrooms along with a large number of special education teachers and the general teachers ... I am also a cooperative school management supervisor for the Local Authority for the nearby primary schools”*. He felt this workload made it difficult for him to meet the individual requirements of the pupils with Down’s syndrome. This experience reflected the tendency noted by Foreman (2011), for those in authority in the education hierarchy to issue directives and leave it to the school staff to apply them, without providing any follow-up to establish practice effectiveness. In addition, the Education Policy in Saudi Arabia encourages the Ministry of Education to develop special education: *“The Ministry of Education shall set a studied plan to raise special education to achieve its aims and also set regulations to organise it”* (D1A191). However, observations and interviews suggested that the Ministry of Education has underfunded special education and the plan is still incompletely implemented.

Negative perspectives held by teachers have been established in the literature as a key obstacle in the successful inclusion of those with disabilities (Alkalifa, 2002), and some principals reported such problems with teachers: *“If you see that I refuse the inclusion of these children [children with Down’s syndrome], note that some of their specialised teachers have the same feeling towards inclusion”* (FPG9). Another one declared, *“Special education teachers ... in our school refuse to teach children with Down’s syndrome who have a profound difficulty... They often say to me that these children’s place is special schools...”* (MPG2).

Consistent with this claim, in one school I observed that the special education teacher during the lesson was sitting reading the newspaper and ignoring students with learning difficulties. He told me later, *“I am not keen on working with learning difficulties*

children but I don't have another job to go to". In an interview with one principal, I was told that the special education teachers in his school were like *"a body without a spirit in the classrooms..."* (MPG7), while principal (MPG9) said of the special teachers, *"They hate the work and hate dealing with children with learning difficulties [children with Down's syndrome]"*. Such attitudes might lead to principals having negative perspectives on including these children and their teachers in mainstream schools. It is perhaps that as identified by Glaubman and Lifshitz (2001); teachers with more experience were found to be less positive than those without experience.

It may be suggested that the performance of teachers would be improved if principals had greater experience and knowledge of inclusive education; since principals are role models (Schmidt and Venet, 2012), who should evaluate the teaching process (Alfahili, 2007), and support and encourage teachers to lead students' learning and teaching (King, 2011). However, principals' lack of knowledge and awareness of the inclusive education concept and relevant skills exacerbated their lack of professional responsibility concerning disabled students and their negative perspectives towards inclusive education.

5.5. Summary

This chapter explored the perspectives of school principals concerning the inclusion of those with Down's syndrome in the mainstream setting. Their attitudes ranged from support for full inclusion to calls for a return to special schools. Irrespective of gender, school principals generally did not support the full inclusion of those with Down's syndrome. Some principals favoured the current situation of partial inclusion, due to the social benefits of inclusion in non-academic activities such as physical education, art and home economics, but without inclusion in academic subjects, for which children with Down's syndrome remain in special classes. This preference resulted from concerns about diverse teaching methods, lack of preparation for inclusion, and unsuitability of some aspects of the general curriculum for children with Down's syndrome. Others thought these children do not benefit from inclusion in general schools, due to communication problems and unacceptable behaviour, and considered special schools

more suitable for children with Down's syndrome. Indeed some resented what they saw as an additional burden involved in teaching such children.

Such perspectives were underpinned by a lack of experience, knowledge and understanding concerning inclusive education as a concept, and the needs of those with Down's syndrome. Also, there were problems of infrastructure, especially in government schools. Such issues will be explained in the next chapter. As stated by the social model, discrimination needs to be removed (Smith et al., 2014). Paying principals a larger salary for managing inclusive schools is insufficient; other challenges concerning the education of students with Down's syndrome need to be addressed.

On the other hand, a few principals supported full inclusion and called for including these children in the general classroom, through making radical changes in the education policy, the school infrastructure and other conditions to absorb the children with Down's syndrome. Their views centred on the perceived benefits of interaction between pupils with Down's syndrome and other children, including the likelihood that the Down's pupils would in this way learn accepted standards of behaviour.

In most cases, however, it was found that students with Down's syndrome were not afforded adequate attention in schools and were not encouraged to communicate with non-disabled students during break periods. Most principals adopted the medical model, rather than the social model, which calls for school principals to ensure the provision of suitable environments and accordingly devise suitable activities for all learners (Frederickson and Cline, 2009). The differences of opinion among principals, regarding inclusion, led me in the next chapter to try to identify the factors influencing the perspectives of the principals towards inclusion of children with Down's syndrome.

Chapter Six: Factors Affecting the Perspectives of Principals regarding the Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome

Following the research stages:

Chapter 1	Introduction and Research Context		
Chapter 2	The Context, Theory and Literature Review	Part 1	The Context of Saudi Arabia
		Part 2	Theoretical Framework
		Part 3	Literature Review
Chapter 3	Research Methodology		
Chapter 4	Principals' Understanding of Concept of Inclusion		
Chapter 5	School Principals' Perspectives on Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Mainstream Schools		
Chapter 6	Factors Affecting the Perspectives of Principals regarding the Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome		
Chapter 7	Recommendations and Conclusion		

6.1. Introduction

The findings in the previous chapters concerning the knowledge of inclusion and perspectives of school principals regarding inclusive education for children with Down's syndrome pointed to underlying factors, for example, the profoundness of disability, training and infrastructure and resources issues. These factors are explored further in this chapter. In the literature, negative perspectives were recognised as being the most important factor to overcome, concerning inclusion (Catlett, 1999). Addressing the lack of knowledge about those with Down's syndrome as well as inclusion in general through the provision of adequate training for principals, in addition to providing human and financial assistance to inclusive schools, are necessary in order to meet the requirements of the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002), *"The school strives to minimise discriminatory practices"* (p.39).

From interviews with principals, several sub-themes emerged relating to factors that affected their perspectives towards the inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in mainstream schools. This chapter addresses these sub-themes in turn:

- Profoundness of learning difficulties
- Training needs
- Local Authority support

6.2. Profoundness of Learning Difficulties

Inclusive education implies the complete inclusion of all children, regardless of ability, across all schooling domains, with schools required to accommodate all children, irrespective of disabilities (Loreman et al., 2005). Therefore, the principals were asked to explain whether they thought that pupils with all levels of disability can be included in mainstream schools. One principal quickly responded, *"It is difficult for our school to include those who need more care..."* (FPG9), while another said, *"It is not possible to include profound learning difficulties children... they must be excluded ..."* (MPG3).

These responses indicate that there are inhibiting factors in relation to the inclusion of children in mainstream schools. Since inclusion is a relatively new concept in Saudi

Arabia, this view may be related to a lack of knowledge pertaining to inclusion of such children, leading to feelings of frustration, consistent with previous literature (Rouse, 2003). Others have found that children's needs and disabilities, and their severity, influence the views of teachers concerning inclusion (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002), leading to reservations concerning the inclusion of children with special education needs in the mainstream setting (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996).

It has been found that some principals encouraged the inclusion of students regardless of their difficulties (Barnett and Monda-Amaya, 1998). However, the impact of the profoundness of the learning difficulties for children with Down's syndrome was shown during an observation in school OSG1, where I observed that one child was taken to the toilet by the janitor because he could not go to the bathroom unaided. The principal (IPG1) complained that *"it is not the responsibility of the janitor to do that with the children in the school"*. However, I noticed that there was no toilet in the school suitable for such children. Consequently, the principal voiced safety concerns. It should be noted that school buildings will be discussed in a later sub-theme, but it is mentioned here because of the connection with the profoundness of disability.

Observations, including that of the school janitor accompanying the child to the toilet, suggest the importance of cooperation, which is recognised as an enabling factor for inclusion (Villa and Thousand, 2005). Similarly, a study conducted in the Egyptian context by Sadek (2000), highlighted the significance of cooperation between and links among school staff, for inclusive education development.

Nevertheless, I found that not all government schools were ready to receive children with Down's syndrome with profound learning difficulties; One principal declared, *"I have a student with Down's syndrome ... he suffers and I also suffer... as I don't have the services for him"* (MPG1). Importantly, in the absence of policies on intervention and early identification, mainstream schools are among the first to identify learners with significant problems. Such problems emerge and pose challenges for the enrolment of children by wrong of diagnosis or by 'wasta', when schools find that they are not able to accommodate the needs of these children. Principals have the responsibility of notifying parents about the disability of the child but feel social pressure to avoid stigmatising

parents and to accommodate the person who has provided *wasta* (El-Said and Harrigan, 2009). This often results in keeping these children enrolled in mainstream schools, without meeting their needs.

Principals of mainstream schools in Saudi Arabia do not all have a degree in Special Education and have never taught such children with difficulties (Al-Abduljabbar and Massud, 2002), so are unaware of their needs and do not know how to accommodate them. An example of this was observed in school OSG4, regarding a child with Down's syndrome who had multiple disabilities. His classroom was on the upper floor, but using the stairs (see Photo 6.1) was very difficult because there was no side-rail, no companion for him, and the school had no lift.

Photo 6.1: Stairs without side-rail



Such experiences are contrary to the principles that all children, regardless of the extent of their disabilities, belong in the general educational setting and can be accommodated in their neighbourhood schools' general classrooms (Jenkinson, 1997). This principle is

highlighted in the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) – in the Culture dimension of ‘Building Community’, for example, staff and pupils treat one another with respect as well as assisting each other in order to encourage social cohesion in the school.

Principal MPG8 stated that he could accept students with learning difficulties but he said, *“We only accept children with Down’s syndrome when we believe that our facilities and staff can help them”*. Whilst the Rules and Regulations of Special Education indicate that “The school building designed for the learning difficulties students should be devoid of all obstacles that prevent those students from making use of it” (D2A3), the article does not refer to the level of disability to be accommodated, leading some principals such as MPG6 and MPG6 to set their own criteria. For example, principal MPG5 refused to include some children with Down’s syndrome in his school, saying that it depended upon the level of disability of the students: *“As you know, this school is for students with moderate learning difficulties only”* (MPG5). This contrasts with Afeafe’s (2000) assertion that regardless of the school building all the children who have Down's syndrome should be admitted in school.

Moreover, one of the principals explained that some general students are afraid of children with Down’s syndrome, especially those with profound learning difficulties. She recalled, *“One day, one of the crazy girls [in a reference to Down’s syndrome] shouted in the home economics class; one of the general girls cried as she was afraid of the shouting... the next day the mother of this child requested that her daughter did not have to study with such a girl”* (FPG4). This participant was not the only one who faced pressure from parents. Principal MPG2 recounted, *“One father of a general student came to me and told me that his son had started to imitate the behaviour of one of the stupid students [in a reference to Down’s syndrome]”*. The principal granted the request; to separate the children, because *“This child [with Down’s syndrome] follows me and throws stones at me ...”* (MPG2). However, the Index for Inclusion indicates that schools and their staff are encouraged to explain the schools’ goals of the inclusion of all the students (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

Overall, the marginalization of these children and their parents was highlighted by my study, which raises issues surrounding negative culture and stigmatisation. Such findings are in line with previous literature in the Gulf context (see Gaad, 2011). Typically observations and interviews showed students with Down's syndrome were seen as medically impaired and, therefore, as requiring care (Villa and Thousand, 2005). In contrast the social model calls for modifications to society's thinking (Smith et al., 2014).

The Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002: p.39), as stated in one indicator, suggests that *"Staff, governors, students and parents/carers share a philosophy of inclusion"*. Therefore, some principals blamed the parents of children with Down's syndrome's for such children's marginalization: *"We have reasons to be scared of such children [with Down's syndrome] ... I believe that their parents are the cause behind this... Can you believe that some parents still close the doors of their houses ... they don't want their child to go out"* (MPG5). The same principal told me, *"... every day some general student's father comes to me and requests that I remove such students from the school. I believe that some of them have a point; sorry, I don't mean they are right, I mean they have a point of view, as the general students are scared of such children"* (MPG5).

In the same context, principal MPG1 reported a similar problem, saying, *"If the parent of a general student comes to register his son in the school, he gets a shock if he sees children with Down's syndrome... some of them withdraw from registering their son in our school..."*. It is possible that the lack of exposure to special educational children results in rejection concerning special educational needs overall (Park et al., 2010). Essentially, such a cultural perspective, as adopted by the community as a whole, has resulted in the reinforcement of the medical model of disability.

Such perspectives reflect the rejection and stigma concerning those with disabilities, which is still apparent in the society of Saudi Arabia. The findings are in line with other works carried out in similar cultures (Brown, 2005), despite the fact that religion has strived to eradicate such habits (see the first part of chapter two); although, as stated by

Hunda (2013, p.2), *"it can be extremely difficult to draw a line where religion ends and culture begins"*.

This stigma is perpetuated by a lack of familiarity and understanding of those with characteristics that are different from others (French et al., 2000). For example, principal FPG8 mentioned, regarding children with Down's syndrome, *"In our school some students call them strange creatures"*. Moreover, some teachers reportedly reinforced this stigmatization. As an example, principal MPG9 mentioned, *"Sadly, some general teachers tell a naughty student that if he is not polite he will bring a student with Down's syndrome to work with him"*. Observations in school OSG4 revealed the general students' fear of children with Down's syndrome. One day, during the break, I observed that two general students did not go outside, and their excuse, according to the teacher ITG4 was *"the fear of children with Down's syndrome..."*.

Such findings are consistent with those of Al-Herz (2008), who reported that peer acceptance is affected by disability type, with a lower degree of acceptance with regard to those with more obvious and serious disabilities. However, they conflict with those of Gal et al. (2010), who claim that primary aged children seem to be more open to communicating and interacting with disabled peers. Nonetheless, pity and fear are emotions that have been highlighted (Al-Habdan, 2001), along with the dislike of aggressive behaviours (Arampatzi et al., 2011).

On the other hand, the social model was apparent with other principals for example, FPG3 argued *"Such children [with Down's syndrome] ... have created a new shape for our school... They are sociable and they are the basis of the school"*. She also pointed out that *"If you see the awareness brochures on special educational needs you will see that children with Down's syndrome are always used, as they are famous for their smiles and fun"*. As Shevlin et al. (2008) stated, there is an emphasis on the role of the principal as a critical aspect in ensuring the application of inclusion and the overall enhancement of schools. Accordingly, inclusive education success is established by the various efforts invested by principals and teachers (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010).

Moreover, there is research evidence to suggest that even the inclusion of those with significant disabilities can be successful, should schools ensure a culture based on shared values, with genuine dedication to overall practical improvement (Loreman et al., 2005), especially with collaborative working with both colleagues and parents (Almalq, 2004). Such collaborative work appeared to me as an enabling factor for inclusion, as when one principal pointed out that: *“We have an informal environment in the school ... whose aim is to facilitate the process of communication among the children with Down’s syndrome and their peers and parents. This informal environment has helped us to identify such children’s requirements”* (FPG6). Furthermore, it is likely that through familiarity with children with special education needs in ordinary schools, over time, teachers will develop confidence and accordingly will accept them (Catlett, 1999). Nonetheless, experience alone cannot be considered a replacement for structured support (Daniels and Garner, 1999).

Therefore, one of the principals suggested a way to overcome the general students’ rejection of children with Down’s syndrome *“I would like the general curriculum to include a lesson to prepare students from a very young age about such children, so they can learn to accept them”* (FPG8). However, it is doubtful whether this would be implemented in Saudi Arabia, owing to the tendency towards centralisation, to an extent that inhibits principals from taking personal risks in making changes by themselves (Almalq, 2004). However, some principals suggested that, with the availability of social media, there is no excuse for anyone to reject or be afraid of children with Down’s syndrome as, *“since Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, Keek and other social networks have become available... now they must have familiarity with children with Down’s syndrome”* (FPG6). This principal was happy with the presence of children with Down’s syndrome in her school: *“I find that the children with Down’s syndrome ... have special charm... leading to acceptance... and they have fun-loving attributes”* (FPG6).

The opinions of principals showed that inclusion was more likely to be accepted when the learning difficulty is moderate, but special schools were considered more suitable for those with severe and profound learning difficulties. Moreover, some rejections were due to a sense of fear regarding students with disabilities, so suitable training is required.

Therefore, I will now go on to analyse training needs, which were mentioned during the interviews.

6.3. Training Needs

Despite the fact that head teachers are believed to primarily learn their skills “*on the job*” (Male and Male, 2001: p.151), training programmes remain a vital tool in enabling school leaders to develop a comprehensive skill set that can meet the high-level requirements of the job. As highlighted by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996), working with students with special educational needs, required intensive and systematic training for educators through the provision of relevant courses as an ongoing requirement of pre-service certification, continuous consultancy and in-service programmes. In Saudi Arabia, as reported by Alfahili (2007), school principals are appointed based on their experience in the mainstream school setting, without any experience of dealing with those with Down’s syndrome, for example, or how inclusive educational settings can be managed. My research showed that none of the principals were specialists in special education. Hence they claimed to need intensive training to make inclusion succeed.

The training of principals, specially related to special education, are understood to have an influence on inclusion (Dessent, 1987; Alanazi, 2012; Alothman, 2014). Thus, one principal commented, “*I had an active resident supervisor... he conducted two courses for us every month but ... he was transferred... Such courses died out after he left... I really do miss him*” (MPA1). Indeed, Saudi Education Policy frequently mentions training: “The Local Educational Authority shall give enough care for training...” (D1A196). The Rules and Regulations of Special Education also promises “help to promote the scientific and occupational level of staff in the special school and the inclusive school through training courses, seminars and conferences...” (D2A69).

Literature similarly reports educators’ views that they require training in order to develop their skills (Kibria, 2005), while Dessent (1987) found that training was an efficient approach to enhancing the practices of inclusive education. Moreover, studies carried out in countries with cultures comparable to that of Saudi Arabia (e.g. Al-Khatteeb, 2008), found professional training courses for school staff in inclusive settings

to be a key factor in inclusive education's success. Accordingly, as noted by Kalyva et al. (2007), there is an important and positive link between training courses, and the practices and attitudes demonstrated in regard to inclusion.

The argument has been posed by Al-Khatteeb (2008) that there is a need to consider and support in-service training for all school staff prior to inclusion being adopted in their school setting. From my findings, however, it appears that there is insufficient training for Saudi educators in most school although the few participants who had received training found it beneficial. For example, one principal declared, *"... I feel that the training was of utmost importance in supporting inclusion"* (FPG5). Moreover, principal FPG9 pointed out, *"I got training for three days and I benefitted so much from it... imagine if the training was for a month – it would help me in managing the inclusive school"*. When I asked her why she wanted training, although she had received some previously, she told me, *"I want continuous knowledge refreshment because the fields in special education, as you know, change daily... more like training in western countries"* (FPG9).

In line with such views, the minutes of a school meeting D4 noted a recommendation to request the Ministry of Education for training and one principal IPG3 reported frequently reminding supervisors about the need for training. In this vein, Alothman (2014) argues that extensive training for principals who have inadequate experience in the inclusive setting is important. As noted by Symeonidou and Phtiaka (2009), staff development is fundamental to the success of inclusion application. This was reflected in the experience of one principal who was trained in special education within the inclusive school under the guidance of his resident supervisor. Immediately after the course, he was somewhat at a loss, because of the amount of new knowledge he gained in the course, but found that *"when I started implementing what I learned at the course I enjoyed the work"* (MPG7).

In contrast, some principals opposed training, and when I asked why, one said, *"I am obliged to cope with the inclusion which has started in my school... I follow up the daily work, I have to move fast like the second hand on a watch... therefore, I don't have time to take courses..."* (MPG2). Another felt the real issue was social attitudes, rather than

educators' training: *"There is a gloomy view by society towards children with learning difficulties [Down's syndrome] as they don't accept such children... they call them by words like 'crazy'. Oh I am sorry... I believe that it is society that requires training, not me"* (MPG2). Already, the Rules and Regulations of Special Education acknowledge the importance of preparing society, asserting the need *"To prepare society to accept students with disabilities naturally"* (D2A77). Also, Alquraini (2011) suggested that universal direction in special education suggest that these schools need to assume extra roles in the future, like training centres for the community.

Generally, the interview data show that principals believed that inclusion was established on fragile grounds, because of the lack of informed awareness of the issue. For example, principal FPG8 stated, *"The Local Educational Authority has to provide good knowledge preparation for principals, and I believe that the minimum preparation is one year, to qualify one to identify the qualities of children with Down's syndrome"*. The same participant added that she did not know how to deal with such children because of her lack of training: *"I deal with all, students, general or special, in the same way"* (FPG8). It also seems the case that there are the same drawbacks in the field of training in Muslim countries: in Bangladesh, as an example, there are few opportunities of training for school educators in relation to inclusive education (Kibria, 2005).

Previous work has similarly recognised the limited training in inclusive education, such as Agbenyega (2007) in the context of Ghana, and Chhabra et al. (2010) in Botswana. However, alternatively cooperation with experienced special educators was noted by Catlett (1999) as being valuable in increasing teachers' confidence in their capacity to work with special educational needs. Johnson (1987) also emphasises teacher development and collegiality as critical to the effectiveness of schools, while Booth and Ainscow (2002) suggest that *"Teachers plan, teach and review in partnership"* (p.41).

Indeed, although no training was provided by the Local Educational Authority, as some principals claimed, some of them pursued self-development, for example, by consulting the resident supervisor: *"I did not get any training at all but I did my best to know everything about children with Down's syndrome, ... asking the inclusive education resident supervisor"* (MPG5). This suggests that the resident supervisor at the school

might be an important factor in enabling inclusion, consistent with Leyser and Tappendorf's (2001) report that efficient joint working by special education needs and general teachers, encouraged the sharing of ideas and acquisition of new skills on a united basis.

Claims by some of the interviewed principals that suitable training was not provided for them confirm previous research in the Saudi context by Alfahili (2007). The latter called for training courses to be devised for professionals in the arena of inclusive education, but also pointed out principals' responsibility for keeping informed about training courses and discussing such issues with teachers. Accordingly, collaboration and integration on training, between principals of schools, the Ministry of Education and the Local Educational Authority, is needed to fill the void between practice and policy.

The following observation illustrated how the lack of practical training is neglected in schools. In school OSG1 I found an expensive appliance to train children with Down's syndrome, to familiarise them with going to the dentist without fear or hesitation (see Photo 6.2). However, the appliance was never used because there was no training for teachers to use it. Principal (IPG4) told me, *"The appliance was put in the corridor for many years without use as no one knew how to use it"*. As Deng (2008) suggested, it is might be necessary that training could be over an extended period, to be more effective and provide enough information for the staff in schools.

Photo 6.2: The dentist chair



Other interviews revealed a perception that practical training was particularly needed. When asked to what extent training prepared the principal for the practice of inclusion, principal MPG9 explained, “... *I was taught about special education generally, but without a reference to inclusion, children with Down’s syndrome or learning difficulties children, or even how to deal with such students in inclusive schools*”. This finding validates Mittler’s (2000) call for teacher preparation for special education needs to encompass practical training placements, to provide teachers with inclusion-related experience. There is, therefore, a need for teacher training institutions to offer practical inclusive education-oriented experiences in supportive and positive environments, as well as opportunities for students to experience inclusive education success (Loreman et al., 2005).

Another criticism of training raised by some of those who had attended such training, was its poor quality. For example, principal FPG3 confessed, “*I attended training... but I don’t feel that they added anything new for me*”. Such a finding validates the suggestion of Avramidis and Norwich (2002) that more specific information needs to be gathered about training opportunities and their quality in regard to inclusion implementation.

Consistent with El-Said and Harrigan’s (2009), finding, access to training might also be influenced by *wasta*. Principal MPG3 declared, “*If I had a ‘wasta’ in the Local Educational Authority I would get on a course... I never ask for such courses as they will not be available for me*”. In the same way, one principal stated that the Local Educational Authority set up courses but since registration forms for such training often arrived late, he suggested the Local Educational Authority had selected the candidates for the course in advance: “... *most of them were the Special Education Department staff or those who have wasta*”. He went on to explain, “*You find a principal who got on a course and one who did not, which means that if you know someone in the Local Educational Authority you will take a course; excuse me, I am frank about such things*” (MPG8).

In the view of King (2011), those in positions of leadership should adopt the role of motivating staff to implement positive change, and support them in various ways, such as through the provision of training courses, which could change attitudes and, as a

result, practices. This is part of the leadership responsibility of "*creating organisational capacity for change*" (King, 2011, p.151). Also, Male (2006: p.109), suggests "*that building an effective learning environment is beyond the efforts of one person alone, so the key task of headship is to build the capability of others to exhibit learner-centred leadership at all levels of a school*". However, principals cannot play this role if they themselves lack training. It may be the case that sound and valuable training could induce changes both in practice and terminology, and could enable a shift from a medical model to the social-oriented model.

Another source of useful information might be the media, but principal FPG6 claimed, "*The media is very negligent. I have not seen a TV programme on Saudi television especially for inclusion*". Moreover, she criticised some programmes that highlight special days such as the World Day for Down's syndrome, the World Day for Autism and others because "*there is media consumption in certain seasons... really we do not have a media strategy that serves children with Down's syndrome or other children with special needs. There are certain seasons in which the media is active then it keeps quiet till other occasions come*". This situation conflicts with a requirement in the Rules and Regulations of Special Education "to spread awareness and knowledge among society's individuals and its establishments about the roles and duties of the special schools, inclusive schools and the nature of the services they provide for the students" (D2A75). This article D2A75 is recognised as being in line with other works, such as that by Al-Habdan (2001), who make the recommendation to encourage the media to visit schools where students with Down's syndrome are studying and then write about them. However, the interviews and observation suggest a discrepancy between the policy rhetoric and reality.

It is clear from the above discussion that professional development would support the positive views of principals towards inclusion. The key role of principals at a practical level has been recognised by McLeskey and Waldron (2002) as affecting necessary changes to the schools applying inclusion. The literature recognises that general education teachers cannot creatively and productively educate and include those with disabilities in the mainstream setting when there is a lack of suitable training to meet

students' behavioural and learning needs (Fakolade et al., 2009). For this reason, one principal suggested that appointing a principal who is a specialist in special education in inclusive schools would be desirable under the current training shortage: *"I believe that if the principal is specialised in special education, or she has at least a diploma in special education, her management of the inclusive school will be better"* (FPG2).

It seems that the present practice surrounding inclusive education for those with Down's syndrome is an area for change, and that principals' development may be enhanced through offering then continuing professional development (CPD), enabling them to more efficiently apply theoretical knowledge. Appropriate training would fill the gap related to their lack of specialist knowledge and the recent status of inclusion in Saudi Arabia. Such training requires support from government, which brings me to analysis and discussion of the third sub-theme.

6.4. Local Authority Support

In this sub-theme I look at Local Authority support as it is reflected in the provision of teaching assistance, nurses, appropriate buildings and resources. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) and Al-Khatteeb (2008) suggest that educating children with disabilities requires a greater degree of support and effort in the form of suitable classrooms, appropriate teaching materials and more specialist teachers. My study agrees with the above studies, as when the principals were asked about the support provided by the Local Educational Authority, they identified many facilities that should be available for a school to be considered as an inclusive school.

For instance, one principal indicated, *"An individual budget for inclusive education should be provided... to cover all requirements without waiting a long time for the next budget from the Local Educational Authority to the school as a whole"* (FPG5). An ARAMCO school principal felt financial support was adequate, but said, *"Give me human support... such support is what will help me to do my best"* (FPA1). This has already been confirmed by the Index for Inclusion that support should be coordinated so as to be able give an effective service for children with special needs (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

A lack of specialised teachers

A lack of specialised teachers has been recognised in studies carried out in various contexts, (Lampropoulou and Padeliadu, 1997; Molto, 2003). In the Saudi context specifically, Al-Herz (2008) established the shortage of multidisciplinary teams, as an obstacle to progress on inclusion.

In the Western context, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) found that teaching assistants were recognised as aiding inclusion. However, assistant teachers were not available in all schools that I visited, whether governmental or ARAMCO. Thus, principal MPG9 called for reducing the teaching burden on special education teachers through support from assistant teachers, *“as I believe that the special teacher makes an effort and he needs an assistant teacher to help him inside the classroom”*. Another principal, commenting on the large number of students with learning difficulties in the inclusive classroom: 15, asked, *“How will the special teacher succeed with this number?”* (FPG6). Various authors attest that a large number of students in classes may be a negative factor facing inclusive education (Glaubman and Lifshitz, 2001), but availability of teaching assistants could alleviate this burden.

Provision of a nurse

Principal MPG6 called for provision of a nurse in the school, and he expressed astonishment that the Local Educational Authority did not provide one, because *“they know that some children with Down’s syndrome have epilepsy and heart problems....”*. French et al. (2000) note the heart conditions linked with Down’s syndrome which could limit pupils’ physical activity. Accordingly, involvement with other school students would be limited (Alabri, 2003). Principal MPG3 also called for a nurse to treat the many injuries to which children with Down’s syndrome are exposed, *“because of the concrete playground...”*. Photo 6.3 shows an example of such a dangerous concrete surface for children to play on. Various studies have emphasised that children with Down’s syndrome, as a result of their disability, experience problems in concentration, which means they are more likely to fall (Singhania, 2005).

Photo 6.3: The concrete playground



In contrast, I found safer grassed playgrounds in ARAMCO schools (see Photo 6.4) taken in school (OSA1). However, in general, the ARAMCO schools do not have a nurse either, as it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to provide nurses (Al-Mousa, 2008).

Photo 6.4: A grassed ARAMCO school playground



According to the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, the health supervisor “is responsible for carrying out the nursing role for students in the special school or the inclusive school...” (D2A61). However, even a health supervisor was not provided by the Local Educational Authority in all the participating schools (Al-Habdan, 2001). In

the view adopted by the inclusion social model, any inhibiting factors to inclusion (e.g. lack of a nurse) need to be identified by the Local Educational Authority and addressed accordingly.

The lack of teaching materials

Another constraining factor found in my research which was similar to findings in other contexts was the lack of teaching materials (Kibria, 2005). For example, some principals mentioned insufficiency of educational aids and sport equipment, which was confirmed by my observation. For example, observation in school OSG4 showed a shortage of educational aids for children with Down's syndrome. For instance, there were no tactile maps or Smart Board, only a regular board over which an old style TV was attached to the wall in a location that was dangerous for the children (Photo 6.5).

Photo 6.5: An old style TV



Hence, FPG8 argued, *“If the Local Educational Authority wants to make inclusion succeed, it should address such shortages; otherwise inclusive education will not survive”*. A number of works have shown that government support can affect inclusive education's success (for example; Kibria, 2005). Moreover, Whiting and Young (1996) state that without suitable professional and financial support teachers experience problems in applying policies required by government policy.

Some principals attempted to provide enabling factors for inclusion, despite a lack of state funding, by raising money to provide educational materials. For example, FPG1 reported, *“We have a very active special teacher and she has a background in making educational aids... My colleagues and I raised money to buy the raw materials, and later this teacher made the alphabet tree from which the general and special students have benefitted”*. Similarly, a principal of a government school proudly announced that she had just finished equipping one of the inclusive classrooms: *“The Local Educational Authority abandoned our efforts to equip the classrooms, so we equipped them through donations from a businessman”* (FPG1). Nonetheless, research suggests that on-going encouragement and support from the principal is imperative to achieving an inclusive ethos (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002).

In the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002), it is established that overcoming barriers to the participation and learning of those with special education needs requires resources to be mobilised across the school as a whole. The availability of resources and the experience of teachers in their utilisation is fundamental for the successful inclusion of special education needs children.

Since inclusion processes are inhibited by resource shortages (Rouse, 2003), principals tried to find support in culturally-accepted ways. For example, principal MPG2 said, *“If you have someone in the Local Educational Authority [a reference to ‘wasta’] they will provide you such materials quickly”*. This selective access is contrary to the view which sees educational inclusion as a fundamental aspect of wider social inclusion; and thus Booth and Ainscow (2002) call for *“Community resources [to be] known and drawn upon”* (p.41). However, an example of social inclusion was seen in an ARAMCO school, which was better equipped: *“ARAMCO didn’t neglect us in providing educational materials such as aids, sport tools and others equipment... all are available and any excesses we lend to our nearby governmental schools”* (MPA1). The observation in the ARAMCO school (OSA1), as shown in Photo 6.6, revealed a larger modern, flat-screen TV and various educational aids displayed in the inclusive classroom, which facilitate teaching children with Down’s syndrome.

Photo 6.6: A modern style TV



School buildings

As for the school buildings, these too are a very important resource, but principals frequently highlighted problems with buildings, which are the Local Educational Authority's responsibility. This problem is illustrated by these quotations "...the Local Educational Authority can provide the suitable building..." (MPG9), "We often request the Local Educational Authority to mend the school's infrastructure..." (FPG9), "I submitted a request to the Local Educational Authority to rebuild the school" (MPG2). These responses indicate that the lack of adequate school buildings is a factor leading to the inhibition of the inclusion in Saudi Arabia. In this way my research agrees with Alothman (2014).

I observed government schools and ARAMCO schools; these schools have different numbers of floors. For example, government schools consist of two floors or more, whereas ARAMCO schools are built entirely at ground floor level, which is less of an obstacle for children with Down's syndrome, who may have mobility and/or motor skills issues (Alabri, 2003), as well as balance difficulty (Sadek, 2000).

In this regard, the Consultative Group for Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia (2004) has established several conditions for inclusion, such as, "the inclusive classroom should be on the ground floor in the mainstream school and close to appropriate and sterile toilets" (D5). On the contrary, observations regarding toilets revealed a lack of hygiene in all

governmental schools, where some toilets were not clean and others ‘closed for maintenance’; the poor standard of toilets and hand-washing facilities can be seen in Photo 6.7 and Photo 6.8. In Saudi Arabia, inclusion has been applied without suitable resources and premises being available, contrary to the suggestions of Avramidis and Norwich (2002) regarding the need for support and funding. However, Al-Mousa (2008) and Gaad (2011), report that Saudi Arabia has a number of key school-building initiatives in progress in an effort to overcome these problems.

Photo 6.7: The inadequate toilet facilities



Photo 6.8: The inadequate hand-washing facilities



In contrast, an ARAMCO school principal declared that her school building met the requirements and suggested generalising ARAMCO’s experience to Saudi government schools: *“I believe that our school building [ARAMCO school] should be an ideal to be followed in all government schools, as it suits all children”* (FPA1). It should be noted

that ARAMCO is one of the biggest oil companies in the world. A reason for ARAMCO to build distinctive schools is this company's wish to attract and keep talented employees to continue working with the company (Saudi ARAMCO, 2015). However, this does not prevent the government taking advantage of ARAMCO's experience in building schools. Indeed, observations in OSA1 showed that the toilets were appropriate and clean (see Photo 6.9) and appropriate hand-washing facilities were provided, suitable for all children, with basins at different heights (Photo 6.10).

Photo 6.9: A toilet suitable for Down's syndrome



Photo 6.10: Hand-washing basins suitable for children of all heights



Additional resources are regarded as pivotal in enhancing education among those with learning difficulties (Al-Zyoudi, 2006). School premises are a key factor affecting inclusion success (World Health Organization, WHO, 2001). Pearson et al. (2003) found that teachers in schools with additional funding provision were more accepting of those with special needs, as well as their enrolment at mainstream schools.

One factor affecting inclusion success is classroom size (Vaughn and Schumm, 1995). My research confirmed this; during the interviews, the practice in government schools of subdividing classrooms was frequently mentioned: *“The problem is that the Local Educational Authority did not establish suitable buildings for children with Down’s syndrome because they cost so much money... the shortest way is ... to divide the general classroom using partitions”* (MPG8). Another participant pointed out that due to this practice, *“the inclusive classroom became very small”* (MPG3). This is contrary to the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, which state that *“the inclusive classroom size should not be less than the general classroom size”* (D2A6).

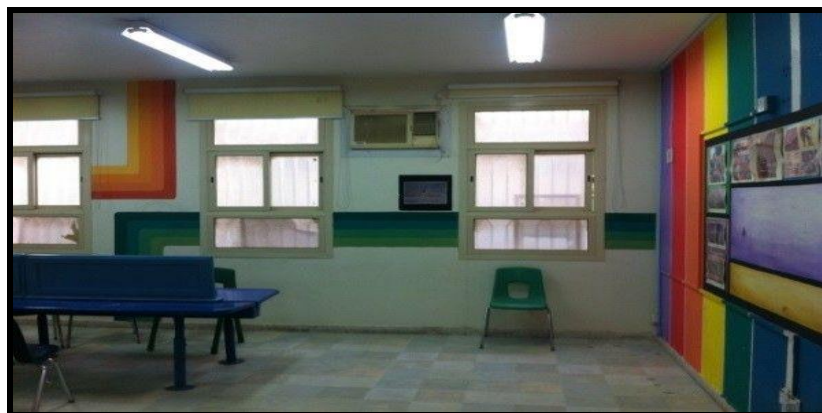
A typical Saudi general classroom has students’ tables arranged in line in three columns, classrooms may have eight tables or more, depending on the size of the school. The blackboard is located in front of the students. In inclusive classrooms, there are usually eight tables, but there are sometimes more and sometimes fewer, depending on the number of students with learning difficulties in the school. Figure 6.1 shows the design of the Saudi classroom. The classroom shown below is quite small, with a traditional layout. This could present mobility issues for children with Down’s syndrome (Alabri, 2003; Aboela, 2008), and the classroom appears to be designed for traditional, teacher-centred teaching, which is not suited to group work. The classroom also lacks equipment and visual aids that facilitate learning for students. This traditional layout was observed in all participating government schools, which have the same classroom layout. In contrast, ARAMCO classrooms are well-equipped, big enough for group work, and include visual aids and equipment that support the teaching and learning process.

Figure 6.1: Design of a Saudi classroom



Indeed, I observed in all the selected governmental schools, that inclusive classrooms were half the size of the general classroom, because of the use of partitions to divide a room into two classrooms. In school OSG4, I noticed distracting interference of voices between the two classrooms because of the partition used to separate one classroom into two inclusive classrooms. This in turn will affect the concentration to children with Down's syndrome, as the majority of them suffer from hearing impairments (Alabri, 2003), and have problems identifying sounds (Jarrold et al., 1999). Photo 6.11, shows the partition on the right side, painted in many colours.

Photo 6.11: Classroom divided into two by partitions



In contrast, the ARAMCO school principal said, “...we have big classrooms that are equipped and furnished and really they do not represent a danger to the children with Down's syndrome” (MPA1). Photo 6.12, bears out this claim. It is noted that there is

floor matting of high quality that prevents reverberation and also non-dangerous furniture, with no sharp corners. Safety comes first in the school projects set up by ARAMCO. This has been confirmed by Saudi ARAMCO (2015). The company takes safety into account in all its works, not only oil works, but even when ARAMCO builds hospitals and schools. Also, ARAMCO is committed to the regular maintenance of schools.

Photo 6.12: Big classrooms in ARAMCO schools



In the government schools, according to the social model perspective, the practical problems facing students with learning difficulties in the educational setting need to be overcome (Villa and Thousand, 2005).

It is clear from the above discussion that the principals agreed on their wish for a complete staff of qualified professionals, e.g. nurses and teaching assistants to create a more a favourable inclusive educational environment; educational materials were in short supply, except in ARAMCO schools; government school principals complained of unsuitable infrastructure, while ARAMCO school principals claimed that their school infrastructure was suitable for inclusion.

6.5. Summary

The findings discussed in this chapter concerned the impact on inclusion of pupils with profound learning and training needs, and the significance local Authority support. The

findings emphasise the complexity associated with the relatively recent inclusive education in Saudi Arabia.

Even principals who are relatively supportive of inclusion rejected inclusion of more profoundly disabled pupils, for a variety of reasons, including parental pressure, safety issues, and the feeling that they were ill-equipped to cope with such children.

The Inclusion literature asserts the role of the principal in removing barriers, while facilitating and encouraging staff development (Hattie, 2005). In Saudi Arabia, this role falls to the Local Education Authority, as frequently attested in interviews, but contrary to policy appears to be unevenly or inadequately performed.

The process of inclusion of those with Down's syndrome in mainstream schools has been started in Saudi Arabia, but success requires appropriate policy planning and implementation. The findings highlight various issues facing the application process, including insufficient training for school personnel, as well as deficiencies of infrastructure and resources stemming from the lack of a strategic approach to implementation and adoption and inadequate resources available for government schools. ARAMCO schools, in contrast, provide well-designed premises and resources, and should, therefore, be models for government schools. The results show that Saudi Arabia has not benefited from the experiences of other countries in the preparation of principals and ongoing professional development. Such training is an essential element of a well thought out inclusion policy, which encourages the greatest possible educational and social integration of all pupils, both with and without special educational needs. The value associated with the provision of suitable training and knowledge in this regard therefore is not in doubt (Sharma and Chow, 2008).

As a result of such concerns Saudi Arabian principals showed inclination and willingness to apply inclusion, but with certain conditions. The current work points to suggestions for addressing issues concerning the transition from the medical to the social model. Accordingly, conclusions and recommendations will be offered in the following chapter.

Chapter Seven: Recommendations and Conclusion

Following the research stages (final chapter):

Chapter 1	Introduction and Research Context		
Chapter 2	The Context, Theory and Literature Review	Part 1	The Context of Saudi Arabia
		Part 2	Theoretical Framework
		Part 3	Literature Review
Chapter 3	Research Methodology		
Chapter 4	Principals' Understanding of Concept of Inclusion		
Chapter 5	School Principals' Perspectives on Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome in Mainstream Schools		
Chapter 6	Factors Affecting the Perspectives of Principals regarding the Inclusion of children with Down's syndrome		
Chapter 7	Recommendations and Conclusion		

7.1. Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis by reflecting upon the aims of this study and its outcomes. The primary aim of my study was to understand the current state of inclusive education offered in Saudi Arabia to children with Down's syndrome, driven by a belief that a deeper understanding of school principals' perspectives is a vital foundation for developing greater inclusion.

In this final chapter, I will critically reflect on this process. This reflection is carried out in several sections, firstly summarising the study and then focusing on its key findings. I also present a series of recommendations based on the study findings. The following sections consider the contributions of the study, as well as an explanation of the limitations. The chapter goes on to signpost some areas that require further study. The last section presents my final thoughts on my interpretation of the study.

7.2. Summary of the Study

From one cultural context to the next, education is viewed differently as a political and ethical issue (Gallagher, 2014). Nonetheless, Saudi Arabia is aiming to provide an education system that is suitable for those with special educational needs in keeping with various international agreements, including that agreed in 1994 in Salamanca (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, 1994). Accordingly, throughout the past 20 years, there have been a number of changes that have affected the education of those with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia. However, there are various obstacles linked with the adoption of inclusion and it has not yet been achieved.

Research on inclusive education, is in its initial stages in Saudi Arabia, (Alanazi, 2012). Although there is a wealth of literature on the issue of inclusion of those with Down's syndrome in Western regions (see, for example, Kasari et al., 1999; Wolpert, 2001; Gilmore et al., 2003; Fox et al., 2004; Buckley et al., 2006; Hughes, 2006; and Sirlopu et al., 2008), to my knowledge, thus far, research efforts have not centred on the context of Saudi Arabia, in relation to issues such as children with Down's syndrome, their

inclusion in primary mainstream settings, the perspectives of principals of both genders, as well as of both ARAMCO and government schools. Accordingly, this gap is filled by the present work.

The Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) places significant value on the education of the child and on the actions adopted by schools to ensure the provision of such education. It considers elements of both the social and medical models. The medical model regards an individual with Down's syndrome as a patient who needs to be treated or 'cured' in order to be able to work 'normally' in mainstream schools today (Oliver, 2009). On the other hand, the social model is an approach of accommodation, comprising environment-related changes, rather than assuming solutions require remedying within-child factors. Furthermore, the attributes of the Index for Inclusion promote a more holistic approach to working with students with Down's syndrome in the context of inclusive environments. The emphasis of the present work has been on gaining insight into the various complexities of inclusive education, with a focus on school principals' views concerning inclusion in the light of disability models, and as addressed by the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002), as a practical application of these models in the current work.

As stated at the beginning of this thesis, as a father of a daughter who has Down's syndrome, a former teacher and special education supervisor and now a lecturer at the Special Education Department at King Faisal University, I began my research with a sense that inclusive education for students with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia was not working. In an effort to gain understanding of the issues hindering provision this study aimed to:

- Examine the understanding of principals in Saudi Arabia in relation to the inclusive education of those with Down's syndrome.
- Analyse the perspectives of principals in Saudi schools concerning inclusive education for those with Down's syndrome.

- Examine the factors impacting the inclusive education of those with Down's syndrome in the specific context of Saudi Arabia.

In satisfying the above-outlined objectives and providing answers to the study questions, I employed a qualitative method in which I used a regional study approach in just one area of Saudi Arabia, in an Eastern Region in a range of government schools as well as ARAMCO schools, which are unique to that region.

The study was implemented using semi-structured interviews with participants at 20 schools in the second semester of the academic year 2012/2013. Supplementary data was obtained via participant observations in five different schools in the first semester of the academic year 2013/2014, and analysis of documentary data. The combination of the three methods, interviews, participant observations (with informal conversations) and document analysis, enabled methodological triangulation, which was intended to enhance the overall trustworthiness and reliability of the findings of this study (Cohen et al., 2011).

The emphasis of this work is on the principals of mainstream primary schools. This sample was selected on the assumption that they are knowledgeable about education policy in Saudi Arabia and had the potential to provide valuable but varying perspectives on inclusive education for those with Down's syndrome. Moreover, their views were important because, as argued by Alothman (2014), when teachers show a willingness to include those with special educational needs, it remains difficult to achieve inclusion without there being adequate support from school leadership who receive an allowance in their salaries when they work in inclusive schools. Principals would have a key influence on such policy development (Alsimbel et al., 2006).

I focused on Down's syndrome because the number of individuals with this condition is increasing yearly in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the literature suffers from various gaps on the views of principals about the inclusion of students with Down's syndrome. Studies in Saudi Arabia have discussed learning difficulties in general, with specific attention to the staff of girls' schools (Alanazi, 2012), and 'intellectual disabilities', as learning difficulties are commonly termed in Saudi Arabia (Al-Mousa, 2008), and a few

works centred on deaf children (Alothman, 2014). Another reason for focusing on children who have Down's syndrome is that these children have different characteristics from other children, with distinctive physical features, as well in low mental ability, contributing to negative attitudes towards these children, and their stigmatisation in Saudi culture (Almalq, 2004).

The data was analysed thematically, with themes identified through in-depth reading of participants' views, supported by observation and documentary data. Moreover, themes were categorised into sub-themes, codes and sub-codes in line with the study questions, in order to establish clear links between the study questions and their answers. A summary of the main findings is presented in the following section.

7.3. Summary of the Findings

The findings emphasise that the policy and rhetoric of inclusion for those with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia are not aligned with reality. In my thesis, the analysis of the data collected supports the view that the government of Saudi Arabia, across all levels, including the Ministry of Education, the Local Educational Authority and inclusive schools, need to ensure they have understanding of the differences between the social and medical models of disability and are able to work with self-awareness in order to include this consideration in their policies, practices, thinking and values.

The general findings from the interviews, observations and document review indicate that, regardless of the attempts of the Local Educational Authority and the national government policy to encourage students' right to attend mainstream schools, those with Down's syndrome are not enrolled in suitable and high-quality inclusive school settings, although I found that there were suitable buildings in ARAMCO schools. Observations across all of the school settings showed that children with Down's syndrome experienced a lack of progress in comparison with their general peers in relation to their overall involvement with students in a mainstream setting and also with inclusion in the social setting of a school. This observation could be a starting point for bringing about change by utilising the experience of ARAMCO in improving inclusive schooling in the country by using a larger budget for education, as is already planned by the government.

The results gathered from the interviews and observations highlight a clear lack of knowledge in the field of inclusion-related policy. There was a lack of understanding and knowledge amongst principals in relation to the inclusive education of children with Down's syndrome, which is likely to affect their perspectives and influence the role they adopt concerning the inclusive education of such students in their inclusive schools. The findings drawn from interviews demonstrated that limited knowledge in the field of inclusive education resulted in principals being reluctant to accept full inclusion of those with Down's syndrome. If students with Down's syndrome are allocated to mainstream educational settings where principals lack appropriate skills and knowledge, this results in ineffective outcomes, with parents and other children expressing their dissatisfaction.

Moreover, the principals' responses in my study provided evidence of the importance of increasing overall social awareness concerning inclusion policy, among parents and teachers as well as principals. The situation of students with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia represents a key obstacle, not only concerning education, but also their rights, which are supported by Islam. It was found that the awareness of society surrounding the rights of people with disabilities with regard to education and social inclusion needed to be improved.

It can be suggested that the principals of schools are fundamental elements in the successful adoption of inclusive education: they are asked to establish a suitable setting within the school environment, to facilitate the education of students with Down's syndrome, as well as their involvement with other students. In this vein, my study suggests that the successful inclusive education of students with Down's syndrome necessitates not only the designing and application of new policies (responsibility for which rests with the Ministry of Education), but also school principals' ability, willingness and skills to apply such policies. Unless a positive perspective, sound commitment and high levels of dedication are demonstrated by school principals, inclusive education policies for those with Down's syndrome will not be successfully implemented. Accordingly, leadership plays a key role in the ongoing encouragement and support for establishing active commitment and positive changes amongst teaching

staff and other schools concerning inclusive education. In its absence, any plans to apply or expand inclusion policy are likely to fail (Hattie, 2005).

Principals in this study pointed to the lack of coordination between schools and the Local Education Authority, as a factor in principals' lack of awareness of inclusion policy. I recognised a lack of communication channels between schools and the Local Education Authority. Improving this situation would be fundamental in enabling the flow of necessary support and could be valuable in identifying problems and establishing various methods of enhancing inclusion provision. Human resource shortages, such as in the field of educational supervision, is responsible for issues in this regard.

The data analysis also revealed participants' concerns in relation to training courses, where emphasis needed to be placed on how inclusive schools could deal with children with Down's syndrome. It was clear that the principals viewed themselves as unable to meet the needs of students with Down's syndrome, but would grow in confidence as their professional development was enabled through in-service provision (see, for instance, Mittler, 2000; and Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Accordingly, training needs to be developed that would raise their awareness, which could, in turn, result in improvements to the practice in general schools regarding those with Down's syndrome. Urgent actions are therefore required and are fundamental to any success.

It is apparent that inclusive education is about far more than the placement of those with Down's syndrome and is, rather, the key foundation to fulfilling the emotional, learning and social needs of students in their educational environment. In Saudi Arabia, students with Down's syndrome receive their education in the general school (separate classrooms), without any changes made to the buildings to improve their ease of movement and learning.

This research revealed a lack of purpose-built recreational facilities that would enable all students to engage in particular activities, which would improve students' self-esteem and promote tolerance amongst non-disabled students. Present physical structures not only limit access to various parts of the curriculum, but also prevent the effective

involvement of those with Down's syndrome in extracurricular activities that are recognised as fundamental to children's socialisation.

At various points in my study, the findings highlighted that other physical resources, including teaching materials and learning aids, are scarce and out of date, and teaching is therefore constrained by the resources available. The shortage of appropriate learning resources and teaching in inclusive classrooms and schools does not seem to be the result of insufficient funding, since the Ministry of Education gives reasonable funding on an annual basis (Rules and Regulations of Special Education, 2002). It is, however, clear that there is an issue concerning a lack of accountability and prioritisation, and a lack of suitable assessment concerning the likely demand before policy adoption. Schools need to be provided with suitable physical resources as a means of support (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). The provision by ARAMCO schools of appropriate buildings and teaching materials has prompted some principals to call for typical practices carried out by ARAMCO schools to be followed in other schools.

It was also found that principals recognised the need to make changes to the present curriculum to enable it to operate more flexibly, thus highlighting the requirement for more specialist teachers. Such findings emphasise the challenges involved in satisfactory inclusive education for those with Down's syndrome in the specific context of the Saudi social and educational domains. This could result in the celebration of diversity in inclusive schools, and the active involvement of all students, although in an Islamic country diversity does not necessarily mean co-education between boys and girls, which is forbidden by Islamic law.

Following a review of the main findings of this study, I want to suggest a series of recommendations, where I set out how it might be possible to make progress in the inclusion of students with Down's syndrome into mainstream schooling environments.

7.4. Recommendations of the Study

In line with my study's key findings, I now suggest a number of key recommendations to enable the subsequent development in the inclusive educational field, specifically in Saudi Arabia.

Leadership training

Good leadership has fundamental importance: it helps to get the most productivity out of human resources. In schools, obstacles may be overcome more easily through the application of good leadership; school principals should place emphasis on establishing a suitable setting for students with Down's syndrome, by supporting individual, independent learning, as well as improvements in teaching for a wider group of students, and development of curriculum activities as in the social model (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). To serve this purpose, school principals should be appointed on the basis of high levels of knowledge in inclusive education and not on the basis of only general educational experience, as it present (see section 4.2). Expertise and qualifications are fundamental influences on the actions of principals and, in turn, the practices of teachers concerning inclusive education (Brady and Woolfson, 2008). Moreover, principals' knowledge needs to be reinforced and extended through continuing professional development, which principals in this study felt they lacked (see section 6.3).

Suitable training should be offered to principals in how the needs of those with Down's syndrome could be met in the arena of inclusive classrooms/ schools. My study makes the recommendation that inclusive school principals attend training courses and workshops in an effort to increase their understanding of students with Down's syndrome and the field of inclusive education in general.

Since the data show that school principals were lacking in training and preparation for providing inclusive education, there could be a notable element of preparation in this regard, prior to new principals managing inclusive schools, as there is a pressing need for suitable leadership. Moreover, training needs to encompass both practical and theoretical issues pertaining to Down's syndrome. Ongoing professional development

training also needs to be available to principals in order to improve their Down's syndrome-related knowledge.

Finally, government scholarships for inclusive school principals should be improved to enable principals to be able to study for a Master's degree from developed Western countries, meaning they would have one-year practical training in Western inclusive schools. Principals' professional training is one of the key elements for the application of in-school inclusive education. If principals are provided with suitable training, they will begin to feel more comfortable working with learners with Down's syndrome, leading to more positive outcomes in meeting these students' learning skills and needs.

Infrastructure

The findings on school buildings (see section 6.4) suggest that mainstream schools in Saudi Arabia have characteristics that promote negative perspectives and exclusive practices, such as division of classrooms, concrete playground surfaces and buildings on more than one floor. Also, there are still a lot of schools using leased buildings that are not actually designed to be schools at all, let alone inclusive ones (Alfahili, 2007). This means there is a need for a massive building programme, so inclusive schools are built in ways that facilitate growth and learning for all students. All reasonable procedures and measures need to be applied in an effort to ensure that school buildings do not limit or restrict the learning of those students with Down's syndrome or otherwise prevent their involvement in school activities. When school environments are designed in an all-inclusive-compatible way, inclusive education would be more likely to be successful (Tufvesson and Tufvesson, 2009).

Ensuring the school setting is prepared for inclusive education necessitates long-term planning, owing to Saudi being in its infancy in terms of inclusion application. Schools need laboratories, libraries, staff rooms, toilets and adequate classrooms, computer and Internet access and sport fields (Bloch, 2009). However, in the schools visited, such facilities were often absent, of inadequate size and quality, unsafe, or not accessible for pupils with disabilities. Since ARAMCO schools appeared to be better designed and

equipped (see section 6.6) the involvement of ARAMCO in the development of infrastructure of government schools is pivotal.

Resources and equipment

Some of the reservations about inclusion expressed by school principals concerned the need for advance preparation to ensure schools were suitably equipped (section 5.3) and attention was drawn to the need for local authority support through the provision of appropriate learning materials (see section 6.6) .

In an effort to ensure success in inclusive education, the learning resources and materials, as well as overall teaching, in inclusive schools need to be designed in order to fulfil the diverse needs of those with Down's syndrome. I recommend that general class tools and equipment need to be changed to ensure that those students with Down's syndrome are accommodated. Educational aids, including computers, televisions and smart boards would facilitate teaching those with Down's syndrome. To reduce cost, schools could also act as local resource centres, in line with the Index for Inclusion suggestion that mainstream schools can be helped towards inclusion by arranging learning centres to share resources. Extensive resource centres could be set up within each province to maintain teaching resources that principals could borrow, to support pupils with Down's syndrome in their schools.

Moreover, school visits and interviews highlighted the importance of human resources in order to enable teachers in inclusive classrooms to meet the whole spectrum of different needs of children with special needs. Schools lacked specialised teachers, teaching assistants, school nurses and the like. Hence, the Ministry of Education should provide inclusive schools with specialist human resources, such as speech therapists and assistant teachers. It is considered that such staff are fundamental to ensuring that the needs of students with Down's syndrome are met. In-school networks need to be established, whereby teachers experienced in teaching students with Down's syndrome can come together to discuss and exchange experience, teaching methods and ideas, which would be useful in encouraging self-help amongst staff and would be valuable in achieving inclusion for these children.

A task force should be established with particular responsibility for continuing assessment of implementation difficulties and developing solutions through a detailed strategy that addresses the physical structure of schools and the general issues of material resources. This would necessitate the availability of qualified human resources, who would help to ensure inclusive policy implementation is a success.

In the clarity of its recommendations, my study will contribute to the fields of education, inclusive education and educating children with Down's syndrome. The contributions of this study are presented in the next section.

7.5. Contributions of the Study

My thesis has centred on obtaining insight into the views and complexities surrounding inclusive education, in addition to the elements affecting inclusive education for those with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia. The study findings in regard to the perspective of principals towards those with Down's syndrome fill a gap in literature concerning such perceptions. Also, in consideration of the conclusions drawn from my study, it may be stated that the research has made notable contributions to knowledge in the international and local literature, highlighting various elements in the educational domain from the perspectives of school principals with regard to Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia. A number of scholars have examined the difficulties and viewpoints of principals on a global scale, and have identified a number of associated factors; however, to my knowledge, this is the first focusing on Saudi Arabia. Moreover, no works have examined the differences between ARAMCO and government schools in relation to the provision of services for those with Down's syndrome.

My study also is the first to examine the actual position of the Down's syndrome service in schools in Saudi Arabia and the capacity of the current system to meet the needs of children. It further recommends a process of restructuring and reform in order to enhance the overall quality of inclusive education; so this will be part of working towards a time when all students in primary schools in Saudi Arabia have access to a full range of educational opportunities.

Although focused on Saudi Arabia as the research context, this study also contributes to several streams of international literature, having potential interest and significance beyond the immediate context. For example, it contributes to the literature on models of disability, and particularly to the debate around the social model, by confirming evidence (from my own observation and the narratives of school principals) of how the day-to-day functioning, social opportunity and emotional well-being of people with disabilities (in this case, children with Down's syndrome) are influenced and often impeded by aspects of their environment. Among the evidence were instances of the impact of physical infrastructure that was designed without disability in mind, resulting in situations where, for example, a pupil could not go to the toilet without an attendant. However, the research also contributes in areas in which the social model has been found deficient, such as social attitudes (Marks, 1999) and the practicalities of implementation (Chappell et al., 2001). In the first of these cases, it contributes by shedding light on the complex social attitudes, both positive and negative, towards disability (for example those of school principals, pupils, parents and the wider society) which need to be recognised, understood and possibly changed, to facilitate the level of inclusion advocated by the social model. In the second of these cases, it contributes by highlighting the ramifications, in terms of personnel, infrastructure and equipment (and by implication cost) needed in order to adapt social settings to the needs of people with disabilities.

In this exploration, the focus on Down's syndrome is significant, since Down's syndrome, as noted in chapter one, accounts for the largest proportion worldwide of children with learning difficulties (Roizen and Patterson, 2003). This study contributes to literature on the education of children with this condition, by providing evidence of some of the benefits and problems associated with inclusion for this specific group. Whilst there is a plethora of literature on inclusion of children with special educational needs in general, there is a shortage of research in education of children with Down's syndrome specifically (Wishart, 2005).

It is important to recognise the different disabilities pose different needs, and that perceptions about needs may differ accordingly. This study therefore contributes insights related to the education of this comparatively neglected group.

Taking a wider perspective, this research also contributes to the international literature in areas of school leadership, school improvement, and change management. Inclusion is a new concept in Saudi Arabia, involving not only legal and policy change, but also changes in the physical environment, educational practices and social atmosphere of schools. By exploring this case, the study highlights the potential role school principals play in leading these changes, and the factors that influence their perceptions. In particular it highlights the need for principals to be prepared and supported to perform this role by appropriate training and development.

In addition to its substantive and theoretical contributions, my study provides a number of practical implications that may be applied by scholars who are concerned with examining inclusive education for students with Down's syndrome. Although I do not claim that my research has given a definitive answer to inclusive education for students with Down's syndrome, I do believe that the recommendations that were developed from my research make a valuable contribution to addressing the complexity of inclusive education in practical terms.

I expect that the recommendations detailed in this work will help to direct educational reform, with an emphasis on the education of those with Down's syndrome in an inclusive setting. The process of modernisation of the Rules and Regulations of Special Education that began in 2002 in Saudi Arabia led to the import of Western policies when starting to build the Rules and Regulations of Special Education, but this was done without consideration of local contextual, cultural and religious factors. As such, if the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia seeks to change and improve education and life for those with Down's syndrome, it needs to adopt recommendations that direct inclusive schools centred on Down's syndrome in primary settings. This could also help to enhance education for all students through the provision of a greater range of learning resources. All students would reap benefits from a school and classroom focusing on Down's syndrome.

In addition, ARAMCO's experience in building schools could be advantageous to the government. The efforts of the Ministry of Education's policy-makers should be directed towards improving the overall quality of the education system for children with Down's syndrome. Muslims are encouraged by Islam to treat everyone equally; nonetheless, the perceptions of the local culture have contributed to isolating such children in different ways. Nonetheless, inclusive education is not only centred on bringing together all learners, but rather on involving those with Down's syndrome in activities in schools and encouraging them to interact with all learners. In this same way, it is crucial for the principals of schools to establish the needs of all students, to ensure they are all provided with suitable resources in an inclusive setting and that challenges are managed. Perhaps more importantly, the study emphasises the value of applying clear, easy-to-follow, understandable educational policies that respond to the needs of those with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, the methodological contribution of my study is apparent, providing the opportunity to reflect on the study process. My approach is novel and distinctive due to the lack of knowledge of research culture in Saudi Arabia. Since the perception is that the qualitative approach cannot be used for cultural reasons (for example privacy), the vast majority of studies of education in general and special education in particular carried out in Saudi Arabia, centre on scientific methods and questionnaires for obtaining data (e.g., Al-Habdan, 2001; Alabri. 2003; Alfahili, 2007; Aboela, 2008).

Thus, to my knowledge, this is the first study concerned with school principals' perceptions of inclusion for those with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia, implementing a qualitative method and obtaining understanding from parents and teachers through the completion of informal interviews. It was possible for the regional study approach to analyse the intricacies of inclusive education in the Saudi setting. As a result, this may lead to establishing the facilitators and obstacles to the development of inclusive education. It can be stated that the application of an interpretative approach through the use of interviews, documentary data and observations could add to the methodology in social science studies in Saudi Arabia. My study highlights the view that the qualitative method provides a wealth of rich data pertaining to inclusive education in regard to

those with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia and has established a platform for subsequent studies to be completed through the use of a qualitative approach.

In the light of the above contributions of the research, and other issues raised in the earlier discussion, the limitations of the study are identified in the next section.

7.6. Limitations of the Study

My study, like others, has its limitations in terms of its methods and goals, which need to be taken into account when interpreting the findings and which point to the need for further research. Owing to the Saudi inclusion policy, any studies in the field of Down's syndrome would be restricted by the experiences of principals and the fact that the field is in its infancy.

Accordingly, one limitation is associated with the sample. The study included a reasonable number of participants (20 principals: 10 male and 10 female) from inclusive schools specialising in Down's syndrome in primary schools in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. Time limitations influenced the decision to conduct the study in a single region, as discussed in the second chapter. Notably, however, there could be differences in regard to the availability of resources due to the presence of ARAMCO schools in this selected region. Furthermore, the samples did not include students, parents or teachers; thus, it is essential that future studies consider the views of all concerned in the field of inclusive education.

Moreover, although the adoption of interviews and observations was advantageous, there are nevertheless various restrictions associated with the application of these methods, including the long periods of time taken to gain permission to interview some participants, cultural issues and timetable restrictions. For example, the interviews with female principals were completed by telephone, owing to cultural and religious considerations, which caused issues in achieving clarity. Cultural constraints outside my control also prevented observations in girls' schools. I must also acknowledge the influence of my own position, both as an insider and an outsider, as a father, teacher, supervisor and lecturer; however, I was able to work with my supervisors to find a

logical justification for a methodology to address this (see chapter one and the issue of reflexivity and positionality in chapter three). Notably, however, the study provides, overall, valuable contributions to the insight and understanding relating to inclusive education in the specific context of Saudi Arabia.

There are a number of limitations that apply to qualitative study, including the lack of generalisability, owing to a small sample size, the sampling method applied, and the highly specific nature of the phenomenon under examination. My concern, however, was not necessarily generalisation to a larger population, but obtain in-depth insight into the research phenomenon in question. The emphasis of my study was on ascertaining what occurs in inclusive educational settings specialising in Down's syndrome in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. Nonetheless, regardless of the reality that generalisation is not one of the specific goals of this qualitative study, a number of lessons have been learned that may be transferred to other contexts (Cohen et al., 2011), subject to the degree of relatability perceived by readers in those contexts, and may at least stimulate worthwhile thinking (Bassey, 2001).

In consideration of the study limitations, as well as other issues highlighted in the prior discussion, future research possibilities are established in the following section.

7.7. Suggestions for Future Studies

The limitations associated with my study provide some degree of insight into possible future research. As mentioned above, there are a number of perspectives that are not included in the current work, including those of students, parents and teachers. Furthermore, emphasis has been placed on various issues that necessitate further investigation in relation to inclusive education for children with Down's syndrome in the Saudi context. Moreover, my study provides a link between studies in different disciplines, including school effectiveness and educational reform. This is a fast-developing area of study, with ever-growing interest centred on how inclusive education can be improved. The following suggestions are, therefore, made for research to extend and build on the contribution of my study.

- An investigation of the views and opinions of those with Down's syndrome in regard to inclusive education would be valuable.
- As the inclusion of students with Down's syndrome is a new policy, subsequent study efforts should aim at further examining the social link between students with Down's syndrome and those in mainstream settings.
- An examination of the views of students, parents and teachers towards inclusive education should be prioritised.
- Analysis of the degree to which school teaching and curriculum methods affect views concerning inclusive education would be informative.
- The types of services required for children with Down's syndrome need to be identified, in order to include all of them in the community.
- Comparable work needs to be completed by female researchers to ensure that observations can be conducted in girls' schools in order to create a wider picture of the perceptions of principals and enable the identification of any disparity from boys' schools.
- It would be valuable to draw comparison with other contexts in the Arab Gulf states, which contain similar religious, social and cultural factors to Saudi Arabia.

7.8. Final Thoughts

Notwithstanding the limitations that surround my study, to my own knowledge, this is the first attempt to examine the practices of inclusive schools for those with Down's syndrome in Saudi Arabia or to include the experiences and views of their principals. Accordingly, my study provides an examination of the complicated pathway to inclusive education in the specific context of Saudi Arabia, which I hope will inform the many developments needed to advance the country's journey. Far from discouraging inclusive education through establishing the various obstacles, it considers inclusive education as an endless journey towards achieving an equal society and social justice. As Uditsky (1993: p.93) stated, "*Inclusive education may take generations before it is properly understood or practised*". Inclusion necessitates a dynamic effort, with the continuous assessment and re-examination of current practices and policies.

However, despite the fact that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1994) does not permit any limitation to or exclusion from educational opportunity on the basis of perceived or socially ascribed differences, my study's findings show that, even today, children with Down's syndrome experience segregation within and from education in "inclusive schools" in Saudi Arabia. This situation is attributable to the lack of a solid implementation process, as well as the lack of resources available for principals and schools. Despite the fact they are respected as individuals from an Islamic perspective, children with Down's syndrome have not been afforded opportunities to participate across all areas of school life, but are excluded from academic activities and positioned in separate classroom settings.

Accordingly, there is a pressing need for changes to be implemented in inclusive schools and focused on those students with Down's syndrome, in an effort to satisfy their needs. In particular, there is a need to highlight the importance of greater knowledge, facilities, skills, resources and improved buildings, in empowering school principals. Moreover, all students are recognised as having the right to receive education in a setting appropriate to their social and academic needs (Miles and Singal, 2010). Therefore, a series of recommendations have been suggested to contribute to fulfilling the requirements for inclusive practices for those with Down's syndrome.

Furthermore, I am an example of how the government in Saudi Arabia is directing its efforts towards sending specialists in the educational field of those with special needs to regions with a greater degree of expertise, to obtain experience that can be used in my home country. Certainly, my experience, as a research student at an overseas university (the University of Lincoln) has helped me to think 'outside the box', and released me from cultural and traditional boundaries. This has enabled me to 'make the strange familiar and the familiar strange'. For example, co-education is considered taboo in Saudi Arabia, while in the West it is viewed differently, and it is segregation that is "strange". Accordingly, this PhD research has been a journey during which various assumption and practices were challenged, highlighting conflicts between local and

global contexts, in my efforts to create understanding, and to form interpretations concerning the inclusive education of those with Down's syndrome.

Finally, my study has developed my own skills, which will prove vital in subsequent research efforts in the arena of students with Down's syndrome. What I have learned from my doctoral studies will enable me to resume my position as an Assistant Professor at King Faisal University, which will, in turn, be fundamental in preparing the national cadre required in order to teach in Saudi schools. It is my hope that there will be much more involvement in preparing teachers for inclusive settings, with more positive perspectives adopted and teachers supporting wider social change in regard to more inclusive practices. Most importantly, I hope that my study helps me in my position as a father with a daughter with Down's syndrome to ensure that students like her obtain a proper education and, above all, rights in their community. Lastly, I undertook this research, living with it during some very enjoyable years of my life. I hope that my study findings and its recommendations will support change, with new research in the field, emphasising other areas that could benefit from improvement in relation to inclusive education in Saudi Arabia.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Permission to take photographs from the Local Education Authority

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أخي العزيز مدير المدرسة (مدير برنامج التربية الفكرية)

أفيدكم بأنني أحد المبتعثين من قبل جامعة الملك فيصل لدراسة الدكتوراه بجامعة لينكولن -المملكة المتحدة- لإجراء بحث عن "تصورات مدرء المدارس نحو دمج الأطفال ذوي متلازمة داون في المدرسة الابتدائية في المملكة العربية السعودية"

ويتطلب إنهاء هذا البحث القيام بعمل ملاحظة والتقاط بعض الصور للمباني والفصول وليس الهدف من إجراء ذلك هو تقييم أداء مدرء المدارس وإنما الهدف مزع هو المشاركة مع المدرء في ملاحظة السلوك والتفاعل والتسهيلات داخل المدرسة، علما بأن الباحث هو الذي سوف يقوم بتدوين البيانات التي سوف يلاحظها.

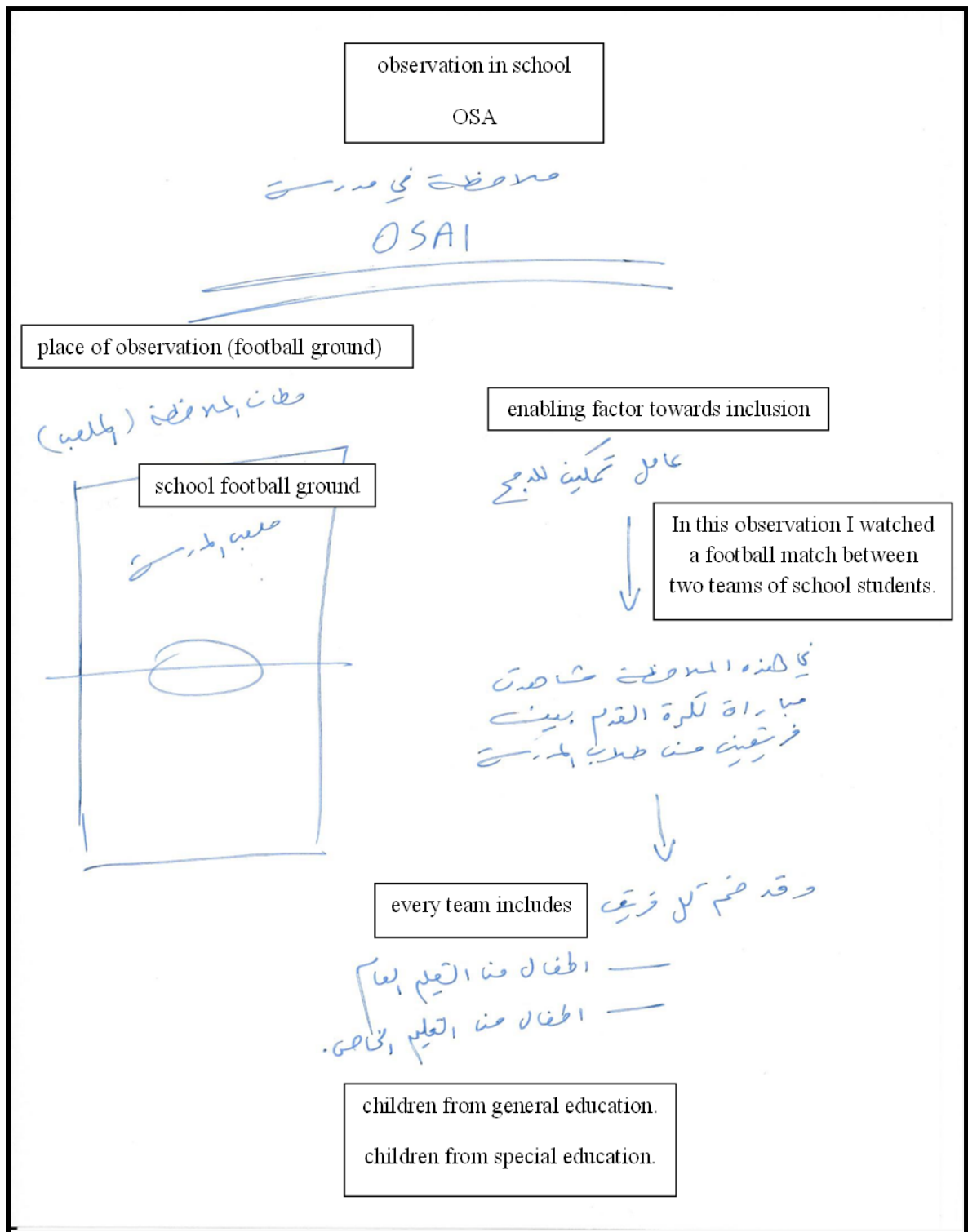
ملاحظة مهمة:

أتعهد بسرية أسماء المدارس والأشخاص المشاركين في البحث،

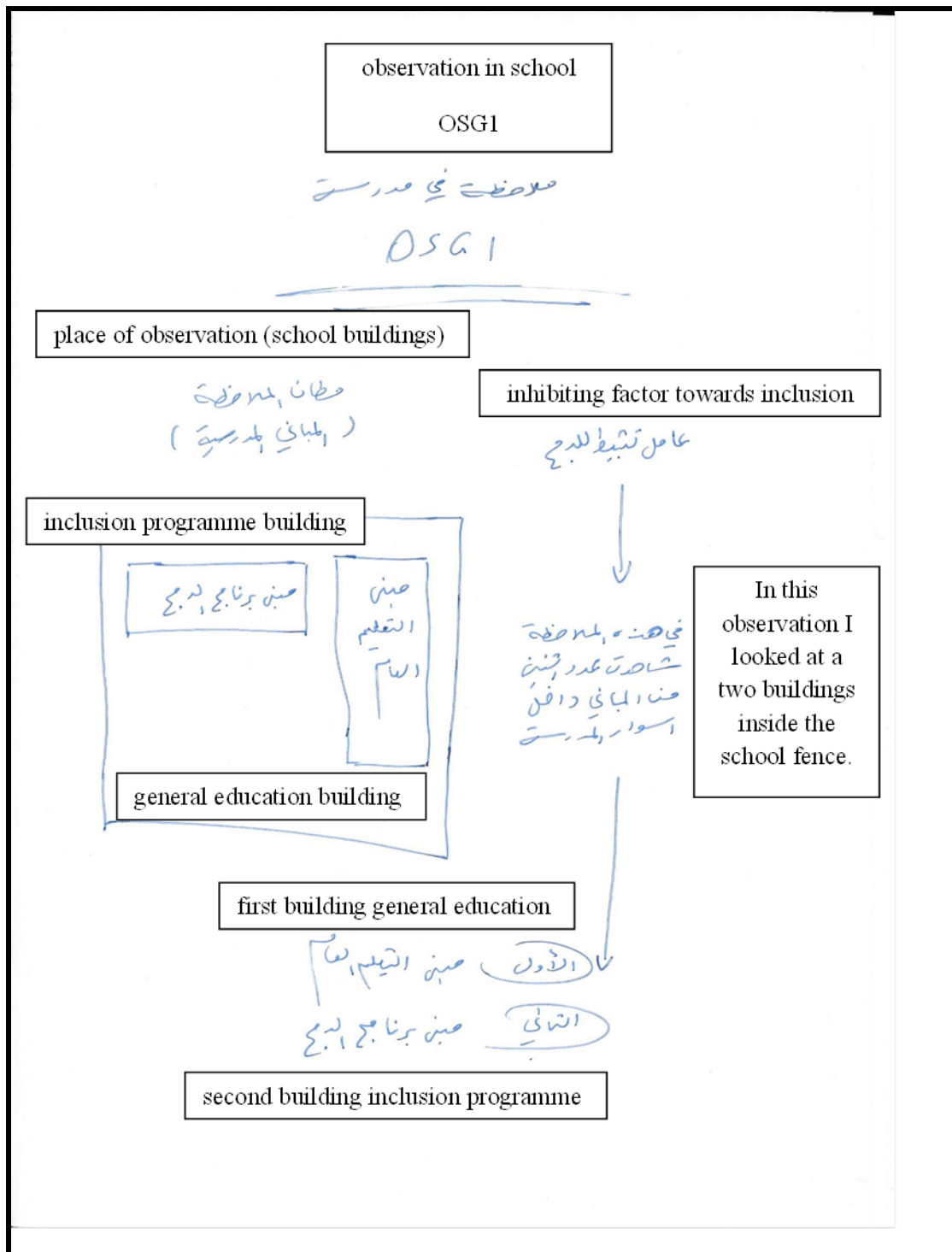
أخوكم بالبحث
وليد العبري

وزارة التربية والتعليم
إدارة التعليم بمنطقة الشرقية
مكتب التعليم بالمدرسة

Appendix 2 Example A of research diary notes (observations)



Appendix 3 Example B of research diary notes (observations)



Appendix 4 Example A of research diary notes (informal interviews)

نوع المقابلة	مع من	نوع المدرسة	الرقم	الرمز
مقابلة غير رسمية	مدير مدرسة	مدرسة ارامكو	1	IPA1

ما هي الفوائد التي تعود على إدارة المدرسة عند دمج الأطفال ذوي متلازمة داون في المدرسة العادية؟

طبعاً، يوجد فائدة مادية لنا كمدرء ولكنها غير مجزية ما تسوى همها بالنسبة لنا لأنها بدل مقطوع يسمى 20 % فلم ا تقيسها إنك تدبر برنامج كامل بمعلمين وطلاب ومتابعيهم مقابل حوالي 1400 ريال غير مجدية بالنسبة لنا كمدير كوكيل كمرشد طلابي بالعكس عبء زايد . لكن بالنسبة لهم كمعلمين لديهم حوالي 30% مبلغ يفرق معهم يوصل حوالي 3000 ريال أو زي لهذا تسوى مادي

انا ارجب ان اقدم انجاز أما ماديا انا غير مستفيد بالعكس صل إضافي كثير ولكن عندما ارى البرنامج وصل لمرحلة معينة واشوف ردة فعل أولياء الأمور ثنائهم لي وشكرهم هذي الأشياء بصراحة محفزة لي.

بعض المعلمين لا يستفيدون من الزيادة تصدق لدي معلم ينفق المال من جيبه على شراء المساعدات التعليمية والذهاب مع هؤلاء الاطفال في رحلات وهذا غير مطلوب منه ولكنه من افضل معلمين التربية الخاصة لدينا.

ما هي المشاكل التي تعود على إدارة المدرسة عند دمج الأطفال ذوي متلازمة داون في المدرسة العادية؟

مشكلة إدارية حالياً يوجد برنامجين دمج في مدرستنا وهي برنامج دمج الفكري وبرنامج دمج متلازمة داون بالإضافة إلى مدرسة التعليم العام يوجد صعوبة لدي يوجد لخبطة علي لوجود عدة برامج في مكان واحد.

لدي اعباء اضافية.

بعض الأطفال عدوانيين في متلازمة داون فهذا يسبب لنا مشكلة مع اولياء الامور الاطفال العاديين.

نعم هناك من يوقف سيارته في مواقف المعاقين من وجهة نظري، هذا ضد ايسط حقوق هؤلاء الاطفال واسرهم وانا غير قادر على القيام باي شيء الا تقديم المشورة والتوجيه، وهذي مسئولية ادارة المرور.

ما تقدر تحمل الإنسان فوق طاقته وتقول له ان ينتج أكيد أنه بيفشل أنت تبغى النجاح لابد تحط أسباب النجاح بس لا تحط له حمل زائد وتقول له انجح.

هل المبنى المدرسي (حكومي أو ارامكو) هو السبب في نجاح أو فشل الدمج للأطفال ذوي متلازمة داون؟

حتى مدارس ارامكو لازالت تعاني من تكديس الطلاب كانت الفصول أول وثاني وثالث فكري يدرسون في فصل واحد لعدم وجود فصول كافية في المدرسة فمن وجهة نظري هذا خطأ ولكن ليس لدينا مكان لدينا كذلك مدرسة عادية حنا ما حنا هجرة وما حنا قرية ندمج الفصول مع بعض حنا في اخر واحدت مدرسة بنتها ارامكو ويوجد مدارس ابتدائية قريبة ولا يوجد بها برامج دمج فافترحت أن يتم افتتاح برامج دمج بها لان كان لدينا ثلاث برامج دمج وهي الفكري ومتلازمة داون والتوحد.

فقط تم نقل برنامج دمج التوحد لان كان برنامج فصول التوحد توصل أحياناً إلى ثمانية طلاب في الفصل الواحد هذا ما هو صحيح حتى على المعلم لما يأخذ معلم ثمان طلاب توحد فكيف ينجح المعلم معاهم صعب وفي الأساس ثلاث طلاب للمعلم ولكن ادارة التعليم أعطتني معلم واحد لثمان طلاب في فصل واحد.

ولكن الحمد لله الان افضل وربما في المستقبل سيكون افضل من الان.

Type of interview	With whom	Type of school	number	Code
Informal interviews	School principal	ARAMCO School	1	IPA1

What benefits do school principals have when children with Down's syndrome are included into mainstream school?

Of course, there is a monetary benefit to us as principals, but it is not much, and this increase in money does not alleviate the concern that accompanies the work for us because it is an allowance called 20%. When you measure it, you are running a full programme with teachers and students and to follow up them for about 1400 riyals is not useful for us as a principal or as a deputy headteacher or as a student adviser; on the contrary it increases our workload. But for them as teachers, they have about 30%, this increase is good for them and it's rewarding it is about 3000 riyals or more.

I want to make an achievement. In terms of salary I am not a beneficiary; on the contrary, have a lot more work. But when I see the programme arrive at a certain stage and I see parents reacting to me and thanking me, these things frankly motivate me.

Some teachers do not benefit from a substantial salary increase. I have a teacher who spends money from his own pocket on buying educational aids and going with such children on trips. It is not required of him to do so, but he is one of our best special education teachers.

What are the problems of school principals when children with Down's syndrome are included into mainstream school?

I have administrative problems. Currently there are two inclusion programmes in our school, a programme for learning difficulties inclusion and a programme for inclusion of Down's syndrome. Also I have the general education school. This is difficult for me. I am confused because there are several programmes in one place.

I have an additional workload.

Some children with Down's syndrome are aggressive. This causes us a problem with parents of general education.

Also, there are those who park their car in the disabled parking [area] in my view, this attitude removes the simplest rights of children with learning difficulties and their families and I am unable to do anything except give advice and guidance, as this is the responsibility of the traffic department.

You cannot load a man beyond his capacity and you tell him to produce results; surely he will fail. If you want success, you must provide the conditions for success, but do not make him overworked and then say to him, you must succeed.

Is the school building (government or ARAMCO) the reason for the success or failure of inclusion for children with Down's syndrome?

Even ARAMCO schools still suffer from overcrowding, where the first, second, and third inclusion classes have to be taught in one classroom because are not enough classrooms in the school. From my point of view, this is wrong, but we have no classroom, because we also have a general school. We are not a hamlet or village in order to integrate three classes together, we are in the last and latest school built by ARAMCO. There is a primary school nearby and there are no inclusion programmes in it, I proposed that they should open inclusion programmes in it, because we had three programmes of inclusion, for learning difficulties, Down's syndrome and autism.

Only the autism inclusion programme was moved from our school, because the autism class programme sometimes reached eight students per class. This is not fair for a teacher. When a teacher teaches eight students to a class, how does the teacher succeed? It is very hard, basically there should be three students for each teacher, but the Local Educational Authority provide me with one teacher for eight autistic students in one class.

But thank Allah (God) now it's better and perhaps in the future it will become better than now.

Appendix 5 Example B of research diary notes (informal interviews)

نوع المقابلة	مع من	نوع المدرسة	الرقم	الرمز
مقابلة غير رسمية	مدير مدرسة	مدرسة حكومية	4	IPG4

ماهي الإعاقة التي تفضل أن تعمل معها؟

أنا ما جربت الإعاقات الأخرى ولكن أفضل الإعاقة الموجودة عندنا الآن وهي الإعاقة العقلية وخاصة إذا كانت بسيطة وهذه الإعاقة التي جربتها. أما الإعاقات الأخرى لم أعمل معها وعدم تجربتي للإعاقات الأخرى هو السبب الذي يجعلني لا أريد بها أو العمل معها.

ماذا تعرف عن الأطفال ذوي متلازمة داون؟

فقط أعرف الأطفال ذوي متلازمة داون في الشكل.

كما تعلم أنا تخصصي بعيد جدا عن التربية الخاصة.

هل سبق لك أن حصلت على دورات تدريبية؟

لا، كنت مديرا لمدرسة تعليم عام وفجأة جاء قرار نقلي لمدرسة بها برنامج دمج. نعم، في بعض الحالات يتم نقل مدير مدرسة عادية إلى مدرسة دمج ولكن ليس لديه معلومات عن الدمج والأطفال الذين لديهم من متلازمة داون، أو كيفية التعامل معهم.

هل يعتبر وضع برنامج الدمج في مبنى منفصل نوع من أنواع العزل للأطفال ذوي متلازمة داون؟

ممكن يكون عزل من وجهة نظرك ولكن من وجهة نظري لا. وأصلا الذي يحدث في المدارس الأخرى هو عزل لانهم في فصولهم الخاصة ولكن من وجهة نظري بهذه الطريقة فإن إدارة برنامج الدمج ستكون سهلة بالنسبة لي.

السبب في ذلك أن البيئة المدرسية الحالية مثل المباني غير مناسبة، فقط فصول لجلس هؤلاء الطلاب، المشكلة التي قائمين على الدمج أنا عدي إحساس أنهم ماله علاقة بهذا الفئة.

هم قالوا المدرسة هذه بها فصول زائدة ضعوا فيها فصول دمج.

هل لديك اقتراحات ترغب في ذكرها عن الدمج أو عن الأطفال ذوي متلازمة داون؟

أتوقع أن تغلق مدراس الدمج وإذا كان هناك رجال عاقلين ورأوا نتيجة الدمج هذه أنا أتوقع أنهم إذا كانوا صادقين سيغلقونها لأنه ليس هناك فائدة بالطريقة المعمول بها الآن قد يقول لي واحد يا أخي فيها فائدة عشرة في المية زين عشرة في المية لكن وجهة نظر الناس القائمين عليها ما اعتقد أنهم فاتحين الدمج حشان تكون الفائدة منها عشرة بالمئة أو عشرين بالمئة أتوقع أن الفائدة التي يرجونها أكثر من كذا.

التطوير لا تعجز عنه الوزارة فلديهم ميزانية ضخمة كما تعرف باستطاعتهم توفير جميع النقص لمدراس الدمج من هذه الميزانية أما بالطريقة الموجودة الآن فأنا أقولهم يختصرونها ويسكرون الدمج أحسن ويدورون لهم طريقة أحسن من هذه الطريقة.

Type of interview	With whom	Type of school	number	Code
Informal interviews	School principal	Government School	4	IPG4

What disability do you prefer to work with?

I have no experience with other disabilities but the best disability [i.e. easiest to work with] we have now is learning difficulties, especially if it is moderate and it is the disability that I have experienced. Other disabilities, I have did not work with them; my lack of experience with other disabilities is why I do not want to work with them.

What do you know about children with Down's syndrome?

I only know children with Down's syndrome by their facial characteristics.

As you know, my specialty is very far from special education.

Have you ever had training courses?

No, I was the principal of a general school and a decision came from the Local Educational Authority to move me to a school with an inclusion programme. Yes, on some occasions a principal is transferred to an inclusive school but has no information about inclusion and children with Down's syndrome, or how to deal with them.

Is the placement of an inclusion programme in a separate building a type of exclusion for children with Down's syndrome?

It is possible that it may be seen as exclusion from your point of view, but not in my view. In fact what happens in other schools is exclusion because they [children with Down's syndrome] are in their own classes, but in my opinion in this way the inclusion programme management will be easy for me...

The reason is that our school environment, such as buildings is inappropriate, there are only classrooms to seat these students. The problem is that those responsible for inclusion programmes, I have a sense that they do not have any interest in these children.

They said this school has extra classrooms, then they decided to set up an inclusion programme.

Do you have suggestions you would like to mention about inclusion or children with Down's syndrome?

I think they should close the inclusion schools if there are reasonable people and they saw the result of this inclusion I expect that if they are honest they will close it because there is no benefit in that kind of inclusion. Someone might tell me that with inclusion there is a ten percent benefit and that is acceptable, but I do not think the view of the people responsible for inclusion is satisfactory for this percentage, I do not think they have opened inclusion in order to see a benefit of ten or twenty percent, they hope for more benefit form inclusion

Development is not impossible for the ministry, they have a huge budget and know that they can provide all that's lacking from inclusion schools from this budget, but [as regards] inclusion in this way, I say to them, stop inclusion and then try to look for a better way to do inclusion.

Appendix 6 Demographic information sheet

البيانات الديمغرافية لعينة (الملاحظة)

لمدراء برامج التربية الفكرية الابتدائية في المنطقة الشرقية (بنين)

اسم البرنامج

عدد سنوات الخبرة في المجال الوظيفي

عدد سنوات الخبرة في المجال الإداري


عدد سنوات الخبرة في مجال إدارة البرنامج

العمر

20	أقل من 30
30	أقل من 40
40	أقل من 50
50	أقل من 60
60	أو أكثر

نوع المبنى

حكومي
أرامكو
أخرى (أرجو التحديد)


 وزارة التربية والتعليم
 إدارة التخطيط والتطوير
 الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بالمنطقة الشرقية

**Appendix 7 Permission from the University of Lincoln for data collection to
conduct interviews from the Local Education Authority**



October 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**Re: Waleed Alabri – ID ALA09157673
PhD in Educational Research & Development**

Subject: Special Educational Needs (Down's Syndrome)

The above student is studying full-time for a PhD in his chosen area of 'School principals' attitude towards the inclusion of children with Down's Syndrome in mainstream primary schools in Saudi Arabia'. He will return to Saudi Arabia on 21 December for approximately 3 months to carry out his data collection.

I am happy to support his time away from our institution and his data collection plans.

Yours faithfully

15/10/12

.....
Date signed

.....
Professor Howard Stevenson (Supervisor)
Centre for Educational Research and Development
University of Lincoln
Brayford Pool
Lincoln LN6 7TS
England

E: hstevenson@lincoln.ac.uk
T: + 44 (0)1522 837333
Web: http://www.lincoln.ac.uk/cerd/Staff/staff_H_Stevenson.htm

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Research & Development

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Appendix 8 Letter from the Saudi Embassy for data collection to conduct interviews from the Local Education Authority

ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA CULTURAL BUREAU LONDON		سفارة المملكة العربية السعودية الملحقية الثقافية لندن
التاريخ ١٤٣٣/١٢/١٣ هـ		
إلى من يهمه الأمر		
رقم الملف F241		
<p>تفيد الملحقية الثقافية بسفارة المملكة العربية السعودية في لندن بأن الطالب/ وليد حسن باطل العبري (سجل مدني ١٠٣٦٤٥٥٩٧) والمبتعث من قبل جامعة الملك فيصل لدراسة الدكتوراه في مجال التربية الخاصة - مسار الاعاقة العقلية بجامعة لنكولن . وقد التحق بالبعثة بتاريخ ١٤٢٩/٤/١٠ الموافق ٢٠٠٨/٤/١٦ ومن المتوقع ان تنتهي بعثته بتاريخ ١٤٣٤/٤/٢٠ الموافق ٢٠١٣/٣/٢ م ويريد القيام برحلة علمية الى المملكة العربية السعودية (إدارة التربية والتعليم في المنطقة الشرقية) لغرض جمع بيانات تتعلق بالبحث الخاص بدراسته لمرحلة الدكتوراه. يرجى مساعدته في جمع البيانات المطلوبة. وقد أعطيت له هذه الإفادة بناءً على طلبه.</p>		
وتقبلوا فائق التحيات،		
الملحق الثقافي		
ب سفارة المملكة العربية السعودية في لندن		
		
فيصل بن محمد المهنا أبا الخيل		
		
الرقم : التاريخ : الموافق : المرفقات :		
630 Chiswick High Road, London W4 5RY Tel: +44 (0) 20 3249 7000 Fax: +44 (0) 20 3249 7001 E-mail: sacbuk@uksacb.org www.uksacb.org		

Appendix 9 Permission to conduct interviews from the Local Education Authority

الرقم : ٣٤٥٠٢٠١ التاريخ : ١٤٤٤/١١/٧ المشروعات : -	 وزارة التربية والتعليم MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	 وزارة التربية والتعليم الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بالمنطقة الشرقية إدارة التخطيط والتطوير
---	--	---

إلى: المكرمين مدير/ة إدارة التربية الخاصة
من: مديرة إدارة التخطيط والتطوير
بشأن: تسهيل مهمة الباحث / وليد حسن العبري

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، ، ،

بناءً على موافقتنا بشأن تسهيل مهمة الباحث / وليد حسن العبري طالب الدراسات العليا لمرحلة الدكتوراه بجامعة لنكولن بالمملكة المتحدة ، والذي يجري بحثاً بعنوان (تصورات مدراء المدارس نحو دمج الأطفال ذوي متلازمة داون في مدارس المرحلة الابتدائية في المملكة العربية السعودية) حيث تتطلب الدراسة استخدام المقابلة على عينة من مدراء - مديرات برامج التربية الفكرية. عليه فلا مانع من تسهيل مهمته. علماً بأن التطبيق سيكون من قبل الباحث نفسه. يسعدني شكركم على عنايتكم وتجاوبكم مع ظروف الباحث.

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، ، ،

نوال بنت عبدالرحمن التيسان
مديرة إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

ص / لقسم البحوث والمشروعات
م/الشامسي
١/٧

✉ dpd@girlseduep.gov.sa ☎ ٨٢٦٩٣٦١ فاكس ٨٢٦٤٩٧٧
www.girlseduep.gov.sa زوروا موقعنا على الإنترنت

**Appendix 10 Permission from the University of Lincoln for data collection to
conduct observations and collect documents from the Local Education Authority**



30th November 2013

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
Cultural Bureau in London
630 Chiswick High Road
London
W4 5RY
United Kingdom

Dear Sirs

Re: Waleed Alabri – ID ALA09157673

PhD in Educational Research & Development

Subject: Special Educational Needs (Down's Syndrome)

The above student is studying full time for a PhD in his chosen area of "School Principals' perspective towards the inclusion of children with Down's Syndrome in mainstream primary schools in Saudi Arabia". He will return to Saudi Arabia on 20th December 2013 for approximately three months to carry out the rest of his data collection (observations and documents).

I am happy to support his time away from our institute and his data collection plans.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Neary".

Professor Mike Neary
Waleed's Supervisor

The Graduate School

University of Lincoln Brayford Pool Lincoln LN6 7TS United Kingdom
www.lincoln.ac.uk 01522 837017 mnearyl@lincoln.ac.uk

Appendix 11 Letter from the Saudi Embassy for data collection to conduct observations and collect documents from the Local Education Authority

<p>ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA CULTURAL BUREAU LONDON</p>		<p>سفارة المملكة العربية السعودية الملحقية الثقافية لندن</p>
<p>التاريخ ١٤٣٥/١/٩ هـ</p>		
<p><u>إفادة</u></p>		
<p>رقم الملف F241</p>		
<p>تفيد الملحقية الثقافية بسفارة المملكة العربية السعودية في لندن بأن الطالب/وليد بن حسن بن باتل العبري سجل مدني (١٠٣٦٤٦٥٥٩٧) والمبتعث من قبل جامعة الملك فيصل لدراسة الدكتوراه بجامعة Lincoln في مجال التربية الخاصة / مسار الإعاقة العقلية قد التحق بالبعثة بتاريخ ١٤٢٩/٤/١٠ هـ ومن المتوقع أن تنتهي بعثته بتاريخ ١٤٣٥/٥/١ هـ . وحيث أن دراسته تتطلب تصورات مدراء المدارس نحو دمج الأطفال ذوي متلازمة داون في مدارس المرحلة الابتدائية في المملكة العربية السعودية . وقد أعطيت له هذه الإفادة بناءً على طلبه لتقديمها إلى الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم في المنطقة الشرقية لتسهيل مهمته. وتقبلوا فائق التحيات،،،</p>		
<p>المالحق الثقافي سفارة المملكة العربية السعودية في لندن فيصل بن محمد المهنا أبا الخيل</p>		
<p>الرقم : التاريخ : الموافق : الرفقات : 630 Chiswick High Road, London W4 5RY Tel: +44 (0) 20 3249 7000 Fax: +44 (0) 20 3249 7001 E-mail: sacbuk@uksacb.org www.uksacb.org</p>		

Appendix 12 Permission to conduct observations and collect documents from the Local Education Authority

الرقم: ٣٥١٥٤٨٥٤ التاريخ: ١٤٣٥ / ١ / ٢٢ المشروعات	 وزارة التربية والتعليم الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بالمنطقة الشرقية إدارة التخطيط والتطوير	المملكة العربية السعودية وزارة التربية والتعليم الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بالمنطقة الشرقية إدارة التخطيط والتطوير
القيم: المواطنة - الانتماء - العدل - العمل بروح الفريق - التنمية الذاتية - المسؤولية الاجتماعية	الرسالة: تقديم خدمات تربوية وتعليمية ذات جودة عالية وفق معايير عالمية بمشاركة مجتمعية	الرؤية: الريادة لبناء جيل مبدع

إلى: المكرم / مدير إدارة التربية الخاصة
من: مديرة إدارة التخطيط والتطوير
بشأن: تسهيل مهمة الباحث / وليد حسن العبري

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، ، ،

بناءً على موافقتنا بشأن تسهيل مهمة الباحث / وليد حسن العبري طالب الدراسات العليا لمرحلة الدكتوراه بجامعة لنكولن بالمملكة المتحدة، والذي يجري بحثاً بعنوان (تصورات مدراء المدارس نحو دمج الأطفال ذوي متلازمة داون في مدارس المرحلة الابتدائية في المملكة العربية السعودية) حيث تتطلب الدراسة تطبيق أداة الملاحظة على عينة من برامج التربية الفكرية. عليه فلا مانع من تسهيل مهمته. علماً بأن التطبيق سيكون من قبل الباحث نفسه. يسعدني شكركم على عنايتكم وتجاوبكم مع ظروف الباحث.

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، ، ،

نوال بنت عبدالرحمن التيسان
١٤٣٥ / ١ / ٢٢

م/الشامسي
١ / ٢١

Office26@edueast.gov.sa ٨٢٦٩٣٦١ ٨٢٦٤٩٧٧ فاكس