Saudi Special Education Preservice Teachers’ Perspective towards Inclusion

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, my parents, and my daughter for their ongoing support and encouragement. Think you for being by my side and supporting me to finish this journey. Many thanks to my lovely husband, Fahad, and my beautiful daughter, Mariah, for their patience and ongoing support. Also, many thanks to my mom for whispering words of wisdom and my dad for continuous encouragement and support. Without the love of my family, I would not have been able to obtain this degree and I am forever thankful.
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ABSTRACT

In Saudi Arabia, students with disabilities have historically received education in special and segregated schools. As times progressed, regulations and laws changed the manner in which students with disabilities were served. Regulations order that students with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment; however, preservice teachers’ perspectives continue to differ in regard to working with students with disabilities in a general education setting. Research has shown that teachers who portray positive attitudes towards inclusion are more likely to work with students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom (Dev & Hayes, 2015). Today, inclusion has occurred in schools around the country; it is the educator’s responsibility to modify instruction in order to teach all students in the inclusive classroom. In order to investigate preservice teachers’ perspective toward inclusion in Saudi Arabia, this study used interviews with seven preservice teachers from the University of Umm Al-Qura. Six major themes emerged from the interview data, which represent Saudi special education preservice teachers’ perspectives toward inclusion, reasons for their perspective and recommendations including (1) negative perspective toward inclusion, (2) reasons related to students with disabilities’ condition and personality, (3) reasons related to the university, (4) reasons related to schools, (5) demand for more hands-on experience, (6) need to spread awareness among in-service teachers, principal, staff and community. Findings of the study and aspects related to the preservice teachers’ perspectives are discussed in detail, as well as implications of the findings and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of students with disabilities in academic settings is an increasing global phenomenon. This is based on a philosophy that students with disabilities should receive an education alongside their peers without disabilities and that instruction should be based on their abilities, rather than their disabilities (Friend & Bursuck, 2002). The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), which was established on October 7, 1975, paved the way for children with varying exceptionalities by establishing free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities. Among several provisions, this law ensures that students received an education in the least restrictive environment (LRE; Freedman et al., 2005). Later reauthorizations of this law by the U.S. Congress (e.g., The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] of 1990 and The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 [IDEA 2004]) strengthened provisions of the EAHCA, including the LRE, with additional assurances that students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum. Moreover, language more explicitly emphasizes the importance of students with disabilities being educated in general education classrooms with support, unless the nature and severity of the disability is such that this cannot be achieved satisfactorily (Strieke & Zong, 2013). Like the United States of America, Saudi Arabia has attempted to make strides in the global movement toward inclusion (MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013). Several policies on inclusive education (IE) emphasize full inclusion in school settings. For example, the Legislation
of Disability, the Disability Code, and the Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) guarantee free and appropriate education for all students with disabilities. However, attaining full inclusion through the implementation of inclusion policies has been a significant challenge. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), just like the United States, puts great effort into education because it is one of the tools that prepares the next generation. This can be understood by looking at the amount of funding that is allocated to education in the KSA. For example, Saudi Arabia spent $2.2 billion on public education in 2015 alone (Aboughabal, 2015). Among the countries in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia stands out for its commitment to funding education. The KSA, like other countries, encourages education and supports teaching. Teachers are responsible for establishing a conducive atmosphere for learning in the classroom. Therefore, it is necessary for preservice teachers to understand how to create such positive classroom atmospheres. This is especially important when interacting with students with disabilities in their classrooms because the disposition, beliefs, and attitudes of preservice teachers are critical components of the success or failure of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms (Parker, McHatton, & Crisp, 2014). Studies on preservice teachers’ perspectives on their preparedness to work with children with diverse needs indicate that preservice teachers feel unprepared (e.g., McKay, 2016). With respect to the KSA in particular, studies suggest that Arab preservice teachers have a negative attitude toward students with learning disabilities and toward inclusion (Alghazo, Doreen, & Algaryouti, 2003; El-Ashry, 2009).

Research has shown that many special education preservice teachers have limited or no prior experience working with students with disabilities, which results in feelings of inadequacy in the classroom. Similarly, Al-Ahmadi (2009) points out that in Saudi Arabia, teachers lack quality preparation when it comes to teaching students with disabilities in regular classrooms.
The limited exposure and lack of preparation increase anxiety and fear for students with disabilities (Everhart, 2009). Prior research has demonstrated that teachers who have had some previous experience working with or have taken preservice courses about teaching students with disabilities are more likely to have positive attitudes toward inclusion (Dev & Hayes, 2015). Likewise, in their studies, Alquraini (2011), Al-Abduljabber (1994), and Alfaiz (2006) found that more experienced teachers exhibited more positive attitudes than those with little to no experience.

Teacher preparation specifically for inclusion has been shown to be an effective method of improving attitudes toward IE (Forlin, 2010). It is the duty of universities to sufficiently prepare preservice teachers to effectively teach students with disabilities in general education classrooms. It is the responsibility of teacher credentialing agencies to ensure that preservice teacher preparation programs instill appropriate attitudes toward the inclusion of students with physical and learning differences and that the teachers are able to meet the needs of all students (Brackenreed & Barnett, 2006).

**Significance of the Study/Statement of the Problem**

The need for this research has been and continues to be supported by various scholars in the field of special education. While the aim of the study is to examine preservice teachers’ perspectives on the inclusion of children with special needs in general educational settings, there has been a dire demand to investigate more in-depth, longitudinal inquiries that are heavily based on a qualitative research design and associated methods (Leatheman, 1999; Schock, 2002; Cordoves, 2013). Educational reform in Saudi Arabia requires the investment of resources. Securing appropriate exceptional student education (ESE) involves proper training of teachers to ensure that they have a basic core of pertinent information, knowledge, and skills, as well as positive attitudes toward the education of such children in regular schools (Mittler, 1992).
However, in Saudi Arabia, few studies regarding inclusion have been conducted. Hassan et al. (2015) conducted a study regarding preservice teachers’ perspectives on inclusion, which is the only study that has focused on this. The rest of the studies, such as those by Alahmadi (2009), Al-Faiz (2006), Alquraini (2012), and Haimour (2013), have focused on in-services teachers. Studies by Alanzi (2012) and Abushaira (2013) focus on teachers and parents, and one study (Alanzi, 2012) explores administrators’ and teachers’ perspectives. Additionally, Somaily et al. (2012) have explored parents’ perspectives.

Among the studies highlighted above, only one provides an in-depth interview—that of Alshahrani (2014). Five studies (Hassan et al., 2015; Al-Faiz, 2006; Alquraini, 2012; Haimour, 2013; Somaily et al., 2012) used surveys, while two others used mixed methods, with Alahmadi (2009) using surveys and interviews and Alanzi (2012) using interviews and observation. On the other hand, Abushaira (2013) used a language development list that helped him record what students would score on their tests. Most of these studies were largely descriptive without diving into the problem of concern. The respondents were given surveys and requested to either agree or disagree with the statements. Thus, some teachers may have indicated positive perspectives toward IE while not feeling well equipped to work with children with learning disabilities.

The questionnaire method relies on participants’ authenticity in self-reporting. Additionally, the responses obtained depend on the questions and the mode of presentation. Thus, poor structure, presentation, or wording or misrepresented questions may adversely affect the conclusions drawn from the findings. Consequently, qualitative research would be of great importance in providing detailed information about teachers’ perspectives on inclusion.

Additionally, a close look at the findings of these studies reveals some inconsistencies. For example, Al-Abduljabber (1994), Al-Ahmadi (2009), and Alquraini (2011) identified a
significant difference between male and female teachers’ perspectives. However, Alfaiz (2006) and Dubis (1987) did not find any differences between them. Furthermore, Alquraini reported that male educators had more positive attitudes toward the full inclusion of children with severe learning disabilities compared to female colleagues. On the other hand, Al-Ahmadi and Al-Abdul-Jabbar found that female educators expressed more affirmative attitudes toward the inclusion of students with learning disabilities.

By seeking to uncover preservice teachers’ perspectives and attitudes toward inclusion, an awareness may be gained about how newly hired teachers influence the trajectory of special education in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it is imperative that teacher education programs provide the most effective information and skills, which can be informed by the attitudes and perspectives of preservice teachers (Rogers, 2014).

**Purpose/Rationale**

This study examines the attitudes of preservice teachers as they pertain to IE and their perspectives on how teacher preparation programs can effectively prepare them to teach students with disabilities. Specifically, the purposes of this study are to:

1. Contribute to the knowledge base on teacher education related to students with disabilities and inclusive practices, especially in countries that are in the early stages of developing and implementing inclusive special education practices, such as the KSA;
2. Identify and address challenges that teacher education programs face in the KSA with respect to preparing preservice teachers to implement inclusive practices for students with disabilities;
3. Inform KSA teacher education personnel and policymakers about the improvement of preservice teacher preparation with respect to inclusive practices and students with disabilities.

Preservice teachers majoring in special education in the KSA may finish their programs with limited knowledge of working with students with disabilities, and thus significant research can provide in-depth information concerning preservice teachers and how their attitudes align with the nature of inclusion in classrooms.

**Delimitation of the Study**

In this study, the participants are special education preservice teachers from Umm-Al Qura University. All of the participants are female because the Saudi education system is based on single-sex education. Therefore, we cannot generalize the results to other places. Moreover, these preservice teachers might have similar perspectives that may have been influenced by the university context.

**Theoretical Framework**

Four theories—social constructivism, social constructivist theory by Vygotsky, social learning theory by Albert Bandura, and the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and theory of planned behavior (TPB) by Ajzen and Finshbein (1980)—informed this research, and the data were situated within this framework. The connection between the theories and the research is vital for understanding the implications of the findings. Theories can help clarify the why and how of the study (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012, p. 13). The foundation of these key theories was useful as a guide for the study of preservice teacher perspectives toward including students with disabilities in regular classrooms. Maxwell (2013) describes a theoretical framework for the infrastructure that informs research. The theoretical framework acts as the internal clockwork
that makes the research tick because it reflects the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and axiological beliefs. Mertens (2015) proposes that the theoretical framework and the act of research engage in a yin/yang-like relationship in which the framework informs the research, and vice versa. Thus, constructivism provides the best framework for the composition and guidance of my research. To understand constructivism, it is important to consider ontology and epistemology. For Warrick (n.d.), ontology informs “the nature of being” (p.3) by answering questions related to reality. One way of understanding ontology is through idealism, which is rooted in the belief that reality is based on the concept that an absolute reality does not exist, but, rather, the observer creates reality. However, realism is the contrast to idealism. Realists assert the perspective that “the truth of real nature of things in the world in knowable in and of itself and independent of the knower” (Warrick, n.d., p. 3). The second half of the philosophical background that must be considered in constructivism is epistemology. Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge or how humans learn (Abdal-Haqq, 1998). Epistemology is related to answering questions with regard to the nature of knowledge, the origins of knowledge, and the contributions of the learner toward the development of knowledge. Constructivism is a theory of human learning that stresses the active role of the learner in building knowledge. Ultanir (2012) explains, “the learner occupies the top position rather than the teacher. The learner gains by interaction with his /her own environment. Constructs his /her own designs and finds his/her own solutions to problems and behaves autonomous and independent” (p. 205). In constructivist learning theory involves “knowledge construction rather than knowledge transmission” (Applefied, Huber, & Moallem, 2001, p. 37).

This personal constructivism is based on the idea that “development of understanding requires the learner to actively engage in meaning making” (Ultanir, 2012, p. 196). Moreover,
constructivism depends on the idea of multiple representations of reality that can be constructed. According to Warrick (n.d.),

a primary division of constructivist theory comes from between the view of the knower as an individual interacting within social structures but creating his or her reality independent of others, and the knower is gaining his or her view of reality through a socially mediated process. (p. 5)

The primary divisions of constructivism are cognitive constructivism and social constructivism (Cobb, 2005; Matthews, 2003). However, in this study, the emphasis is on social constructivism. Social constructivism is based on the belief that knowledge is constructed as a result of interaction with others. However, cognitive constructivism focuses on the individual and the innate drive to learn (Abdal-Haqq, 1998). On the other hand, according to social constructivists, social and historical contexts are what allow individuals to give meaning to their experience and ultimately develop knowledge. Abdal-Haqq (1998) defines social constructivism as “individuals constructing knowledge in a transaction with the environment, and in the process, both the individual and the environment are changed” (p. 2). Social constructivism considers that knowledge is positioned in social and cultural contexts in which the culture provides the tools necessary for development. From a social constructivist viewpoint, the ethical dilemmas raised due to the involvement of politics in the interpretive work are not a problem that needs to be solved but, rather, are seen as an experiential matter related to the relationship between the researcher and the participants. The question of “how should I be toward these people I am studying?” (Schwant, 2000, p. 203) cannot be avoided. Benhabib, Nussbaum, and Noddings suggest, “an ethic of closeness, of care, of proximity, or of relatedness” (Schwant, 2000, p. 204). Thus, I am inspired in my role as a researcher to attempt to form a trusting and caring
relationship with the participants and to be aware of the fact that my experience and the participants’ experiences are interwoven in the interpretive work.

While the participant constructs their knowledge from their prior experiences and interactions, the researcher acts as a tool to facilitate the participants’ expression of their thoughts and ideas as they undergo the self-discovery process (Macbeth, 2003). By allowing the student/participant to freely express their beliefs, the instructor/researcher will help the student reconstruct some of their preconceived values and beliefs about inclusion and teaching. Moreover, a different participant will construct a different meaning from the same experience. Presenting participants’ perspectives will allow for an in-depth understanding of how preservice teachers’ perspectives differ and how their preparation programs help (or do not help) them better serve students with disabilities in their inclusive classrooms. In this study, the researcher is not attempting to control, predict, or test the hypothesis but aims to understand and collaborate with the preservice teachers to construct a better understanding of inclusionary education.

Lev Vygotsky is one of the individuals frequently associated with social constructivism. Vygotsky emphasized the role of social context in learning. He discussed interaction with others, including normal peers, teachers, and family members in regular classrooms as a means for the construction of knowledge. Inclusion is not just supported by the social constructivist theory by Vygotsky but also by the social learning theory by Albert Bandura. A discussion of each theory of these individuals will follow.

Vygotsky articulated that students’ collaboration and interaction are important aspects in enhancing their development. Vygotsky’s theory on social development learning focuses on mental growth, which takes place as a consequence of social interaction or social interaction with others (teachers, caregivers, parents, and other family members) and without any corresponding
neurological, biological, or physiological changes. For him, all human cognitive operations constructed during development are instances of “internal reconstruction of external (social) operation” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 56). Vygotsky (1978) stated the following:

cognitive operations are initially concrete cultural relationships between people inscribed in language (more technically in the linguistic sign); children acquire these cultural relations, or sign systems, as their practices in the course of social interactions, specifically through the mechanism of speech (being spoken to and speaking); … they learn to apply these sign systems in regulation and direction of their thinking.” (p. 4)

This quotation helps describe the social nature of learning. The social theory of learning explains the social aspects of how individuals learn. Learner et al. state that “The social interaction between the child and others are a needed ingredient in learning” (p. 18). Vygotsky’s theory of cognitive development focuses on the idea that social interaction and imaginative play are significant contributors to the cognitive development of children. He explained that the social interaction that the child engages in helps him or her discover and create meaning from things that he or she discovers. Precisely, he believed that some of the most important lessons a child could experience were in the social interaction he or she has with a skilled tutor. Children will observe the behavior of the tutor as well as follow the verbal instructions the tutor provides. Then, the children will emulate what they observe from their tutor. The children will attempt to understand what they observe and the instruction they receive by copying and internalizing while learning to apply this to their own lives. Vygotsky called this cooperative dialogue. He also called the tutor the “more knowledgeable other” (p. 187). The tutor role usually involves adults; however, it can also include social interaction with other children. The critical part of the role is that the child can learn from the more knowledgeable other. Elaborative and corrective modeling
can improve the language of adult responses to the incomplete or ungrammatical utterances of children. If a child possesses sufficient linguistic knowledge from adults, this will lead the child to correct his or her speech in the direction of more accurate forms of language. Vygotsky believed that a child could learn well beyond their capabilities through their communication with others (Mahn, 1999). The social aspects of communication and learning may help the child to achieve more in some cases. Vygotsky articulated students’ collaboration and interaction as essential aspects for enhancing the learner’s zone of development. He argued that peer interactions give students with disabilities an opportunity to imitate their colleagues in regular classrooms (Shabani et al., 2010). The zone of proximal development (ZPD) highlights the importance of instructional scaffolding based on the child’s current zone of development. He also stated that childhood development is enhanced by interactions with peers through dialogue as well as the scaffolding of instructions (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Thus, for students with special needs, communication with normally developed peers can improve their development. Therefore, interactions between students with special needs and normally developing peers helps them in their development.
Figure 1. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is adapted from Lev Vygotsky, 1934, p. 432.

Bandura guides the theory by providing insight into the cognitive mechanisms utilized by agents in this production, such as “self-efficacy” (Bandura, 1977, p. 12). The self-efficacy theory defines how people think, feel, and motivate themselves to succeed (Bandura, 1994). In addition, self-efficacy beliefs constitute one major part of social cognitive theory and refer to one’s confidence engaging in specific activities that would lead to the fulfilment of particular goals (Bandura, 1994). Findings have shown that self-efficacy beliefs can help predict behaviors such as those related to whether one will engage, persevere, and accomplish one’s goals (Bandura, 1994). From an educational perspective, self-efficacy in teaching is the belief that one’s teaching can influence how well all students can learn, including special needs students. Empirical findings validate the associations between high levels of self-efficacy in teachers and openness to implementing varied instructional strategies for all students, including ESE students, and more positive attitudes toward IE (Wolters & Daugherty, 2007). This research observed the effects of school organizational and educational climates and teachers’ sense of efficacy on general education teachers’ attitudes toward the inclusion of students with special needs. The results showed that school climate and teachers’ sense of efficacy, as well as participation in special education training, were positively associated with teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion. This indicates that self-efficacy was the single most important factor affecting attitudes. On the other hand, teachers with low levels of self-efficacy in their teaching were more likely to see difficulties in learning as attributable to the child and were less willing to adapt their teaching methods to fulfill the child’s need (Wolffson & Brady, 2009, p. 228). Teachers with higher efficacy attribute students’ difficulties more to external factors than those with lower efficacy, suggesting that teachers who feel capable and confident are more comfortable in accepting some responsibility for students’ difficulties. Evolving evidence suggests that teachers’ self-efficacy
beliefs are better predictors of the attributes they uphold regarding IE than their role (for example, whether a teacher works in a learning support setting or mainstream special setting). Higher levels of belief in efficacy lead to greater effort from teachers, which, in turn, leads to better performance, again, supplying information for the formation of higher beliefs of efficacy. For Bandura, to increase self-efficacy in teachers who teach students with disabilities, it is important to provide them with good resources and support them in order to increase their confidence. He highlighted that even a teacher with a strong sense of efficacy may not perform the behavior if they have no motivation. This suggests that if there is a desire to change someone’s behavior, it may be important to provide rewards and incentives for the behaviors. Shaping the environments may encourage behavioral change. This also includes providing opportunities for behavioral change, assisting with those changes, and offering social support. Bandura stated that student learning, regarding both behavioral and cognitive learning, is attained through modeling, guidance, and observation (Graves & Ward, 2012). Specifically, students learn from “verbal instruction, live modeling by a person, and Symbolic modeling through attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation” (Graves & Ward, 2012). Thus, the notion of inclusion is strongly supported by both psychologists Bandura and Vygotsky. Bandura and Vygotsky hint that students with disabilities can learn from their normally developing peers, and it is better for special need students to be in the LRE.
The third theory is the theory of reasoned action (TR) and the theory of planned behavior (TPB) by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). Ajzen and Fishbein’s theory of planned behavior is a widely used model for determining behavior resulting from attitudes. This theory has also been used in research involving attitudes toward people with disabilities (Azjen & Fishbein, 1991). Ajzen and Fishbein believe that an individual’s intent to perform a behavior is a combination of an attitude toward the behavior, the subjective norm, and the relative significance of attitudinal and normal considerations. The theory suggests that attitudes toward a behavior may be affected by previous knowledge, experience, and newly acquired knowledge (Azjen, 1991; Azjen & Fishbein, 1977). Attitude plays a significant role in determining individuals’ behaviors (Azjen & Fishbein, 1977); therefore, it is important to learn the factors that shape the attitudes of mainstream teachers as they attempt to include students with disabilities. Precisely, this is based
on the premise that the attitudes of mainstream teachers toward the inclusion of students with disabilities are influenced by past experiences, including, for example, previous experience teaching students with disabilities, field experience in IE, and newly acquired knowledge through professional development or training modules (Azjen & Finshbein, 1991). Ajzen and Finshbein point out the theoretical variables of behavioral intention: an attitude toward the behavior, the subjective norm, and the perceived behavioral control should combine to estimate intention (Alsalhe, 2011). However, attitude is not directly related to behavior, but it can indicate something about the overall pattern of behavior. They believe that teachers’ behaviors can be detrimental as a result of their attitudes. The theory of planned behavior (1991) states that the construct of attitude is a central concept in social psychology. The decision of whether or not to exhibit conduct is known as behavioral intention, and it requires a concise plan to execute a future action. In this case, attitude may be defined as psychological and neurological disposition acquired throughout experience, which has a directional control over personal responses to every kind of circumstances that a person confronts. Thus, it is imperative to know preservice teachers’ perspectives so that they can help explain their actions toward inclusion. Odom and McEvovy (1990), Stafford and Green (1996), and Buysse et al. (1998) reported that the attitudes of program workers were critical for planning and executing a successful preschool inclusion program. Moreover, Stoiber et al. (1998) found that the third highest rated barrier to inclusion was teachers’ attitudes when 543 parents and teachers completed a scale that measured beliefs about inclusion.
Figure 3. Theory of Planned Behavior (adopted from Icek Ajzen, 1991, p. 166)

Definition of Important Terms

- Inclusion: In this study, “inclusion” means including a student with a disability at least 75% of the time in the regular classroom (Praisner, 2003).

- Special needs student/student with disability: Special education programs serve students with disabilities who qualify for one of the following categories as defined by the IDEA: specific learning disability, speech or language impairments, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD) and multiple disabilities, other hearing impairments, visual impairments, autism, and traumatic brain injury (Mercer et al., 2011). However, for the purposes of this study, the researcher
excludes attention-deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD), students with multiple disabilities, and gifted students.

- Preservice teachers (PSTs): For this study, preservice teachers are senior students who went through the practicum and are in their last year enrolled in special education programs.

- Perspective: “Teacher perspective” refers to the feelings and observations a teacher has in regard to including students with disabilities in the regular classroom. “Teachers have observed and experienced both the benefits and negative consequences the process has on the classroom as a whole” (Cassady, 2011, p.6). Moreover, this also refers to teachers’ opinions about special education for students with any form of disability (Alqahtani, 2017).
CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of special education in Saudi Arabia has been a unique process. Special education roles have been developed in a multidisciplinary manner, sometimes disconnected from personal efforts to educate students with special needs. Unexpectedly, in 2005, legislators demanded the implementation of an inclusion model for special needs students in regular classrooms. In this chapter, I will discuss the history of inclusion, the impact inclusion has on student outcomes, and the perspective of preservice teachers on inclusion. I will define inclusion, special education laws, and current disability research in Saudi Arabia. The chapter will conclude with restructures of special education systems in Saudi Arabia. This chapter is important in two ways: (a) to provide the audience (specifically educators) with information about current special education in Saudi Arabia and (b) this information is a vital piece of context necessary for the qualitative data collection in this dissertation.

History and Laws of Inclusion in the US

In 1974, there was an intense debate regarding the status and future of special education. There were primary factors that played significant roles in the decision to move from segregation to integration, such as the research failing to prove the effectiveness of special education classes; the acknowledgement of cultural bias and consequent inappropriate diagnoses of children as disabled, especially those from minority and/or disadvantaged backgrounds; the devastating effects of labeling; and court litigation establishing the right for children with disabilities to free
and appropriate education in regular classrooms to the maximum extent possible. Moreover, court decisions and state legislation were also considered the main factors that fostered the development of determining segregation. Although Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka was decided in 1954, it took until the early 1970s for the regulation addressing the concern of children with disabilities to occur.

From 1971 to 1975, there were 46 cases that focused on children with disabilities’ rights to education in 28 states. These cases established the principle that these children had the right to be taught alongside their normally developing peers. Out of all of these cases, four generated the most attention and are considered the most influential in establishing the right for children with disabilities to be educated in general classrooms. Two of these, Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1971) and Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia (1972), challenged the practice of excluding children with disabilities from public schools. The other two, Diana v. State Board of Education (1970) and Larry P. v. Riles (1972), affected the processes of identifying and labeling exceptional children. A considerable number of schools began implementing and experimenting with inclusive approaches to teaching students with disabilities. Even though success was mixed, the results were encouraging, which led to comprehensive efforts by the mid-1970s and then became known as mainstreaming. These effort, decisions, and laws, culminated in the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA; PL 94-142) in 1975, which requested schools to move the question of whether or not to how to implement inclusion. The EAHCA granted the right to (a) not face discriminatory testing, evaluation, and placement procedures; (b) be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE); (c) procedural due process, including parental involvement; (d) free education; (e) an appropriate education; and (f) individualized
education program (IEPs). However, the law did not use terms such as “integration,” “inclusion,” or “mainstream,” but it challenged every school to accept a student with a disability in general education to the maximum extent possible.

From 1975 to the mid-1980s, the world of special education did not change much, but the advocacy for those children increased in frequency. To respond to the increasing call for school reform, the regular education intuitive (REI) was formed. The goal was to combine general and special education and to create a more unified system of education (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Will, 1986). The REI is based on the assumptions that (a) special instruction is not required because students are more alike than different; (b) good teachers can teach all students; (c) quality education can be provided without the reference to special education categories; and (d) all students can be managed in general education without any segregation because segregation is considered discriminatory and inequitable. By the late 1980s, critiques of the REI and concerns emerged regarding the willingness and ability of regular education teachers to teach special needs students. Legislation continued the effort to bring more children with even more severe disabilities into regular classrooms. In 1990, the EAHCA was reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The major changes in the IDEA were that (a) the language of the law was changed to emphasize the person first by, for example, changing the term “handicapped student” to “student with disability”; (b) added conditions, such as autism and traumatic brain injury, to the list of disability categories; and (c) a plan for transition was required to be included in every student’s IEP by the age of 16.

In 1997, the IDEA was again reauthorized to protect the rights of students whose disabilities resulted from violent or dangerous behavior and to improve parental participation as well as school–parent relationships in special education. The 1997 IDEA also revamped findings
to ease the financial impact of special education on districts, while also accounting more precisely for poverty. The IEP changes now included that the goal statement be measurable to help parents and teachers determine students’ progress toward annual goals. Additionally, this reauthorization redefined the construct of “free and appropriate education” to comply with the Rowley decision of 1982 in which the court firmly explained that appropriate does not require the districts to provide the best possible education. In 2000, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (Pub. L. 106-402) amended the developmental disabilities services legislation of 1970. It called for full community inclusion and self-determination for people with developmental disabilities.

People with disabilities have the right to live in harmony with society and be productive, independent human beings. The school should help ESE students achieve this goal. The recent reforms made significant progress in policy, and there was a general acceptance of the need for affiliation opportunities for students with disabilities. Modern educators confront the increasingly high expectations for students with disabilities. For example, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), an amendment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); the Good Start, Grow Smart initiative of 2002; and the corresponding Reading First initiative (2002) were all designed to promote high standard, quality education to all children, and the NCLB developed systems for accountability for schools and school districts. The law increased the responsibility of both states and schools to ensure that programs are effective (Rous, 2004). It required that state officials monitor improvement by measuring student outcomes through state and district assessments. The NCLB contains a policy commitment to ensure that all students have a fair and equal opportunity to meet the state standards, thus aligning the requirement of NCLB with the IDEA of 2004. Schools, districts, and states had to test 95% of all students, including ESE
students in Grades 3–8, in math and reading. Both critics and supporters alike credit the NCLB for forcing attention on underperforming children. Supporters of inclusion see including children with disabilities in state testing as an important step to ensure that every student receives a high-quality education and note that collecting data on achievement is the only way to determine whether the student is progressing or the schools are doing their job. Critics explained that the law is not flexible enough to consider the individual needs of students with disabilities. Additionally, highly qualified teachers are not yet defined.

Special education is constantly changing. Integration has been a prominent theme for many years, but the last reform remains unclear (Danielson & Bellamy, 1989; Katsiyannis, Conderman, & Franks, 1995). Much is still unknown, but what is known is that inclusion appears to be something that requires careful thought and preparation. Special educators should not focus only on the access to general education but, rather, on the assurance that when inclusion is appropriate, it is implemented with proper attitudes, accommodations, and adaptations in place (Deno, 1994; King- Sears, 1997; Scott, Vitale, & Masten, 1998).

**Impact of Inclusion on Student Outcomes**

The inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms is a controversial issue and a topic of one of the most heated debates in education. Advocates for inclusion argue from a human rights perspective, stating that it is the right of all pupils to be educated in a regular classroom (Ainscow & Cesar, 2006; Frrell, 2000). They agree that all the needs of students with special needs can be met in regular education settings given appropriate planning, collaboration, and support services (Strieke & Zong, 2013). Advocates of inclusion, such as Ayres and Meyer (1992); Putnam (1993); Raynes, Snell, and Sailor (1991); and Wheeler (1991), suggest that special education and other remedial programs are not working; in fact, they are detrimental to
the social skills and developmental abilities of exceptional students. They expand that everyone involved, including teachers, principals, students, parents, administrators, and members of the local community, should adopt the philosophy of inclusion and that all ESE students can benefit from fully integrated programs (Murphy, 1996). Inclusion programs recommend strategies, such as multidisciplinary collaboration, modification of the materials and curriculum, accommodation, individualized plans, research-based instruction, peer tutoring, cooperative learning, team teaching, and disability awareness and training (e.g., Ayres & Meyer, 1992; Giangreco & Putman, 1991; McEvoy & Vandercook, 1991; Putnam, 1993; Raynes, Snell, & Sailor, 1991; Wheeler, 1991). Having an inclusion facilitator full time at the school site is very important (e.g., Ferguson, Meyer, Jeanchild, Juniper, & Zingo, 1990; Stainback, Stainback, Moravec, & Jackson, 1992). Many supporters of inclusion published descriptions of successful inclusion that employs several of these strategies (e.g., Adams, 1993; Jakupcak, 1993; McEvoy & Vandercook, 1991; Nathanson, 1992; Villa, Thousand, Stainback, & Stainback, 1992). Anti-inclusionists argue that full inclusion of the student with special education violates the existing legal mandates (Murphy, 1996). They claim that each student with a disability should receive education in a place that is appropriate to his or her needs, and this place could not be in the regular classroom. Furthermore, they claim that the functional needs of many exceptional children and children with severe disabilities cannot be addressed in regular classrooms (Sainbury, 2000; Daniel & King, 1997). Opponents insist that such students need at least some individualized instruction in a controlled environment, which can be provided by specialized training. They believe that special education classes are necessary (e.g., Braaten, Kauffman, Braaten, Polsgrove, & Nelson, 1988; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Fuchs, Fuchs, & Fernstrom, 1993).
Over the years, a large body of research has accumulated on the effect of inclusion. There are too many different and inconsistent results to draw an unequivocal conclusion. In review, most studies have found neutral or positive results of IE, but harmful effects have been observed as well (Nakken & Pijl, 2002; Lindsay, 2007). In the case of supporting inclusion, several researchers argue that integrating children with disabilities with their typically developing peers is sufficient enough to increase positive experiences of learning and socialization. Wolery et al. (1994) and Ruijs et al. (2009) concluded that inclusion has a positive effect on the academic achievement and social skills but not the social position of the special needs child.

Dessemontet and Morin (2012) studied the effects of inclusion on the academic achievement and adaptive behavior of children with intellectual disabilities and concluded that special needs children made slightly more progress in developing literacy skills than children attending special schools, and no differences were found between the programs of the two groups in mathematics and adaptive behavior. Other researchers have found that general education classrooms increased vocabulary and grammar comprehension for a teenager with Down syndrome (Laws et al., 2000). Moreover, Forman et al. (2004) evaluate the educational experiences of a student with profound and multiple disabilities in the inclusive and segregated classroom. The results show that the student in the regular classroom was involved in significantly higher communicative interaction than their matched peers in special education. This was also true for the self-concept, social position, and social participation of pupils with disabilities in a mainstream class. Additionally, Avramidis (2012) found that ESE students held a positive perception in all assessed domains of self-concept and felt socially accepted by their classmates. However, for their social position, they were less popular and had fewer friends than their non-ESE peers. Daniel and King (1997) noticed a higher gain in reading and smaller gain in
math counter to their non-inclusion peers and perceived self-esteem was lower among those placed in an inclusion classroom.

In contrast, some researchers studying the impact of inclusion found no effects or even adverse effects. For example, Saint-Laurent et al. (1993) found no difference in adaptive behavior among children with moderated intellectual disabilities in general education and those in special classrooms. Cole and Meyer (1991) also found no differences between children with severe intellectual disabilities in inclusive classrooms and those in special classrooms. Rogers and Thiery (2003) found that the reading performance of special needs students decreases in inclusive education. Fletcher (2010) also observed that the effect of inclusion of students with emotional problems could lead to a drop of approximately 5% standard deviation in math and reading.

Some researchers (e.g., Hegarty, 1993; Farell, 2000; Lindsay, 2007) suggest caution when drawing conclusions from the research base. Studies often differ in their definition of “inclusion” and rarely describe the conditions of the classroom and the kind of support received (Farell, 2000; Lindsay, 2007). Moreover, the conditions of the classrooms vary based on teacher experience, the number of students in the class, the number of ESE students, etc. Second, the comparability of the groups is often insufficient because there are differences in the type of disability, level of the disability, age of the student, student characteristic, and many other reasons (Hegarty, 1993; Farell, 2000; Myklebust, 2007). If the comparability of the two groups is not well established, there is a possibility that the better outcomes of inclusion children are not due to their placement but to their skills existing before school entry (Hegarty, 1993; Myklebust, 2007; Foreman, 2009). In fact, many studies show that students with higher IQ and high-level
functioning are more often included than lower-level children (Osborne et al., 1991; Buysse et al., 1994; Eaves & Ho, 1997; Harris & Handleman, 2000; Wendelborg & Tossebro, 2008).

**Pre-Service Teachers’ Perspectives on Inclusion**

According to current research efforts, preservice teachers have indicated that they felt unprepared for working with children with diverse needs (McKay, 2016). The dispositions, beliefs, and attitudes of preservice teachers are critical components of success or failure in inclusive classrooms (Parker, McHatton, & Crisp, 2014). Research has shown that preservice teachers have limited or no prior experience working with students with disabilities, which results in feelings of inadequacy in the classroom. The limited exposure and lack of preparation increase anxiety and fear for students with disabilities (Everhart, 2009). In other cases, teachers who had some previous experience working with or who had taken preservice courses about teaching students with disabilities were shown to be more likely to have positive attitudes toward inclusion (Dev & Hayes, 2015).

General educators often believe that lack of planning time is a barrier to success, especially if they are in a co-taught environment; they feel that there is insufficient time to collaborate with the special educator and address any behavioral issues they may encounter (Pugach & Winn, 2011). Training, specifically for inclusion, has been shown to be an effective method for improving attitudes toward IE (Forlin, 2010). It is the responsibility of universities to fully prepare preservice teachers to work with students in the classroom, as well as the responsibility of teacher credentialing agencies to ensure preservice teachers possess a professional attitude toward inclusion, in which preservice teachers are confident in their ability to meet the needs of all students (Brackenreed & Barnett, 2006).
However, many schools do not prepare their teachers to work with children with
disabilities. Many teacher education programs lack a systematic approach to preparing preservice
teachers to collaborate with their prospective colleagues (Kamens, 2007). A contributory factor
to successful inclusion is based on the teacher’s attitude and willingness to include students with
diverse abilities, as well as the teacher’s perceived confidence or sense of efficacy in being able
to work with these students (Leyser, Zeiger, & Romi, 2011). It was found that preservice
teachers’ most frequently quoted sources of anti-inclusion beliefs were supervising teachers and
other school personnel at field experience sites, as well as sources of inspiration about the value
of inclusion (Brantlinger, 1996).

As teachers must be able to come together to work with parents and all stakeholders for
the best interest of the child in an inclusive setting, collaboration and consultation between
special and general education teachers must occur to increase students’ success in inclusive
classrooms (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003).

Regarding teacher education, there must be ongoing professional learning and
development in the area of inclusion. As a result, it will lessen the resilience of educators in the
classroom. It is important to prepare preservice teachers to comprehend the complexities of
teaching and learning and to create a classroom that is engaging and interactive. A study by
Garriott, Miller, and Snyder (2003) suggests a number of preservice teachers discuss inclusion
from a values orientation, indicating that students with special needs have a right to equal
opportunities and should not be isolated from their typical peers. This allows for our
understanding that preservice teachers are able to understand, to some extent, the climate of
present classrooms. Similarly, Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) found that preservice teachers
felt that their knowledge of inclusion, along with successful inclusive field experiences, influenced their attitudes toward inclusion.

When working with diverse learners in the classroom, preservice teachers must be cognizant of their own culture and become self-reflective. Thus, they must work collaboratively with the special educator to ensure students attain their highest potential. In relation to the importance of preservice teachers recognizing their own reflexivity in their practice, the research of Garriott, Miller, and Snyder (2003) yields alarming evidence about teachers’ expressed beliefs:

The greater concern for teacher educators should be the 45% of the pre-service teachers who believe that students with mild disabilities should receive educational services in special education classrooms. The majority of these students (78%) believe that students with mild disabilities need more individualized attention than they can receive in general education settings and that students with mild disabilities might distract typical students from learning and would demand increased teacher attention. This belief often is voiced by practicing teachers and administrators. (p.23)

Evidently, there is a need to consider the attitudes of preservice teachers as they pertain to IE, which emphasizes prior research on the attitudinal impacts of preservice teachers as well as training for inclusion. While preservice teachers who are not majoring in special education may finish their programs with limited knowledge of working with students with disabilities, research is needed to provide in-depth information concerning preservice teachers and how their attitudes align with the nature of inclusion in classrooms. Accordingly, Swain, Nordness, and Leader-Janseen (2012) believe that by providing students with a range of experiences in special education, there may be a reduction in the misperceptions surrounding special education and the
complexities of the disabilities. Therefore, in the future, universities and teacher preparation programs must work on improving teacher education programs with the premise of understanding the importance of preparing teacher candidates about the history and pertinence of inclusion.

Azyoudi (2011) compared preservice teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion between Jordanian preservice teachers and those in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). He points out that there were significant differences attributed to nationality. Although both Middle Eastern countries shared many similarities, there were differences in their attitudes. It is important to mention that cross-cultural literature supports the notion that preservice teachers who have had more practice with IE have more positive attitudes toward inclusion. Thus, the Jordanian preservice teachers were more positive than the UAE preservice teachers. This interpretation seems supported by Sharma, Forlin, Loreman, and Earle (2006), who conducted a study in which the researchers compared preservice teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion and sentiments toward people with special needs from Canada, Australia, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Their study found that preservice teachers from the Western countries had more positive attitudes and sentiments toward individuals with disabilities than did their Eastern counterparts. The researchers indicate that these differences could be due to prevailing levels of implementation of inclusion and the overriding authority and policies in the countries studied. Each country had a different policy, education system, and financial support, which make it difficult to generalize findings to another. We cannot generalize other countries’ findings to this study, even if those countries share many similarities with Saudi Arabia. When making assumptions, hypotheses, or generalizations, there are many aspects and contexts that should be considered. The only relevant study the researcher could find was about Saudi preservice teachers’ perspectives on including students with
intellectual disabilities, which was written in English by Hassan et al. (2015). The study was conducted at Jazan University in 2014–2015. The study’s goal was to examine factors, such as the extent of knowledge about inclusion, disability acceptance, and interaction with children with disabilities, that affect preservice teachers’ attitudes toward including students with intellectual disabilities in regular classrooms. The findings showed that knowledge about inclusion, disability acceptance, and interaction with children with disabilities influenced the preservice teachers’ attitudes. This shows the gap in the Saudi disability research and the urgent need for this kind of research.

Teachers, either general or special, are considered the best evaluators of new programs because they hold the largest responsibility for applying programs effectively (Haimour, 2013). Recognizing the critical role teachers and preservice teachers’ attitudes and perspectives play in inclusive classrooms, preparation programs need to examine prospective teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion satisfaction with their preparation programs (Hsien, 2007). Teachers’ insufficient preparation for inclusion may hinder them from achieving effective teaching in IE (Hsien, 2007). From a different angle, teachers’ negative beliefs, dispositions, and attitudes could be an obstacle to creating effective inclusion practices (Shade & Stewart, 2001). According to Campbell, Gilmore, and Cuskelly (2003), teachers with more positive attitudes toward inclusion have more confidence in their abilities to teach students with special needs and are more willing to accommodate children’s need. Moreover, teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion and their knowledge of inclusion have been found to predict effective teaching practices in the classroom (Kuyini & Desai, 2007). More attention should be given to developing positive attitudes toward students with disabilities among teachers early in their professions (Jeon & Peterson, 2003;
Murphy, 1996). Romi and Leyser found less support for inclusion among Arab (Muslim) colleges in comparison to students from Jewish colleges.

Similar studies (e.g., Alghazo, Dodeen, & Algaryouti, 2003; El-Ashry, 2009) suggest that the overall attitudes of preservice Arab educators toward including students with disabilities in regular classrooms were negative. In recent years, efforts to improve teachers’ attitudes have emerged, indicating that positive change is possible when appropriate preparation programs are implemented. For example, Campbell and colleagues (2003) noticed that when preservice teachers were presented with research-based instruction, along with structured field experiences, they had much more positive views about inclusion by the end of the semester. Taylor and Ringlaben (2012) found that participants revealed that accepting diversities by normal peers could be promoted by educating children with disabilities in regular classrooms.

Previous research shows that teacher preparation programs can promote positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms (Jeon & Peterson, 2003; Hastings & Oakford, 2003; Sosu, Mtika, & Colucci-Gray, 2010). Therefore, promoting positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities for preservice teachers is crucial to increase their willingness to teach this population. Research on the topic will contribute to the current study and help with the sensitivity of the KSA context, particularly when the special education programs are relatively new. As the lack of research is noticeable in Saudi Arabia, this research was driven by the belief that understanding preservice teachers’ perspectives will improve the teacher education programs. For these reasons, the objectives of the current research are:

1. Contribute to the knowledge base of teacher education related to students with disabilities and inclusive practices, especially in countries that are in the early
stages of developing and implementing inclusive special education practices, such as the KSA;

2. Identify and address challenges that teacher education programs face in the KSA with respect to preparing preservice teachers to implement inclusive practices for students with disabilities;

3. Inform KSA teacher education personnel and policymakers about the improvement of preservice teacher preparation with respect to inclusive practices and students with disabilities.

This work considers one of the elements of improving learning competencies for children with disabilities. Inclusion will help a student with a special need to be an active part of society. Furthermore, Alexander (1978) and Daniels (2000) highlight a need for research that investigates full inclusion in special education. They indicate that these kinds of studies help the country resolve to create a friendlier education system, whether the nation’s special education perspective is in the advanced stages (such as in the case of the US) or the initial junctures (like the KSA).

**Inclusion in Saudi Arabia**

The KSA did not offer any special services prior to 1958. Taking care of students with disabilities was the responsibility of the family and relatives (Al-Ajmi, 2006). The emergence of special education services in 1958 began when blind students began attending schools known as “scientific institutes” (Salloom, 1995). In 1962, the Ministry of Education expanded the special services to include deafness and mental retardation (Afeafe, 2000). The number of special education schools increased gradually from one that serves the blind in the 1960s to 27 schools that serve different types of disabilities by 1987 (Al-Kheraigi, 1989), and between 1988 and
2000, the number of schools became 54. The first trial to include a student with a mild disability with their typically developing peers in 1984 occurred in a city called Alhofouf (Al-Mousa, Al-Sartawi, & Al-Adbuljbar et al., 2006). Even though this experiment fell short of implementing the crucial components for successful inclusion, it was the beginning of the practice of giving students the legitimate right to attend schools with their typically developing peers in regular classrooms. There was a shift from segregated classes to integrated ones in 1988 and 2000.

Services for students with learning disabilities were not available until 1990 because there was incomplete knowledge about learning disabilities. Now, roughly 1,417 programs offer a part time and resource room for special needs students in regular public schools (Al-Otaibi & Al-Sartawi, 2009; Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia, 2012). However, students with severe and multiple disabilities are still attending special schools (Alquraini, 2011). Still, there are no specific services provided for categories such as behavioral and emotional disorders (BED) or attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Unfortunately, these seem to be disorders, rather than a type of disability. Cushing, Clark, Carter, and Kennedy (2005) highlight that the improvement of regulation on inclusion is a significant issue in special education policy. This is not just a process to eliminate discrimination but also to enhance learning for all students. IE will support students with special needs being a part of their society and thus improve their social and learning abilities. In Saudi Arabia, there is a demand to establish laws to ensure the rights and needs of special needs students. For example, there is a need for highly qualified professionals, advanced special services, and health and transportation privileges for individuals with disabilities in the nation. In addition, there is no agreement or precise definition of “inclusion” in Saudi Arabia. For example, Al-Ahmadi (2009) defines “inclusion” how the United States defines it, which is as a service delivery model that shows commitment to meeting the needs of students.
with learning disabilities. The definitions used are rather general or inconsistent. Alkhateeb et al. (2016) point out that Saudi educators define “IE” as an approach to ensure education for all, and others identify it as teaching all students with disabilities in regular classrooms or more as educating only children with specific types of disabilities in ordinary education settings (Alghazo & Gaad, 2004; Gaad, 2001; Weber, 2012). The different meanings of the word “inclusion” confine the meaning and make it applicable only to Saudi culture. Moreover, it might confuse international researchers who are not familiar with the Arabian context and policy.

Alkhateeb, Hadidi, and Alkhateeb (2016) analyzed studies published from 1990–2014 in English-written literature on the inclusion of children with developmental disabilities in Arab countries. Their study sought to review and analyze research conducted on IE in Arab countries. The authors point out that the current research emphasizes that Arab nations are struggling to educate an increasing number of children with mild disabilities in a “less restrictive,” rather than a “least restrictive,” learning environment.

Students with mild learning disabilities receive their education in general classrooms with some help from special education services like resource rooms. These students participate in the regular education curriculum with a few modifications and accommodations. However, students with mild and moderate mental disabilities still receive their education in special classrooms in public schools. They also share some time with their regularly developing peers in some noncurricular activities, such as recess, art, and PE (Alqraini, 2013).

The schools offer special education curriculum to these learners that is different than the regular curriculum provided to their general developing peers. Students with mild to moderate disabilities also only attend elementary and middle schools. Unfortunately, they cannot attend any further education, except at some vocational training centers (Al-Ajmi, 2006). The main goal
of these centers is to provide these students with social skills and daily life and employment skills to live independently (Ministry of Health Care, 2010). Therefore, these settings have become challenged to educate students in general education settings.

Furthermore, students with severe intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia are often still taught in segregated special education institutions that do not allow them to interact with their normal peers. These institutes provide shelter, food, financial aid, and assistance to students with severe and profound disabilities, multiple disabilities, and autism. An additional important issue is that students with disabilities in these schools receive IEPs that are based on a special education curriculum that is not modified from the general education curriculum (Alquraini, 2013).

Additionally, there is a lack of specialists, such as occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech and language pathologists, who could help and assist students with special needs to reach their goals (Al-Otaibi & Al-Sartawi, 2009; Al-Quraini, 2007; Al-Wabli, 1996). Reasons for exclusion are complex and varied but are generally based on disability stigma; widespread negative perceptions and beliefs; poverty; and lack of access to education, particularly in rural regions (Peters, 2009), where schools are unwilling and poorly prepared to provide educational services for children with disabilities—according to them, the equal but separate theory is the best way teach students with and without disabilities (Al-Faiz, 2006, p.21)—and lack of effective policies and regulations, resources, and parental involvement (Alkhateeb et al., 2016).

As the diversity of children in public schools continues to increase, the number of children who do not have some special need is dwindling; however, professional educators are increasingly held accountable for the academic accomplishment of all students (Schrock, 2002;
Rogers, 2014). In efforts of teachers to prepare to be responsive to the needs of diverse students, especially those with special needs, continued research that examines factors that contribute to the success of the inclusive classroom is always needed (Leatherman, 1999).

By focusing on research that examines successful strategies for enhancing the perspectives and attitudes of preservice teachers, the quality of inclusive classrooms can be improved for both the special needs students and teachers (Leatherman, 1999). Understanding preservice teachers’ knowledge and skills related to education, specifically for the provision of support for students with special needs, can provide guidance on what areas may need to be addressed through teacher preparation programs, even those recommendations conveyed by the preservice teachers themselves (Rogers, 2014). If teacher education programs can provide prospective teachers with the knowledge and skills to effectively teach children with special needs, it can ultimately enhance their ability to teach all children well (Schrock, 2002).

**Special education laws in Saudi Arabia**

There are three primary laws supporting disabled individuals in the KSA. First, the Legislation of Disability (LD) was the first bill aimed to support individuals with disabilities, and it was approved in 1987. This law included provisions that guarantee equal privileges for all people with or without disabilities. The law also contains definitions, programs for intervention and prevention, and procedures for assessment and diagnosis to determine eligibility for special education services.

Under this law, public agencies are required to provide access, services, and modification for any attractions to make them available to individuals with special needs. Finally, the LD demanded that public agencies offer training and rehabilitation programs that support independent living (Ministry of Health Care, 2010).
The second law is the Disability Code. It was passed in 2000 by the Saudi government. It warrants that individuals with disabilities have the right to access an appropriate and free social, psychological, medical, rehabilitation, and educational service over public agencies. Furthermore, this law necessitates that these agencies support eligible people in areas such as welfare, employment, habitation, health, complementary services, and other regions (Prince Salman Center of Disability Research, 2004). The third legislation is the Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI), also known as Law Number 224. An expert from the Department of Special Education and Directorate General of Special Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reviewed the United States’ special education policies, including of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975, as well as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990. The RSEPI introduced in 2001 is similar to those US policies. This law is considered the first for Saudi learners with disabilities. The RESPI comprises the rights and regulations for a student with special needs and describes main categories and tasks for professionals who work with these students. Moreover, it defines the IEP and describes elements of the IEP and the people who should be included in planning and offering the IEP. The law includes evaluation and examination procedures for a student to decide whether they are eligible for special education services. According to the RSEPI, all children with disabilities should have free access to suitable education, IEPs, early intervention programs, and transition services. The RSEPI did not leave out the importance of inclusion; it stressed the need for teaching students with disabilities in the (LRE; Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia, 2002). Additionally, it stated that students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities should receive their education with their normally developing peers in regular classrooms to the
maximum extent of their abilities (Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia, 2002, p. 22) Thus, the RSEPI supports the quality of special education services in Saudi Arabia.

Briefly, these policies support free and appropriate education for students with special needs. Even though these laws were passed years ago, they are not implemented in the real world with special needs children. In fact, the lack of proper practices has created a gap between the framework and the delivery of services, leading to a lack of services for some learners with disabilities.

**Disability research in Saudi Arabia**

Disability is a complex and multidimensional challenge. It can significantly limit a person’s activities and integration into society. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), almost 15% of the world’s population lives with some type of disability, of whom 2–4% experience substantial difficulties in functioning (Al-Jadid, 2013). In Saudi Arabia, it was thought that the number of persons with disabilities was quite low; however, there is no specialized institute for dealing with collecting data, such as those in the US, where specialized studies offer a good basis for understanding disability statistics. There is limited reliable information on disabilities, such as numbers, amputee population, and type of disability or geographical distribution, in the annual report of the Ministry of Health. There is underestimated data on disabled persons because most of the specialized organizations became more sensitive in reporting the statistics due to security reasons. Families feel ashamed for having a person with a disability in their family and, as a result, tend to avoid revealing information related to their loved ones and do not participate in such research (Al-Gain et al., 2002). Furthermore, another major problem in Saudi disability research is that there is no standard measure to assess or identify the degree of disability. Altamimi et al. (2015) synthesized Saudi special education
literature written in English, and the study yielded 116 publications in English over the last 44 years. This review illustrates that disability research in the KSA can be described as being in the developmental stage. According to Levin, O’Donnell, and Kratochwill (2003), there are four stages of educational research.

![Four Stages of Educational Research](image)

**Figure 4. Four Stages of Educational Research**

The findings suggest that research in the KSA is still predominantly in the first stage as described by Levin et al. (2003). It is thus implied that the research in the KSA needs to move beyond the first stage into the intervention research, classroom experiments, and effectiveness. In summary, the review reported that there is a lack of published research on disability in the KSA. Still, research is needed to plan appropriate management programs, effective implementation of primary prevention strategies, and proper allocation of health resources (Al-Jadid, 2013; Almimi
et al., 2015). Odom et al. (2005) suggest single-subject design research that might be a better fit for special education given the fact that there is a difficulty using experimental group l design. This synthesis found the non-usage of single-subject design in Saudi research, which is contrasted to the international trends (Horner et al., 2005). Therefore, adopting such a research design may be the catalyst needed to propel educational research beyond the first stage in the KSA (Altamimi et al., 2015).

**KSA and US Special Education Laws/Regulations/Statistics and Research**

Both the IDEA and the RSEPI have the same goal regarding providing free and appropriate education for special needs students. Both legislations required schools to provide IEPs, transition services, related services, and early intervention programs. Furthermore, both regulations demanded that schools educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment as possible. Additionally, the school should offer all the alternative placements, such as regular classrooms, resource rooms, and special classrooms, in a regular school. The RSEPI defined and provided a general background for key terms in special education similar to the IDEA. Moreover, the IDEA and RSEPI explain procedures that should be considered by a multidisciplinary team to determine the eligibility of the child for special education services (Alquraini, 2013).

Table 1

*Comparison Between the KSA and the US*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>IDEA in the US</th>
<th>RSEPI in the KSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (age of the children that should be eligible for the special service)</td>
<td>Birth to 21 years old</td>
<td>Dose not determined (Alquraini, 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories of special education</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They consider they are deficient more than having a disability.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the comparison above, it is clear that there are a variety of issues related to the implementation of the RSEPI. Further complicating the situation is the fact that there is a lack of an accountability system that investigates the implementation of the RSEPI requirements and a lack of family awareness of their right to demand better education for their disabled children. Murry and Alqahtani (2015) highlight that preservice teachers do not have a good knowledge
base but want to know more about the laws of special education and the implementation of such laws in schools. It was also found that preservice teachers who will have special need students in their classrooms have not received more than cursory information in their preparation programs on the subject.

**Restructuring the Special Education System in Saudi Arabia**

At the beginning, the special education program developed separately from the general education program. The special education department at Umm-Al Qura University advocated special education philosophy and practices more in line with recent international standards and changes taking place globally. The IE movement in the United States began to impact Saudi education. The Salamanca Statement of Action on Special Education by the United Nations in 1994 recommended that all students with special needs have full access to regular schools and be taught in classes using child-centered pedagogy. Thus, the combination of global and local events led to new special education administration and the bringing of reform. In 1995, the General Secretariat of Special Education (GSSE) initiated major reform in the special education system in Saudi Arabia. A graduate of Vanderbilt University and a blind professor, Nasser Al Mosa, took office in 1995 and began the call for action and changes influenced by the American special education philosophy. This led to changes in two ways: (a) the adoption of the philosophy of inclusion making regular school available for special needs students and (b) providing special education services, including identification for students with learning disabilities, speech and language impairments, and emotional and behavioral disorders (Al-Mosa, 1999). Specifically, it aimed to reform neighborhood schools to provide appropriate education for ESE students and, when appropriate, unite, rather than segregate, ESE students from their normally developing peers. The GSSE adopted the practice of cascade of services
proposed by Deno (1970) to end the sharp separation between general and special education. The philosophy of the GSSE aimed to create regular schools that value all learners, irrespective of their diverse needs, and to increase the effectiveness of the general education system in responding to all learners. However, due to the long history of separation between special and general education, special education reform has proceeded gradually, maintaining a continuum of special education services and progress toward mainstreaming. Inclusion has three goals. The first states that the general classroom should provide special education services, when appropriate. Thus, the GSSE establishes special education in regular school in various forms, which include: (a) self-contained classes within a regular school, (b) resource rooms, and (c) itinerant teachers and consultants. The second goal involves a transformation of special education schools’ and institutions’ roles to accomplish two functions: (a) to serve students with multiple and severe disabilities that regular schools are currently unprepared to serve and (b) to make special education institutions serve as resources for local inclusion programs and as professional development centers for teachers. The third goal aims to develop special education professions in various specialized areas by increasing local training programs and through sending more Saudi students abroad. In the United States alone, there are 105,992 currently studying and 6,034 new students, and 12,829 already graduated in 2015–2016 (General Authority of Statistics). In education, there are 393 new students and 4,386 currently studying, and 938 already graduated in 2015–2016 (General Authority of Statistics). To a large extent, the reform has accomplished its goal of moving students with special needs into regular schools and, to some extent, into regular classrooms. The effect of reform can be seen through the analysis of the growth of special education in the KSA. In 1995–1996, 48 schools were serving 4,828 students, and only 12 self-contained classrooms in a regular school were serving 380 students.
After the enactment of the GSSE plan, the number of special education classrooms in regular schools increased to 390 in 2000, to 1,073 in 2002, and to 2,435 in 2014–2015 (Ministry of Education). The overall number of students receiving special education services increased to 5,208 in 1995–1996, to 20,000 in 2002, and to 31,355 in 2014–2015 (Ministry of Education).

**New development in Saudi Arabia**

The special education system in the KSA had experienced a slow era of development. Currently, the country’s system is attempting to align with the global changes in educating ESE students. Since the initiation of the KSA’s social and economic development plans after September 11th, the focus has changed from imparting Islamic values to replicating values such as those reflected in the NCLB legislation. It was required that policies regarding education be altered and that the curriculum exclude subjects that stress extremism (Prokop, 2003). The evaluation of the curriculum has been demanded by officials from within and outside the nation to refrain from introducing such a concept in the classroom (Mathis, 2010). The Saudi government is focusing on providing modern and appropriate wellbeing means for people with disabilities to help them adapt to society and their environments. In 2007, King Abdullah introduced the Tatweer project to reform the Saudi educational system, and the project aimed to promote high-quality education for all students (Tayan, 2017). Under this project, there was a call for IE for special needs students, greater authority was given to schools, and principals became responsible for distributing school schedules, rotation, testing, and evaluating teachers’ performance and school activity. In addition, teachers’ roles became more active in both teaching and learning processes. Teachers were allowed to engage in extracurricular activities. With more authority, principals became more supportive of teachers and students, while teachers became more encouraging of the learning processes (Alyami, 2014).
The vision 2030

In 2016, Mohammed bin Salman launched “Vision 2030,” which is considered Saudi Arabia’s newest regulation. The king’s son and defense minister, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, is repacking policies that most international countries have been developing for years now. Most of the plans are not new, but they reflect the long-term drive for reforms that have gained fresh urgency from the next generation of leadership. Saudi Arabia will accelerate reforms in education and will coordinate activities with all stakeholders in education through a wide range of programs by, for example, reviewing Saudi education policies and reorienting formal education systems (Ministry of Education). Recently, the Ministry of Education has been working on the outcome of schooling through implementing the educational reform plan (Saudi Vision, 2030), which consists of 12 goals. Goal number nine of the National Transformation Program (NTP) has to do with enabling students with disabilities to receive an appropriate education and to ensure independence and integration into society (Al-Assaf, 2017).
CHAPTER THREE:  

METHOD

This study examined the attitudes of preservice teachers as they pertain to IE and their perspectives about how teacher preparation programs could effectively prepare them to teach students with disabilities. Specifically, the purposes of the study were to:

1. Contribute to the knowledge base of teacher education related to students with disabilities and inclusive practices, especially in countries that are in the early stages of developing and implementing inclusive special education practices, such as the KSA;
2. Identify and address the challenges that teacher education programs face in the KSA with respect to preparing preservice teachers to implement inclusive practices for students with disabilities;
3. Inform KSA teacher education personnel and policymakers about the improvement of preservice teacher preparation with respect to inclusive practices and students with disabilities.

Therefore, the study was guided by three research questions:

i. What perceptions do Saudi special education preservice teachers have related to the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms?

ii. What explanations do Saudi special education preservice teachers give for their beliefs about inclusion?
iii. What recommendations do Saudi special education preservice teachers have for their preparation programs to help them better serve students with disabilities in their classrooms?

**Research Design**

The study utilized a qualitative interviewing design approach. Interviews help to explore perspectives of individuals’ lived experience after they are exposed to a concept or construct (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In this study, the construct of inclusion was used. Moreover, interviews gave the researchers various opportunities to understand and help others make sense of specific events and subjects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), specifically an informative analysis of teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion. These questions enabled us to describe issues that were non-directional that were being investigated and allowed the outcomes to appear as the facts were being analyzed (Association for Qualitative Research, 2000).

Thomas (2006) argues that the inductive approach “allows research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies” (p. 238). The data were organized by first condensing the raw data into brief summaries; next, categories were established based on the data and the brief summaries were linked to the research objectives; and finally, the emerging themes were highlighted, along with patterns of response or trends. A process known as member checking, or information feedback, was used, which made the findings more valuable and credible. In the study, member checking meant that the researcher shared the initial transcript with the participant in order to have them explain any confusion and change identifiable information that might have affected the participant’s privacy. The important aspect of member checking was the credibility of the outcome. The member checking made the findings deduced credible because all
the members agreed on the interpretation of results. Moreover, member checking facilitated significant contributions as the recommendations provided by the respondents were practical. In their application, those recommendations improved their preparation programs.

**Research Setting**

The study was conducted via Zoom, and there were no specific rules, except that the place must have possessed good Internet connection and was quiet enough to have allowed the researcher and the participant to communicate clearly. Zoom allowed for a full range of graphic and text exchange. Like Skype and ooVoo, it allowed for an interview to be very similar to face-to-face interviews. To date, Zoom even works in rural areas, such as Makkah, where the Internet connection is weak. Additionally, anyone can use Zoom from their phones or any platform, which made it easy for participants who did not have laptops. Moreover, the program did not come with any cost for use. The way it worked was first, the user downloaded the program, and then they clicked the invite button, which sent a link to the participant’s email. The participant then clicked on it to join the interviewer and begin the meeting. It was a very easy process to learn and follow. To record the meeting, the user simply clicked on the recording button, and it recorded the interview and saved the file in the Zoom folder on the user’s computer.

**Umm Al- Qura University**

In 1949, King Abdulaziz established the College of Shari’a (Islamic Law) in Mecca. The college was the first higher education institution in the country. In 1952, the teachers’ college was established, and in 1959, the College of Shari’a took the responsibility of teachers’ preparation and became the College of Shari’a and Education. In 1962, the college of education was established as an independent college, and it was a part of King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah. However, the University of Umm Al-Qura was established in 1981 by royal decree.
number 39 of 1981, and the College of Shari’a and Education was detached from King Abdul Aziz University and joined by the new departments to form the new university. Today, the university offers more courses in such diverse subjects as business, technology management, medicine, engineering, marketing, Islamic economics, architecture, as well as various applied social and engineering sciences.

**The Department of Special Education at Umm Al-Qura University (UQU)**

The Department of Special Education at UQU was established November 21, 2011. The department is considered one of the newest departments in the KSA as the study began in the department during the first semester of the academic year 1432–1433 (2011–2012). The department offers the following tracks in the special education major:

- Intellectual disability
- Learning disability
- Autism
- Hearing disability

The department of vision is a leading academic model in the field of special education and is in line with latest international and scientific developments. Moreover, the department aims to be an outstanding institution at the local, Middle East, and international levels that is committed to meeting community requirements effectively. The vision will be accomplished through its mission. The department mission has three dimensions:

1) Preparing teachers to be distinct academically, behaviorally, and educationally
2) Conducting national research projects at national and global levels
3) Providing community services effectively
Participants

The participants of the study were seven Saudi female preservice teachers from the special education program, and there were three interviews conducted for each participant. For the participant to have been eligible, they needed to be a preservice teacher, trained to be a special education teacher, and have been through the practicum course or still be taking the practicum course. All participants in the study were students from the same university. It was a purposive sample and voluntarily based on time convince for the participants.

In order to recruit participants, I contacted the special education department, and I sent them an email containing the IRB approval and the consent form in Arabic and English. Then, the department sent emails to all of the students that qualified for my study requirements. The researcher received about 20 emails, but 10 preservice teachers volunteered. However, only seven finished all three interviews. The preservice teachers identified the date and time to meet. I spent about 2 months to complete my entire interviews with seven preservice teachers.

The preservice teachers were from the University of Umm Al-Qura. Five of them have been through the practicum course, and two are still in it. All of them had little to no experience before the practicum. Table 2 is a description of my participants including name of participant, disability category they were assigned to teach, number of days per week, number of students, and type of school.

Table 2

Participants’ Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hadeel</td>
<td>Intellectual disability</td>
<td>4 days/week</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Regular school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ranim</td>
<td>Learning disability</td>
<td>4 days/week</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Regular school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basma</td>
<td>Hearing impairment</td>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Special school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maha</td>
<td>Learning disability</td>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regular school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eahid</td>
<td>Intellectual disability</td>
<td>4 days/week</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Regular school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amal</td>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>Regular school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tala</td>
<td>Intellectual disability</td>
<td>4 days/week</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regular school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection

Exhaustive interviews were used as the primary data collection method. An in-depth interview process was selected because it gave the interviewees a chance to share their thoughts and experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). According to Creswell (2013), interviews are one of the significant tools for gathering data. The interview protocol consisted of questions used to learn more about the participant’s perspective (provided in Appendix A). The interviews conducted were three per person and took between 30 minutes and 1 hour, conducted by the researcher. The researcher chose three interviews per person to build a genuine report and gather a thick description meant at increasing the validity of the research. Interview questions were used “to encourage people to talk about their experiences, perceptions, and understandings rather than to give a normative response, company line or textbook type answer” (p. 135). Typically, qualitative interviews are much more like discussions than formal, structured interviews, and they are often referred to as a “conversation with a purpose” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). This open-ended and romantic interview was used in the study in exploring the preservice teachers’ perspectives on inclusion. The interviews were embedded in the “romantic”
conception of interviewing. By building genuine rapport and trust with the interviewees, the researcher better generated the kind of conversation that was intimate and self-revealing (Roulston, 2010). The objective of the interviews was to understand how preservice teachers felt about having children with disabilities included in general classes. In the first interview, the researcher asked the participants general questions related to their background. For instance, questions asked included: “Tell me about you,” “Why did you choose this field?” and “How many students with special needs are in your classroom?” Gradually, the questioning moved on to the topic, and the researcher then gave a general idea about the research interest and the rationale for choosing the topic. The first interview was vital because the questions enabled us to describe issues that were non-directional that were being investigated, and it allowed the outcomes to appear as the facts were being analyzed (Association for Qualitative Research, 2000). For the second interview, the researcher asked guided interview questions that dealt with preservice teachers’ perceptions, explanations, and program recommendations, as well as questions related to the nature of the inclusion of students with disabilities. The third interview was a follow-up intended for clarifications and questions that the researcher had generated due to the participants’ responses. For instance, questions, such as explain the “extent of” or “describe,” were used to further prompt the interviewee to engage in further clarifications when it was necessary. Follow-up interviews were scheduled for the participants who misunderstood the questions or provided unclear answers, so the researcher asked questions that were meant to elicit detailed elaboration on the answers given (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

In the present study, the interview protocols were guided by the research questions. The questions were reviewed by former doctoral students and university advisors to make sure that the information gathered was clear. In qualitative research, the researcher was not only guided by
the original research questions but also by the themes emerging from the data. Hatch (2002) highlights that qualitative interviewing involves creative acts of changing and reforming questions asked, depending on what is learned or fails to be learned in a situation. The interviewee answered the researcher’s questions before the researcher asked them and, in some cases, took the conversation to different directions that were not anticipated but still proved to be important. Furthermore, being a qualitative researcher, I approached the participants in a way that allowed for changes in the questions in order to accommodate emerging themes while maintaining the overall structure (Hatch, 2002). Merriam (2009) argued that it is crucial to record interviews to improve the quality of the data retrieved. It was difficult to record the interviews, but the researcher used the recordings to understand the interviews at a later time. In order to obtain the best quality information, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings immediately after each interview (Rubain & Rubin, 2011). The researcher took notes during the interviews for the purpose of allowing the interviewer to take note of the non-verbal cues of the interviewee. Finally, participants had the opportunity to check the transcript of their interviews, along the first interpretations made by the interviewer, for the purpose of providing feedback to the researcher (Creswell, 2007).

The participants in the study were assured confidentiality, which meant that identifiable information would not be disclosed in the presentation of the study findings. Additionally, participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Moreover, the researcher offered a mentoring relationship in which the researcher answered participants’ questions and concerns raised during the interview process.
Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the general inductive approach. Inductive analysis refers “to approaches that primarily use the detailed reading of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through analyses made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher” (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). The reason a general inductive approach was used was to allow the data to develop into consistent and significant themes. In the approach, the researcher began with an area of research and allowed the theory to materialize from the data. One characteristic of the qualitative research is that data analysis “happens while data are being collected as well as after the evaluator has left the field” to help the researcher to deal with a large amount of information (Bikle & Bogdan, 1986, p. 98; Creswell, 2002; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996). Thus, Glensne (1999) suggests two stages for qualitative data analysis. First, early data analysis: this phase assists the researcher with focusing and shaping the incoming data by recognizing the general and holistic meanings and themes and grouping them (Corbin & Strauss, 1998; Harasymiw, Horne, & Lewis, 1976; Layder, 1982). The second phase of the data analysis is based on the results of the first phase in which the researcher connects pieces of the raw data, discovers how information fits together, and fully synthesizes the raw data to discover where the real meaning resides (Biklen & Bogdan, 1986; Eaves, 2001; Foucault, 1983; Kirk, 1964; Rueda, 2005; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) mentioned that even though the general guidelines for qualitative data analysis are equivalent, the analytical procedures are different for each study depending on the purpose of the study, the research design, and the training.

The qualitative data analysis for the study was adapted from Creswell, who highlights the three branches of qualitative analysis: data conclusion drawing/verification, reduction, and data display. The researcher listed and grouped primary data from the transcript and the notes. Then,
the researcher removed all overlapping, repetitive information, and vague expressions. After eliminating unnecessary information, the researcher went on to cluster the remaining data into a thematic label. The finalization of the themes occurred when the researcher went back to the full transcript and noted whether any expression was made explicitly or was compatible with the responses. Each validated theme was then synthesized and then structured to explain the phenomena. Once emergent themes were acknowledged, the researcher used the themes to create categories from the categories; the researcher then interpreted the data in determining the way emergent themes helped to respond to the study’s research questions.

1. What perceptions do Saudi special education preservice teachers have related to the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms?

2. What explanations do Saudi special education preservice teachers give for their beliefs about inclusion?

3. What recommendations do Saudi special education preservice teachers have for their preparation program to help them better serve students with disabilities in their classrooms?

For the data management, the researcher took notes during the interview and wrote a memo. According to Patton (2002), due to the rationale of qualitative researcher responses to changes and emergent issues, and also because the

researcher analyze what is not said as what is said, memos enable them to note the unspoken while still in the filed … and track one’s thinking, make one attentive to process and give one idea to make ideas cohere…” (Biklen & Bogdan, 1986, p. 99)

Memos allow the researcher to remain as transparent as possible by keeping personal feelings, beliefs, and thoughts separated from the raw data of interviews. The notes taken during the
interview and memos written were compared to the transcriptions made, and after this was done, a coding process followed (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

For the analytical process, the researcher began with open coding. Open coding defined and categorized the data (Charmaz, 1998). It involves a close reading of the data and line by line coding. The goal for the line by line reading of the transcript was to generate code, names, or categories that accounted for the data under analysis. The close reading of the data opens up the text, revealing thoughts, ideas, and meanings contained within (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The codes used in the thematic units came from the participants’ words or phrases, known as in vivo codes. For example, the researcher used some of the participants’ repeated words as code that shredded common characteristics under one category. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) explain how in vivo codes can help beginning qualitative researchers to code, and it gives honor to the participant’s voice. When the codes began to accumulate, the researcher grouped related codes that shared some common characteristics under one category. After categories were formed and emerging themes were identified, the researcher then examined the cases in a bid to identify categories and themes that were common among participants. Constant comparative analysis was used by the researcher in which she returned constantly to the data to verify the emerging categories and to examine and compare themes for similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). When the comparison did not yield any new categories, the researcher stopped the process of coding and began writing the report.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness takes the place of validity in qualitative research. Credibility and transferability are used to explain the validity of the research (Merriam, 2009). With respect to
credibility, triangulation of data is one of the most prominent ways to increase credibility. Generally, triangulation means using different resources to verify the authenticity of each resource (O'Leary, 2012). Triangulation gave us the opportunity to present the results with “rigor, breadth complexity richness, and depth to any inquiry” (Denzin, 2012, p.3), which added to the credibility of the findings. In the process known as method triangulation, member checking was used. In the study, member checking meant that I shared the initial transcript with the participant to agree that every word written on the transcript were theirs, and participants explained confusion and changed identifiable information that might have affected their privacy. Moreover, after the coding presses, the codes were shared with a peer who is a Ph.D. student at the University of South Florida. The codes were explained with some quotes to the peer, and their feedback was received. Based on the peers’ feedback, themes were created. Transferability is the extent to which findings might be applicable to other contexts and can be achieved through providing a rich and thick description (Tracy, 2010). In the study, I provided rich descriptions and recognized my ability to make the tacit knowledge explicit by the providence of a thick description of the interview process and by the in-depth way I monitored who spoke, what they spoke about, and even who did not talk and what was not said.

Ethics

Ethics in research involves maximizing good and minimizing harm. Thus, preventing or reducing harm means protecting participants’ rights and applying appropriate principles. Generally, ethical principles focus on autonomy, beneficence, and justice (Capron, 1989). Autonomy is the respect for the participant and their rights. For this aspect in the study, I told my participants what the research was about and answered all of their questions and concerns. I also let them know their right to withdrawal from the research at any time they wanted. I also used
consent forms. In qualitative research, the use of consent form fulfills the autonomy condition (Kvale, 1996). When it comes to the beneficence, the researcher must be aware of the consequences and potential harms. For beneficence, I was careful with presenting results that did not expose participant identities or identifiable information that might have jeopardized participants’ jobs, lives, and positions. The principle of justice refers to fairness and equality. For this aspect, I did not take advantage of participant vulnerability. In fact, my relationship with them was friendly and like a coaching relationship, where I responded to their concerns and questions regarding teaching in inclusive schools and studying in the United States. I acknowledged participants’ contributions and effort by sharing the results of the study with them. Implementing those principles was not easy. Interviews may raise unpredicted ethical dilemmas, and when it comes to online interviews, it is even harder because until now, there has been no formal guidance for conducting an online interview or Internet-based research (IBR; Markham and Buchanan, 2012). Not having a formal guideline was the first ethical issue for me because it was based on personal tuition and experience with the regular type of interview. The process of getting the ethical approval from the IRB at USF was harder because I was required to get the Saudi university’s approval by one of the institutional review board (IRB) members; however, it turned out that it was not required. There are numerous gray areas in ethical decision-making when it comes to the digital world and making a decision as to which sets apply, especially when one set conflicts with another (Markham and Buchanan, 2012). The lesson obtained from the presses with the IRB was that the IRB deals with Internet-based research on a case by case setting, and it might not consider a regular case. Ambiguity and uncertainty form part of the process, and multiple judgments are possible.
CHAPTER FOUR:
FINDINGDS

The purposes of this study are to:

1. Contribute to the knowledge base of teacher education related to students with disabilities and inclusive practices, especially in countries that are in early stages of developing and implementing inclusive special education practices such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA);
2. Identify and address the challenges that teacher education programs face in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with respect to preparing pre-service teachers to implement inclusive practices for students with disabilities;
3. Inform KSA teacher education personnel and policymakers about the improvement of pre-service teacher preparation with respect to inclusive practices and students with disabilities.

Therefore, the study was guided by three research questions:

*RQ1. What perceptions do Saudi pre-service teachers have related to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom?*

*RQ2. What explanations do Saudi pre-service teachers give for their beliefs about inclusion?*

*RQ3. What recommendations do Saudi pre-service teachers have for their preparation program to help future teachers better serve students with disabilities in their classrooms?*
The researcher contacted the special education department at the University of umm-Al Qura and sent them an email explaining the purpose of the study, the study criteria, and the consent form in Arabic and English. Seven pre-service teachers (PSTs) agreed to participate in this study. All of the pre-service teachers took their practicum in inclusive schools except for one pre-service teacher (PST) she was in special school for students with hearing impairment. Three pre-service teachers (Hadeel, Eahid, Tala) had worked with students with an intellectual disability, two (Maha and Ranim) had worked with students with a learning disability, one (Basma) had worked with students with hearing impairments, and one (Amal) had worked with autistic children. None of the PSTs are currently working except for Amal, and she has been working for 8 months. Also, none of the pre-service teachers had any experience before the practicum except for Amal; she is the only one that was volunteering before the practicum course. During the practicum, Hadeel, Eahid, Tala, and Ranim attended the school 4 days a week; Amal and Mi twice a week; and Basma attended the school one day a week.

The analysis of the data began with addressing each research question, identifying themes and analyzing each theme and subtheme. It should be noted that initial analysis took place in Arabic before translation into English to ensure that meaning was not changed due to language translation issues. The researcher translated the quotes and asked a native graduate student from USF who is a fluent in both languages Arabic and English to translate the quotes. Then the researcher compare the quotes and met with the native graduate student three times for at least three hours to discuss translations to choose the English words that best represented the participants’ words and meaning in Arabic. Both the original Arabic quotes and the English translations are included throughout this chapter. Findings are discussed according to each research question. Quotes are included that support the core of each theme connected to the
Research Question 1: What Perceptions Do Saudi Pre-service Teachers Have Related to the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in the General Education Classroom?

The aim of the question was to know PSTs’ perspectives about inclusion and if any differences in perspective exist for the purpose of enhancing the knowledge base on teacher education related to students with a disabilities and inclusive practices especially in countries that are new in joining the inclusion movement. One theme emerged from responses to the questions: Negative perspectives toward inclusion. This theme is described below along with the participants’ quotes in Arabic and English.

Theme: Negative perspectives toward inclusion

All of the pre-service teachers expressed that they did not think it appropriate that students with disabilities were included in the regular classroom. However, some said that inclusion might not be appropriate for some of the special needs students but could be for some special needs students. However, they insisted that it is better for the special needs student to be in a special classroom in a regular school which is the situation is now in Saudi. They stated that it is better to include them in non-curricular activities only.

Ranim: “I actually like the system that we have where the learning disability students have access to the resource rooms and are included into the regular classrooms. And the mild intellectual disability students are in schools that have special classes. An example with us is a student with Autism in the regular classroom and around other students but has an assistant with her. This student has only a mild disability.”

Eahid: “Like what we already have, the students are in a special class in our school I mean as they are in special class in regular school.”
Hadeel: “It's nice how they are now in their own class but included in assembly, recess, lunch with their classmates because it will be hard on them academically in regular classes. She will feel like she is less than her classmates but when she is with other students with ID she feels that she isn't behind. I feel that if she doesn't respond with a regular answer if she's with the other students unlike with students with ID because then she won't feel like she is missing out.”

Tala: “I mean, like, if they include them in recess and leisure time but including them during regular educational teaching (studying) no of course not and it is better that they are separated, or we can integrate them in non-curriculum activities.”

Basma: “There are some students who are not accepting of special needs students. Hmmm, I feel like the students will be overwhelmed for example once me and my friends are talking in class in front of the students with hearing impairments, the students don't want to talk to each other through sign language because they might feel like their shy. I wasn’t sure what was wrong with them and ... there other girls in other classes where my friends were teaching the girls were crying, I didn't understand what was happening.”

Amal: “Ummm, I didn't think that all of them, some of them, maybe. I feel like if they were included there would be a problem instead of us fixing the problem.”

Maha: The student’s health, education and rehabilitation, I see greater improvements without inclusions.”

The pre-service teachers believe that the needs of these students would be difficult to address in the general education classroom. Thus, they assert that the special needs classroom can accommodate and fulfill the students’ needs. Two of the pre-service teachers explained that the special needs students can ‘find themselves’ in the special classroom.
Ranim: “Honestly, I feel that if I took the student out of her classroom, she very very happy, because she feels that she isn't learning in the regular class. When I take her out and take her with me responds in a positive matter as she replies and asks questions and also I give her praises, gifts and stickers which makes her so so happy that she is with me in the resource classroom. Another situation is when two students with LD in the same class, when I go and take one of the students, the other student will say 'me too me too' because she too wants to come with me. I feel like that they found their happiness, that someone understands, a person that treats them right, so they want to leave each time, to our resource room. A third example is we have a student who comes to our office every single day, every single period and asks us when it is her turn to come to the resource room, and we would tell her ‘not your time, not now.’ She feels that she doesn’t belong there upstairs in her classroom and she loves us and the other special needs students and wants to be around us.”

Ranim: “Ah, yes because when the students are in a regular classroom they are in higher education standard compared to the special needs students. When they are placed in these classrooms they don’t benefit from the classroom and would be better if they are in a special class, or partly included with their classmates; they will be more relaxed and advance their educational goals, that’s what I have witnessed a lot.”

Another pre-service teacher commented that special needs students are victims in the inclusion classes and that General Education Teachers (GET) treat them in a way that destroys them.
Ranim: "Secondly, the teacher’s attention, energy, and praising to one student, the student feels that they found someone who understands them, they don’t feel like someone is yelling at them, won’t focus on their weaknesses, don’t understand them clearly. The teacher doesn’t understand. They don’t understand, for example, when the teacher punishes them in a harsh treatment, it will ruin the student."

Three pre-service teachers stated that inclusion could have negative effects on students with disabilities. They gave an example of students without disabilities making fun of students with disabilities and it negatively impacting the teased students’ self-esteem and confidence.

Hadeel: "I feel it doesn’t work like I don’t know how to tell you, it just doesn’t work. The special needs student’s self-esteem will go down. They will see other students reply in class when they can’t reply. I feel like it doesn’t work. Maybe it would work if there was an inclusion only in recess and non-academic subjects."

Maha: “Maybe if there were special needs students in a general class if they had a problem and didn’t understand something they will feel shy to say that they don’t understand, due to the other students understanding and he doesn’t. He will see himself as lower and affect his confidence. Unlike when he is with a teacher that understands him and students at the same level as him, have students similar to him, and be at the same IQ level, then he would be comfortable to ask questions and say he doesn’t understand. My opinion is that he will learn more in specialized classes.”

Maha: "They have started to include the students only for the morning assembly. When we go back to class, the regular students will chase after the special needs students and tell them mean words.”

Ranim: "...The regular students will bully LD students and even LD students who are considered normal or close to normal. Those students will say things like ‘Get away from them, they are
special needs; they are stupid and retarded.' Especially if the student is hyperactive or diagnosed with ADHD, they hurt them more.”

Research question 2: What explanations do Saudi pre-service teachers give for their beliefs about inclusion?

The aim of the second question was to explore pre-service teachers’ explanations of holding a certain perspective. Several themes and sub-themes emerged that are related to the reasons for not favoring including the student with a disability in the general education classroom:

1. Reasons related to the student with disability condition and personality
2. Reasons related to school
   a. The number of students in the classroom
   b. Lack of resources and facilities
   c. The lack of preparation, awareness
3. Reasons related to the university
   a. Short practicum
   b. Insufficient knowledge
   c. The lack of communication and collaboration between university and schools
   d. Limited number of university adviser

Theme #1: Reasons related to the student with disability condition and personality

Pre-service teachers mostly agreed that the decision of including students with disabilities in the general classroom should depend on the severity of the student’s disability and the
student’s personality. Students who had behavior issues and were disruptive, having low IQ and severe cognitive impairments, aggressive or who are a danger to themselves or others were said to be better served in special classes; the following quotes exemplify their thinking.

Ranim: “No no no negative. Even though she has an assistant that sits with her, her situation is still difficult. She won’t be able to be included with the normal students even if her disability is very mild. But the effects of Autism will show behavioral issues, like hits her head on the tables and walls runs around in class and then throws her body to the floor. Even if her parents have faith that she will get better, it still isn’t safe for the student with a disability to be included...”

Hadeel: “Like I feel the teacher will focus more on her then the other students won’t be comfortable in the classroom because of the special treatment” (The researcher asked, “why they didn’t feel comfortable?”); Hadeel responded, “For example, she will do something that will bother the other students because even if her behavior is modified she will still show hyperactive behavior.”

Hadeel: “It depends on her IQ level, if the level is not low then there is no problem to include her with the other students. If it was too low, then I feel like it will not work if she is included.”

Eahid: “The reason is some of them do not have behavioral issues, but around other students, their behavioral issues will pop out of nowhere, for example, there was a calm student but when she leaves my cousin tells me that this girl tries to scare them. I didn’t know why, maybe the other students were bothering her, but if the parents want them in the inclusive classes then the parents need to modify their behavior and make a plan so that they stop doing this...”
Basma “There are students that I honestly believe that they can be in regular classes because they do respond quickly, praise God. For example, there are some students who responded with me so fast like she has no disabilities, the only thing is that she has a less serious hearing loss. If they were completely deaf then they could include them in only a short period then take them back to their special class.”

Amal: “From the behavioral point of view, he shouldn’t have any behavior issues like aggressiveness, violence, or any kind of these behaviors. From the intelligence point of view, the kid should be at that level of the IQ, so that he doesn’t feel like he is lower than them or that he is missing from something. He should have the IQ level where he will be able to learn.”

Tala: “Their abilities are so low we cannot manage them; it will be extremely difficult. Also, if you put them in the regular class which already has a large amount of the other normal students, imagine if you include the special needs kids it will be impossible to manage all.”

Basma: “I don’t think that all of them, maybe only a half of the special needs. In the class that I was teaching, there were two special needs students that seemed very normal, God blessed them, but the rest of the students feel uncomfortable and like to be by themselves. Even when the supervisor told me that the students with hearing impairment feel like that they are right, and the normal students are wrong… they aren’t wrong… hmm, I’m not sure how to explain it. Normal, understand… for example, when they do a sign they want all people to learn sign language, instead of having them learn to speak. Like they don’t want to learn; they don’t even want to move their lips when they sign. It could help, but they don’t want to.”
disabled I don't think it would work. If there was a special ed teacher working alongside with the regular education teacher, maybe. But if there was one teacher, I feel like it would be hard.”

Theme #2: Reasons Related to School

Large Number of Students. The public schools in Saudi Arabia have a large number of students in regular classrooms. Thus, two pre-service teachers believed that the special need student would not get the attention they needed, especially with the large number of students in the inclusion classroom.

Maha: “I'm not sure, but I feel the concept of the inclusion doesn’t convince me. Honestly, the inclusion won't improve the special needs students to reach their goal, unlike the special classrooms can help them accomplish. If they were in a special center with a special need student, they could reach more goals than being in a normal class.” (The researcher asked, “why? what’s the reason?”); Maha responded, “Hmm, when they are in a special class the focus will be on them more, but when they are in the normal classrooms there isn’t a specialized teacher; the teacher will give extra care, they will just treat them as a normal student. Also, there are more students in the regular class but in the special class, there is less so there is more attention on the students because there is a one-on-one with the student and designed a plan for the student—all her attention [is] on his skills, weaknesses, strengths. Unlike if the teacher was just lecturing to the whole class.”

With an increased number of special needs students, one pre-service teacher questioned how many special need students they would accept in a general education classroom. There are a
lot of special needs students in the special class and the Special Education teacher cannot deal
with them, so bringing even more students into a general education setting would be even more
difficult.

Eahid: “I mean if they put them together, the teacher won't have time. To be truly honest, the
teacher already has 15 students and is too much for even a special class. The teacher won't even
have time to focus and create a plan for each student. Imagine if they put them with the regular
class. They used to as teachers take 2 or 3 students of these special needs students and make
them IEP plans and I feel that in itself is unfair because each student deserves a plan. I have said
this before to them, but I don’t blame them because there are so many students.” (The researcher
asked, “do you mean the number of special need students or the regular students were a lot for
the teacher?”); Eahid responded, “I mean the special need students are a lot for the teacher. If
we have a special class not make plans for every student. God knows, what will happen if they
put them with the other regular students. Would they give attention to every single one of the
special needs students in the class? And work with them individually in the regular class?? Yeah,
I don’t think so.”

Lack of Resources and Facilities/Infrastructure. The pre-service teachers highlighted
that the school wasn't ready in every respect to including students with disabilities. Schools lack
materials, and necessary resources to accommodate all students. One pre-service teacher
explained that they don't even have a curriculum to follow. She drew the attention to the
curriculum/educational resources that they cannot use or follow. Usually, the curriculum is not
suitable for the special needs student. There is no accommodation it needed to change or greatly
adapted and simplified.

تالة: " زي كذا، بس الشيء اللي هوا ما في منهج تمام يعني الكتاب في كل المواد انتي لمن تيجي تتصفحه شوفي كيف
اعطيين ما في شي هان يعني انتي لازم تروحين تدوري وانتي اللي تجيبين معلومات ايش اعطوني وتسبيليها قد ما تقدر و
تعطيين أيها، ما تحتاج على الكتاب لا متصلين أنا في دروس كثير أفتح الكتاب ما في شي ما في حاجة لازم اروح النت وادور
المعلومات و اسويا عرض بوربوينت مدني ايش وأروح أقدمها."
Amal: “Not once do I feel like that they are implementing the plans with modernized technology you feel like it is all old fashioned.” (So the researcher asked, “like what?”); Amal responded, “Until now I don’t see any improvements in the study materials. Like when I was working in the school, they didn’t have any new gadgets to use for teaching, no modernized material. They had an old chalkboard, no modern technology, nothing.

Amal also stated that “The whole responsibilities were on us as teachers; we would need to supply them with the resources. It is all out of our pocket, the school didn’t supply us with any materials, and they didn’t have anything for us. It felt like it was a regular school with nothing specialized for the students. They just handed us a room, with nothing.”

Further, there was concerned regarding the school infrastructure and the school building. Two pre-service teachers pointed out that an environmental necessary for better inclusion was missing.

Amal: “From the infrastructure, it was a typical public school building. Also, another thing is there was a girl with behavioral issues where she would throw herself and there was no safe environment. They didn’t put into consideration for the special needs students. Even the stairs are dangerous where there isn’t anything adapted for the special needs students. It isn’t only a problem with the one girl, but there were the other students with intellectual disability. They just put them all together in one school without any accommodations for the special needs students.”

Tala: “But the thing is that there is no great curriculum for the special needs students. Like the book used at school, for all the subjects, when you go to open the book, you will ask yourself what will I give them. You would have to research and look and then simplify the topics for them. You cannot depend on the book to teach them. When I open it for any subject, I would have to go online, look for the information create PowerPoints and present it to them.”

The other pre-service teacher expressed the lack of modern equipment like a smart board.
Tala: “Yup, if there is a student with ID and physical disabilities, they won't be able to be included in the regular classroom. The problem is the stairs, so they just keep them on the first floor because of their wheelchairs. Because the school itself is not prepared to have students with disabilities in their school. In public schools, there isn't even a way to go upstairs, like elevators, to connect them with the other students.

Moreover, there was a lack of human resources. There were specific concerns regarding the availability of specialists, for example, a nurse, doctor, psychologist, and a speech therapist. Pre-service teachers highlighted the need for a special education team to collaborate and help the students.

Hadeel: “I will try to act independently, but when [there are] epileptic seizures or any other health issues I feel like there should be at least an on-campus doctor. Or a professional that is educated in these medical issues so that they can come to their aid. They should also have counselors working in the schools. In my first two weeks as an intern, a girl had a seizure which caused chaos, teachers and the principal running around, people saying give her water let her put her feet up, if only there were someone who had a little bit of knowledge to help her. A doctor someone certified, there should be a specialist when they want to have this inclusion!”

Tala: “We did everything, except the behavior modification plan, I swear we didn’t know how to do this because this should be the role of a specialized psychologist. The school needs a counselor and a whole special education team. The school should have the staff to help with the plan…”

One pre-service teacher stated that there is not just a shortage of specialists but also of special education teachers.
Maha: “Maybe due to that they only have a few special ed teachers. I have seen that there were a few special ed teachers. There are only a few! They don’t have specified professionals for every type of disability. For example, they don’t have a teacher assistant, and they also have LD teachers teach slow learning students. There aren’t enough teachers at the school.”

A further challenge identified by the pre-service teachers was that there was a shortage of qualified special education teachers. The recruitment of special education teachers was not based on any special criteria or requirement.

Amal: “Ah, see that the morning centers there are some that work great with the students but there are others that do a bad job with the students. The [thing that is] wrong with the morning centers is that most of them do not employ a person who is specialized; they employ a person with a high school diploma. When I was studying in my junior college [of] year, I used to volunteer in these centers. They were awful; they hired a person who isn’t qualified and doesn’t know what is wrong with the student and how to behave with that student. The student had sensory issues—he would get annoyed with loud sounds, he would cover his ears, and then she would make it worse by yelling at him because she has no knowledge about how to work with him. Instead of fixing the problem, she makes it worse.”

Tala: “Some of them have experience and others have a major in math and they put her with the special needs students. When we were interning and the supervisor asked us about our experience and some pre-service teachers would say that if a girl wouldn’t sit down a teacher would tie them in their chairs. This is how you know that they are not qualified for this position. Why would they tie the students? If she was a special ed teacher, she would never have done this. This teacher must have majored in history or math, not in special ed.”
The Lack of Preparation, Awareness. In addition, most of the pre-service teachers' responses revealed concerns that regular schools lack preparation, awareness, and as a result are not accepting students with disabilities. Unfortunately, the pre-service teachers explained that the school's teachers showed negative perspectives toward difference and disability and that this had an enormous impact on the school ethos and climate.

Ranim: "I see that the special ed students that are included, do not benefit, because most regular teachers have misconceptions on the special ed student. When I went to take the special ed student from the regular class, I feel like the others around her including the teachers doesn't even want the ESE students with them. This girl used to be 3 years in intellectual disability and they transferred her to learning disability and the same teacher would tell the girl, 'You didn't read the story!' This story was around a page and a half; this girl was still learning the letters of the alphabets. She would tell me, 'Take her take her she hasn’t been reading from the beginning of the year.' This girl is an introvert and very shy with no self-esteem. She has learned a lot of bad behavior from the intellectual disability students. What I want to say is that the regular education teacher refused to work with me when I asked to take the special need student out of class to cooperate with me. Even when the student isn't happy with that teacher or they would respond with take her and take all the students because they all have LD. I feel like the teachers don’t understand what LD means. There come regular education teachers who tell me come to take a look at one of my students, she has 'sleeping disability.' Can you believe she told me this? They have no background about students with a disability."

Maha: "First of all, I feel like the regular education teacher is not convinced. In her eyes, she sees that we have no impact. Do you know what I'm saying? The regular education teacher will say to me, 'this is the students' ability and you can't even help her improve. You are holding me back when you take her from the middle of class.' Also, when the special ed teacher praise the special needs students the other normal girls in the classroom will make a problem with the teacher and want a gift too. The regular teacher would get very bothered that we gave the
special need students a gift.”

**Theme #3: Reasons Related to the University**

**Short practicum.** All of the interviewed pre-service teachers were dissatisfied with the level of training they had in their teacher education program. One of the reasons for feeling ill-prepared is that the practicum was short.

Basma: “No no no, never. Unfortunately, I feel like... I feel depressed. I don’t want the certificate, I want to start over because the college didn’t prepare me.” (The researcher asked, “why?”) Basma responded, “Well, I swear, I felt like the school failed to prepare us.” (the researcher asked, “who did the university fail?); Basma responded, “I feel like I just did it without any struggle, maybe it was just me, it felt it was chaotic because I would go to the practice once a week for one class. For three whole months, I wouldn’t even exceed 10 hours of implementing.”

Amal: “First of all, I don’t work with the student from the beginning to end, so I didn’t see an accomplishment. If you work with the student from A to Z then you would see myself grow cuz I only have one class for one hour [only worked with them twice a week].”

Eahid: “To be fair, not that much. Like I told you the program didn’t have us go to schools and practice what we learned, therefore, I didn’t feel like we had accomplished anything. I mean, after we finished the practicum, I learned a little bit from my mistakes, but the program has not prepared me to become qualified, no.”

**Insufficient Knowledge.** Participants also reported that they had insufficient knowledge and experience. Of the pre-service teachers, 6 out of 7 pointed out that there was a lot of repeated information in different books, which left them feeling frustrated.
Ranim: “Honestly, everything was repeated. Most of the professors followed the plans as it is so I felt that it was very repetitive. Even the professor’s got bored with it—same book, same information, same topics, same definitions, the same diagrams, and same teaching techniques. Everything, everything was the same, same thing. Even the projects are given in class, it would be a research or a presentation and most of the students would just do the presentations.”

Hadeel: “I feel all the courses in my major just repeats itself. Like if I took one class I would see the same thing in another class. Some classes would be more detailed but in the end, it’s all the same.”

Eahid: “No and no. Unfortunately, there isn’t one course. It’s true I do leave with new information, but it didn’t help me in the practice. Not at all, For example, there is a course called How to Design Activity for Students with Special Needs. It talks about the importance of doing activities with students with disabilities. There is another course called guidance it was about a walkthrough of students with disabilities issues and symptoms of intellectual disability, it felt like a review of the other classes I took. The teaching methods were the same, same information, definitions, same ideas, same kinds of symptoms reasons, which was just repeated. The courses didn’t teach us how to work and make activities and plans. In the beginning, it was helpful but after many years it was repetitive with no new ideas, nothing to implement in our work.”

Maha: “The one thing that I did benefit from was in the first two years where I actually felt like I learned new things, but in the last two years I felt that it was repetitive of the same classes and topics. I've already seen this information before, I've taken them in the previous classes” Also Maha illustrated: “for example, definition of special education and types. Under each type, there are subtexts, that only a few were new, but honestly, it was information I have already learned. The sources are so similar that they all start with definitions in the beginning and types
of disabilities, which we already know. They should give us something new, for those four years I learned theoretical things, as I told you, it was only the first two years that I actually had learned something.”

Amal: “When we were learning we didn’t go every semester to visit schools, it was only in the last semester that we went to experience, the rest just. Information, information, information and it was the same thing all over again, nothing new, I just got bored. Every semester that I take, the course was just like the courses I took the semester before, nothing new.”

Tala: “It isn’t the same book, another book, but with the same information. What you find in one book, you will find it in another book. The professor will say that because our major is new that’s why it is repetitive. In another course, you will take the same as the other. The only difference is the title. They would just add like one new topic, add a small extension to what we already know, so we cannot complain that is the same thing. They would give you a new piece of information and tell you to memorize it.”

Moreover, the pre-service teachers pointed out the differences between the books they were reading and the reality (the actual class where they were teaching). They explained that while they knew that teaching and classroom management strategies were required for effective teaching and learning in the classroom, they found them difficult to put into practice.
schools. When I first saw a girl, she had LD and ADHD, like I was shocked that she had both. I was teaching her, and she doesn’t understand. I would see the teacher talking to her and trying to explain the lesson and by the end of the class the girl still didn't understand a thing...”

Eahid: “Honestly at school I didn't feel like I accomplished much especially in behavior modification I didn't feel I accomplished because it was one girl even though I used much techniques but I didn't feel I modified her behavior I didn't feel I accomplished especially in the behavioral modification plan it was because of the time and we didn't know what is required from us we know there is a behavioral modification Plan but we don't know how to implement it ... we study it before but it is different.”

Amal: “My first point is that they should have taught us the material in English, another point is that at university they should use programs that measure the strength and weakness of the students with a disability. An example is one program called ‘Hal’ and ‘Portage’ should have been taught at the universities. I wish that the schools had helped us more with these things because they didn’t prepare us and just gave us examples of programs and just told us what they are but didn’t explain how to use it. I independently went out of my way to attend workshops and lectures. I feel like this is the job of the university because not all student can afford to go. The university should have told us how and what and with whom can we implement these strategies to/for.”

Maha: “The reason behind our issues is that we didn't have practical application, but when it came to when we had to do it, we wrote plans and proposals, however, it wasn’t real. We just imagined the situation where we had a case to make up. There was a course called Case Study, we didn’t have a case, we should’ve but the professor told us to enter the fictional world and make up the disability, symptoms, and techniques to deal with it and to teach them. The professor had helped us a little bit with the plan which made it easier on us...”
Basma: “Thing is reality is different than the coursework, when the professor lectured us on the features of the special need but when it came for us to use it in a real-life experience it was completely different.”

The Lack of Communication and Collaboration between University and Schools.

Further, participants commented that there was not any communication or collaboration between the university and the schools to enhance the pre-service teachers’ experience. The pre-service teachers expressed the desire to access such training and felt that the administration should provide an opportunity for receiving such training. Four pre-service teachers talked about the difficulties they faced in schools because of the lack of communication and collaboration between schools and the university, preservice and in service, general and special education teachers.

Ranim : “Oh, honestly , there was a lot of time wasted in the school I mean for example the university didn’t tell the school administration that they shouldn’t give us a substitute role ,where we just stayed with students who did not have class that day, more than three periods or two periods because as soon as we come they would ask us when do you have classes ? And, I would say something like the first and the second period and they would say you are going to substitute the third and fourth period but why? My colleague is after me and she is going to teach the third and fourth period and also the in-service teacher is teaching and I want to learn from them how they teach and what their strategy is. Can you imagine I just observed one period and then I started teaching”
Amal: “The university advisor came only once and ask about general school problems we might have.” (then the researcher asked, “did you do the IEP plans and strategy by yourself?”); Amal responded, “The advisor had asked us to put together a portfolio that the advisor is supposed to look over, but the school teacher graded the portfolios instead. and even though we followed the advisors guidelines and requirements the school teacher wasn’t impressed with any of our work so we didn’t implement the plan as we supposed to.”

Basma: “mmmm….I swear I cannot think if there were any difficulties. only that I had a short amount of time that I could spend with the students and for them to respond to my teachings. Or maybe because I didn’t develop a relationship with them because I only taught them once a week and the school didn’t allow us to sit with the students outside of class time, even if there was no lesson that day.”

Two preservice teachers said that there wasn’t any collaboration between in service and preservice teachers.

Tala: “They were supposed to be working alongside us, when we started our internship, the teachers stopped their duties and put all the responsibility on us.”

Another two preservice teachers also stated that there wasn’t any collaboration between the general and special education teachers. They explained that the general education teacher was even crude

Ranim: “The general education teacher tells me that LD student isn’t allowed to leave class and head to go to the resource room. She feels that the LD student is skipping class, especially if they are one of the quiet students. But when it is an active LD student, the teacher is elated and would say something like “take her, get her out of here” which leaves the student embarrassed.”
Maha: “Also, the general education teachers see me come take the students as a special needs teacher, she will give me a hard time or create a problem with the student.”

Maha also commented that she wish if the general and special education teachers could work together to improve all students.

Maha: “Ohh, like I said, if there is a special edu teacher and general teachers co-teach and work on a lesson plan, it will be better for the student. But like I said, what I saw at school, I feel like that the student won’t get to reach his goal because of inclusion. They might learn but I don’t think that it would get the most from It. I know that inclusion Is the right thing, but ideally it won’t work for their rehab and development.”

A Limited Number of University Advisers. The limited number of university advisers impacted the number of visits done to evaluate the pre-service teachers and to provide them with feedback. Four pre-service teachers mentioned that the university adviser came only once to the school.

Maha: “The university supervisor didn’t come to see us only once, she just came to check if there is an issue with the school. For example, if there is a problem we are facing or if we had any questions. She checked what is going on, and told us that she will come to evaluate us or give it to the school teacher to do so. In the end, the university supervisor didn’t come again and gave the evaluation to the teacher. The supervisor just went by the teacher’s evaluation.”
Basma: “She came only once to check what is going on. She checked on us only towards the end of the semester. I wish she came towards the beginning so that I could have had feedback to follow. The evaluation she gave me is she told me that I should raise the volume of my voice more when I am lecturing and I should also use my voice with sign language appropriately. The reason is that I was trying to memorize the sign language because I didn’t have enough experience to use more sign language. Yes, I used to study the signs but only simple words. (The researcher asked, “so the real issue is that the supervisor didn’t have enough time?”); Basma responded, “My supervisor, god bless her, was helpful, but her time with us was so little because we were so many students so she couldn’t give each student a detailed preview on their evaluation.”

Tala: “Secondly, the university supervisor should try her best to come and watch us, before she evaluates us before she evaluates us only once. However, my supervisor never showed up... She let all her evaluation on my file, She didn’t come see me, that isn’t right. The right thing to do was for her to organize her schedule and make time to see us. It is true, we are a lot of students, however, there should be more supervisors. Because there is so many of us, there should be more supervisors. In our university, there are only two Intellectual disability supervisors. They won’t have time to see us all. What they should do is increase the number of supervisors...”

Amal: “She came only one time, only once, just checked up on us. Then we sorted our portfolio like there wasn’t any preparation, feedback, or any guidance from the university. An also, the school was supposed to show us the right thing when we make mistakes, so we learn from that, right? However, the school teacher didn’t give us any feedback on it and she makes us do what she wants.”
Research Question 3: What Recommendations Do Saudi Pre-service Teachers Have for Their Preparation Program to Help Future Teachers Better Serve Students with Disabilities in Their Classrooms?

The purpose of this question was to investigate pre-service teachers’ suggestions/recommendations to improve their teacher preparation program and eventually the service provided to students with disabilities. The themes emerged related to this research question:

1. More hands-on experience.
2. Spreading awareness

More hands-on experience. The need for more relevant training and field experience was highlighted by all of the pre-service teachers. All of the pre-service teachers agreed on the need for more field experience. Lack of experience can be easily overcome with opportunities to gain experience. Training can go some way towards closing the experience gap.

Ranim: "Yeah, as I have said, we need an intensive experience in this field. Honestly, I felt like the book was very repetitive, I would see the same chapters same topics. Right now, I'm taking Introduction in ID. Before, I had taken a curse called Evaluation and Diagnoses. The introduction has an entire chapter called Evaluation and Diagnoses, this chapter was so long. Just this chapter was about 150 pages, but the professor said no because she is required to follow the curriculum. We had to study it which made me feel depressed and bored of it."

Hadeel: "Most of the material in the courses was repeated a lot. There was the same information in every course. I mean, the information was useful but it only let us find more experience so that we could practice it in real life. I feel like if I had that opportunity to meet the students and know..."
about them, see cases, then I would have benefited more than just passive learning. I wasted four years sitting in a desk at the university being fed information over information.”

Maha: “My experience? I swear I don’t have any experience to begin with. I wish the university had let us go out and experience before we took the practicum. I wish I had more hands-on experience more than theoretical. Theoretical knowledge has no value compared to the implementation and experience. I’m not sure, I wish we had an intensive experience so that we had more of a direct contact.”

Eahid: “I think in Riyadh, but I think they have practicum every semester or every year. Therefore, they study and work, study and work, study and work, I feel like this would be so nice that they get to make a connection with their experience with what they are learning. They are learning the right way. When it is paired together, their education comes out amazing.”

Basma: “I wish if only I had practicum every day, like my sister she would go every day to a kindergarten public school. I feel like she has more experience than I do because I only had the chance to go once a week.”

Amal: “Ahh, from the implementation view, I feel like if I had the chance to implement every semester, we would have the opportunity to see cases and be exposed to every disability so that we had the experience to work with them all.”

Tala: “Yup, they should have put our weight grade on our first experience, they should have let us experience more before the practicum. So that we could see if we could teach if we could do
Spreading Awareness. This refers to raising awareness for inclusion as well as wider cultural changes regarding how to individuals with a disability are perceived. Four pre-service teachers suggested not rushing the implementation of inclusion in schools without implementing all the steps for successful inclusion and starting with preparation and awareness.
own two eyes, a girl with LD wanted to participate in a song during the class party. The girl was saying that she knows the song and wants to join but the teacher said that she can’t be involved because she is LD. She was crying and telling me ‘please talk to my teacher let me join’ but I couldn’t do anything because I wasn’t her teacher and in the end, she didn’t even get to participate in the song. How do we include them? This student only had LD what if she was intellectually disabled. The teacher themselves should be educated and aware.”

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of the study was to explore pre-service teachers’ perspectives toward inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Seven pre-service teachers were interviewed in this study. A total of six main themes emerged that addressed the three research questions. The first research question was about pre-service teachers’ perspectives toward inclusion. The central theme from the finding was: Negative perspective toward inclusion. All of the seven preservice teachers were less favorable of inclusion.

With respect to the second question, the preservice teachers explained why they hold that perspective. The interviewed pre-service teachers pointed out three main reasons sported their perspective. The first theme was related to the student with disabilities condition and personality. Preservice expressed their concerned about including students with severe disability and behavioral problems. The second theme was related to schools. The preservice teachers explained the obstacle they faced in schools such as a large number of students in the classroom, lack of resources and facilities, and the lack of preparation and awareness. The third theme was related to the university where the preservice teachers talked about the short practicum, insufficient knowledge, the lack of communication and collaboration between university and schools, a limited number of university adviser.
The third research question was about pre-service teachers’ recommendations to improve teacher education programs and as a result of that better serving student. Two themes emerged from these interviews. The first recommendation from the preservice teachers was the need for more hands-on experience. All of the preservice teachers highlighted the need for more hands-on experience and how it could affect their growth and learning experience. The second recommendation was spreading awareness. The preservice teachers stressed the need to raise awareness at schools first starting from the principle to staff workers.
CHAPTER FIVE:
DISSECTION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore pre-service teachers perspectives toward including students with disabilities in the regular classroom. Three research questions guided this study:

1. What perceptions do Saudi special education pre-service teachers have related to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom?
2. What explanations do Saudi special education pre-service teachers give for their beliefs about inclusion?
3. What recommendations do Saudi special education pre-service teachers have for their preparation program to help future teachers better serve students with disabilities in their classrooms?

This chapter provides a discussion of study findings, limitations of the study, conclusions, implications, recommendations for future research, and reflexivity.

Discussion

Negative Perspective toward Inclusion

For the most part, pre-service teachers in this study negative perspectives toward inclusion. Two pre-service teachers believed that the needs of students with disabilities would be hard to address
in the general education classroom. Moreover, they asserted that special classrooms would fulfill the student’s needs. This finding aligns with the literature related to inclusion in the KSA, which indicates that Arab pre service general education teachers have a negative attitude towards including students with disabilities in the regular classroom (El-Ashry, 2009; Romi & Leyser, 2006). Research from scholars in the United States also suggests that many pre/ in – service general/special teachers expressed concerned related to inclusion which effect their perspective negatively. For example, Rakes, Noggle, and Shah (2018) found that preservice teachers from both general and special education program lack understanding of inclusion and those preservice teachers feel the need for additional development to be prepared to teach in an inclusive setting. And even after decades of efforts to accept inclusive education, studies have consistently shown that preservice (Adel, 2015; Allday, Neilsen-Gatti & Hudson, 2013; Kiloran, Woronko & Zaretsky, 2013) and in-service(Tiwari et al., 2015,p. 129; Alur & Timmons, 2009; Singal, 2008) general education teachers feel unprepared to fully accept including student with disability. Thus teacher preparation programs need to provide more courses and field-work related to inclusion and effective inclusive practices. Preservice teachers in both general and special education programs need a greater number of placements in inclusive classes for longer periods of time in order to have ample opportunities to develop and refine their inclusive education knowledge and skills. For example, Clson et. Al. (2017) found that when PST is more engaged in field experience, they are more positive and accepting of inclusion. This finding is interesting because the assumption is usually that special education preservice teachers have more experience and practices enabling inclusion; however, the result of this study and previous research (Gehrke & Cocchiarella, 2013; Gehrke, Cocchiarella, Harris & Puckett, 2014 ) revealed
that special education preservice teachers are concerned about teaching in inclusive settings and
do not feel well prepared to do so.

The previous literature indicated that positive change could happen for pre-service
teachers’ perspectives toward inclusion if they were offered coursework (Andrews &
Clementson, 1997; Wilczenski, 1993) and field experiences (Rademcher et al., 1998; Reber et
al., 1995) in inclusive settings. However, the pre-service teachers in this study had little to no
contact with students with disabilities through their education prior to their enrollment in their
only practicum and they did not have proper preparation to implement inclusive practices or
strategies through their coursework. Therefore, the negative perspectives towards inclusion by
the participants in this study could be due to limited or nonexistent preparation for pre-service
teachers to acquire inclusion competencies.

Pre-service Teacher’s Explanations

The second research question explored pre-service teachers’ reasons/concerns for holding a
certain perspective toward including student with disability. Several themes emerged from the
data regarding this research question:

1. Reasons related to the ESE student’s condition and personality

2. Reasons related to their school context
   a. The number of students in the classroom
   b. Lack of resources and facilities
   c. The lack of preparation, awareness

3. Reasons related to their preparation program/university
a. Short practicum
b. Insufficient knowledge
c. The lack of communication and collaboration between university and schools
d. Limited number of university advisers

**Reasons Related to the ESE Student Condition and Personality.** Findings from this study indicate that pre-service teachers were concerned about including students with severe disabilities. They also showed concern for students with specific kind of disabilities such as intellectual disabilities and hearing disabilities. Students with emotional and behavioral disorders were also less favorable than students with mild learning disabilities. This is not surprising because teachers have been and continue to oppose including students who they deem to be difficult to teach in their classrooms (De Boer et al., 2011; Alghazo & Gaad, 2004; Avramidis et al., 2000). The severity level of the student’s disability appeared to determine teachers’ level of support of inclusion (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Pre-service teachers in this study believed that students with less severe disabilities needed fewer accommodations or modifications of instruction and curriculum consistent with previous research. For example, Cook (2002) found that pre-service teachers showed more positive attitudes toward including students with learning disabilities as compared to students with behavior disorders, intellectual disability, and multiple disabilities. Avramidis et al. (2000) found that that pre-service teachers reported to be more stressed when they had students with emotional and behavioral disorders in their classroom compared to students with other disabilities. Gerber’s (1988) tolerance theory provides an explanation for these findings, that teachers are more tolerant and accepting of students with mild disabilities because of the common belief that they require less instructional modifications.
According to tolerance theory, teachers are less tolerant of students with severe disabilities because they require more instructional modifications.

**Reasons/Factors Related to the School Context.** Pre-service teachers have listed many factors that have hindered the implementation of inclusion in schools and those factors led to their negative perspective. Those factors include the lack of resources (educational materials and human resources) and facilities, the large number of students in the classroom, lack of preparation and awareness. Pre-service teachers expressed their concern about the absence of key factors for successful inclusion, for example, the lack of appropriate materials and equipment, well-trained school personnel, facilities, awareness and preparation, and the large number of students in the classroom. Those pre-service teachers voiced that knowing what to do was important but not sufficient. In fact, pre-service teachers in this study were very critical of the services provided to students with disabilities in the general education school. Inclusionists have published descriptions of successful inclusion that use several different strategies such as multidisciplinary collaboration, modification of materials and curriculum, individualized plan accommodation, research based instruction peer tutoring, cooperative learning, team teaching, disability awareness and training (e.g., Giangreco and Putnam, 1991; McEvoy and Vandercook, 1991; Raynes, Snelland, Sailor, 1991; Wheeler, 1991; Ayres & Meyer, 1992; Nathanson, 1992; Villa, Thousand, Stainback & Stainback, 1992; Putnam, 1993; Adams, 1993; Jakupcak, 1993). Alzyoudi (2006) identified a strong relationship between having enough resources (educational and human resources) and the success of inclusion. He found that educational and human resources and school premises are among the factors influencing the successful implementation of inclusion (UNICEF, 2010).
Further, two pre-service teachers in this study believed that the number of students in the regular classroom was too many; thus, it would be challenging to implement inclusion in such a classroom. Previous research suggested that teachers might be willing to educate student with disability in their classroom if the class size was controlled. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) reported that having fewer than 20 students in the general classroom would facilitate inclusion efforts. The results from this study suggest that support services are vital to the way that pre-service teachers view inclusion as successful or not in practice. Evidence has shown the relationship between teachers “beliefs and commitment to inclusion and the support they receive” (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Kruger, Struzziero & Vacca, 1995; Smith and Smith, 2000).

Moreover, two pre-service teachers highlighted the necessity of having an appropriate school building. Al Mousa (2010) and Gaas (2011) acknowledged school building problems. The researchers explained that Saudi Arabia had a major project underway and the fast and rapid expansion of the special needs population has been too fast and too large for the Saudi education system to match. Right now in Saudi, political changes might be a major cause, for example, changes in the law demanding that student with disabilities be included in public schools have been enacted without giving schools enough time to prepare. As it stands, schools do not have licensed special education teachers who are capable of assisting these students (Alahmadi, 2009).

Pre-service teachers in this study agreed that public schools were not prepared. Two pre-service teachers highlighted the importance of awareness and having supportive leadership and an accepting environment in the school. Those pre-service teachers explained how teachers were not collaborating and have a lot of misconceptions about special education. Unfortunately, many schools did not prepare teachers to work with students with special needs. An important factor contributing to the success of inclusion is based on the teachers’ attitude and willingness to
include students with special needs as well as teachers’ confidence and self-efficacy in being able to teach these students (Leyser, Zeiger & Romi, 2011). It was found that pre-service teachers’ most frequent quoted sources of anti-inclusion beliefs were supervising teachers and other school personnel at field experience sites as well as sources of inspiration about the value of inclusion (Brantlinger, 1996).

**Reasons Related to their Preparation Program/University.** In this study, all of the pre-service teachers had a short practicum and they had limited to no prior experience working with students with disabilities. All of the pre-service teachers expressed the need for training. Al-Ahmadi (2009) points out that Saudi teachers lack quality preparation when it comes to teaching students with disability. Lack of preparation and limited exposure increases anxiety and fear of students with disabilities for teachers (Everhart, 2009). Indeed, previous research has shown that teachers who have prior experience or have taken special education courses related to teaching students with disabilities in inclusive setting are more likely to have positive attitudes about inclusion (Dev & Hayes, 2015). Similarly, Al Quraini (2011), Alfaiz (2006) and Sl-Abduljabber (1994) found that more experienced teachers showed more positive attitudes than those with little to no experience.

Further, in this study, almost all of the pre-service teachers pointed out that a lot of information was repeated, unrelated, insufficient, and there was a gap between the research and practice. In agreement with this study’s findings, Leathrman and Niemeyer (2005) found that pre-service teachers felt that knowledge of inclusion along with successful inclusive field experiences influenced their attitudes toward inclusion. Teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion and
knowledge of inclusion have been found to predict effective teaching practices in the classroom (Kuyini & Desai, 2007).

Also, Al-Khatteeb (2002) asserts that training is very important for the teachers before inclusion is implemented in their school. King and Edmund (2001) state that preparation and experience both play a role in increasing teachers’ confidence. The crucial variable that consistently has been found to positively influence educators’ attitudes about educating students with disabilities is training in either special or inclusive education (Shade & Stwart, 2001; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Subban & Sharma, 2006; Sharma et al., 2006) or as a part of a special education teacher education program.

Further, in this study pre-service teachers believed that in-service teachers did not have sufficient experience to teach in inclusive classrooms. Generally, Saudi teachers lack training especially when it comes to teaching students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Al-Ahmadi, 2009). This could be because pre-service teachers are aware that neither the schools nor the teacher education programs in Saudi implement strategies that enhance teachers’ abilities to teach students with disabilities in inclusive settings. However, there is evidence that such training can make a positive difference (Leyser et al., 1994; Waldron & McLeskey, 1998). Scholars contend that teacher education program developers need to reform their curriculum in order to raise positive attitudes through providing more knowledge on special education (e.g., Sosu et al., 2010; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Teacher preparation programs should equip pre-service teachers with content on instructional skills, collaboration, training, and field experience related to special education, which combined have been found to change the attitudes positively toward inclusion (Heflin & Alaimo, 2007).
The pre-service teachers in this study agreed that they did not receive the level of supervision from their professors that they needed during their field experiences. Having limited number of opportunities for observation and feedback can negatively affect the professional development of pre-service teachers (Hussain, 2010). Similarly, Feguson, Meyer, Jenchild, Juniper, & Zingo (1992) and Stainback, Stainback, Moravec & Jackson (1992) stressed that having an inclusion facilitator full time at the school site is very important for the success of inclusion practices. In Saudi Arabia, the pre-service teachers are spread over a large geographic area and each school can only have 1-3 student teachers for an internship making it difficult for faculty to travel to internship schools every week. Additionally, in Saudi Arabia the university does not offer any financial support for traveling costs for professors to do supervision.

Collaboration and communication between pre-service teachers and in-service teachers and between PK-12 schools and universities has emerged as a major theme supporting inclusion. Pre-service teachers have stressed the need for collaborative work between special education teachers and general education teachers (Ali et al., 2006). Therefore, teacher education programs should provide purposeful opportunities where pre-service teachers and teacher educators work collaboratively in schools to help students with special needs (Bishop & Jones, 2002). Unfortunately, many teacher education programs lack a structured approach to preparing pre-service teachers to collaborate with their prospective colleagues (Kamens, 2007). A European Commission communication on improving teacher education emphasized the need for knowledge and skills to work closely and collaboratively with parents, colleagues, and the wider community (Beard et al., 2007). However, Saudi Arabia’s education system and policies separate the roles, management structures, and physical spaces of special and general education teachers. The special education teachers are not permitted to teach in regular classrooms but are expected
to be in the resource room. These factors have created unfavorable conditions for collaboration between special and general teachers.

The role of the principal is critical to successful inclusion. Importantly, the principal should create and sustain a collaborative culture between specialists and general education teachers for inclusion to work (Waldrong & Mcleskey, 2010). The encouragement and continuous support from the principal have been shown to positively influence the inclusive ethos (Advramidis & Kalyva, 2007). Positive school ethos, described as welcoming attitudes and strong achievement orientation (Dyson et al., 2004) in addition to teamwork and collaboration (Hartas, 2004), is considered a major factor in successful inclusion (Skidmore, 2004) including positively impacting teacher attitudes about inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Staff and students might have a less satisfactory experience of inclusion if teachers and principals are not working together toward a positive ethos. Importantly, the pre-service teachers in this study stated that principal support for inclusion was weak based on their experiences.

Important to this study, the region of the world where teachers reside appears to be a factor with respect toward attitudes about students with disabilities and inclusion. Several studies have indicated that pre-service teachers from Western and European countries like Canada, Australia (Sharma et al., 2006), USA, Germany (Leyser & colleagues, 1994) had more positive attitudes toward students with disabilities than their Eastern and Asian and African counterparts in Hong Kong and Singapore (Sharma et al., 2006), Ghana and Taiwan (Leyser & colleagues, 1994). These findings are similar to other studies in Arab countries. For example, pre-service teachers in Jordan and United Arab Emirates (UAE) had negative attitudes towards people with disabilities. Similarly, pre-service teachers in Palestine also reported negative attitudes toward inclusion of students with disability (Romi & Leyser, 2006). The researchers in these studies
explained that the negative perspectives were due to the limited lack of training and opportunities for teachers/pre-service teachers to work in inclusive classrooms including the limited implementation of inclusion. On the other hand, in countries such as the US inclusion is more widely practiced and pre-service teachers have greater opportunities to experience inclusive classrooms. The researchers also pointed out that inclusion in Asian and African countries considered to be a new phenomenon or is only being tried on an experimental level.

The many factors associated with the themes that emerged from the data in this study appear to have influenced the pre-service teachers’ resistance to inclusion. Their perspectives likely have been constructed on the basis of culture and personal experience (Anderson et al., 1995; Lonka, Joram & Bryson 1996; Joram and Gabriele, 1998; Tatto, 1998). Pre-service teachers’ beliefs could be considered more or less difficult to change based on the feedback from their environment. The findings from past studies concur with the finding from this study since pre-service teachers were not given feedback or provided with sufficient knowledge related to inclusive education in their teacher education program. Thus, their attitudes toward inclusion might have been negatively influenced by their frustration related to the lack of all the previously mentioned factors and the lack of the readiness of the education system to support students with disabilities in general education settings.

**Recommendations from the Pre-service Teachers in this Study**

The third research question sought to investigate pre-service teacher’s recommendations to improve the teacher education program and to better serve students with disabilities. Two major recommendations from pre-service teachers in this study is that they believed they needed more hands-on experience and there needs to be a greater level of awareness spread about the
needs of students with disabilities and the construct of inclusion. All pre-service teachers expressed the need for more extensive field experiences. Campbell and colleagues (2003) noticed that when the teacher education programs provided research-based instruction with structured field experiences, the pre-service teachers showed more positive views about inclusion. Therefore, this study suggests that teacher education programs should provide experience for pre-service teachers where they can have contact with students with special needs. As previously suggested, prior research indicates that having contact with students with disabilities can improve attitudes toward inclusion (Leroy and Simpson, 1996; Yuker, 1988).

The second primary recommendation from pre-service teachers in this study is not to rush to the implementation of inclusion without preparation and awareness. The lack of a plan to develop an awareness of inclusion was considered a major challenge. This was because some of the participants in this study believe that both the lack of awareness and lack of data in order to justify and strengthen the effectiveness of inclusion adds to the resistance to change and it leads to negative attitudes (Myers, Ager, Kerr & Myles, 1998). Pre-service teachers’ responses are consistent with recommendations from previous research, which concluded that the value of combining research-based instruction with structured field experience in changing attitudes towards disability and inclusion is critical. In addition, past studies also recommended that raising awareness of one form of disability may lead to changes in attitudes towards disabilities in general (Campbell, J., Gilmore, L.M and Cuskelly, M. 2003). Rillotta and Nettelbeck (2007) concluded that combining social and educational integration with training in awareness of disability for secondary school students resulted in more positive, long-lasting attitudes about education and social inclusion of people with disabilities.
Given these recommendations, an understanding of inclusion among all stakeholders and administrators needs to be deepened beyond the integrated location, through a process of discussion and debate rather than forced legislation imposed upon the Saudi educational system by the new political organization. Education supervisors should promote discussions across different schools. Particularly, administrators and university educators should identify effective practices for implementing inclusion, supporting the dissemination of effective practice, and promoting the sharing of ideas among inclusive schools and those schools yet to embrace inclusion. This should include assisting schools to find ways to promote discussions with all teachers and parents.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this study. First, there were some issues related to the nature of the online interview. The researcher interviewed using the online video conference software Zoom which requires a functioning internet connection. This was not available at every location within Saudi. At times, it was difficult to get a clear voice due to internet interruptions and sometimes time was wasted while trying to connect with the respondents. Based on that, and since most of my participants were from rural areas where the internet was very weak or did not exist, it limited the number of participants that partook in the interviewing process. Moreover, two of the participants withdrew from the study because they did not have the technical competence required to download the necessary software and to maintain the Internet connection for the duration of the interview. This could have led to issues of representation (O’Connor et al., 2008). Further, the researcher faced a lot of misunderstanding with the participants.
regarding the purpose of the research and recording, which caused a lot of participants to withdraw from the study. For example, eight of the participants thought the interviews were a job interview and when they realized it wasn’t they withdrew from the study. A researcher needs to be clear and precise with participants since the risk of misunderstanding is greater while doing online interviews (Salmons, 2012). In addition, there was a lot of disconnection between the students and the online interviews. Three of the participants were either absences or no shows. This possibly could be because of the nature of the technology used (i.e., an online video conferencing platform and email communication), which affords less commitment compared to face-to-face interactions. For example, one can stop the meeting by clicking on the end meeting choice or disconnect the internet choice and thereby not respond to the researcher’s emails or texts. The Saudi education system is based on single-sex education; schools/universities for girls are separate from schools/universities for boys who lead to a female researcher, only gaining access to a female university and its resources. It is very difficult for a female researcher to enter a male university. Thus, this study only investigated female pre-service teachers. It is possible that the inclusion of male participants could have resulted in different findings and insights.

Conclusion

This study focused on the pre-service teachers’ perspectives on including students with disabilities in the regular classroom. Pre-service teachers’ voices can provide insight for policymakers and professionals in the field to better prepare future teachers leading to better services for special need students. Based on the findings of the study, pre-service teachers had a negative perspective regarding including students with disabilities in the regular classroom. This result is consistent with previous research indicating that teachers have a negative perspective towards inclusion. Pre-service teachers also shared the challenges they face related to schools
and universities and their specific concerns about including students with severe disabilities, lower IQs, and with behavior issues. Pre-service teachers’ concerns about including students with severe disabilities coincided with previous research related to including students with multiple and severe disabilities. Participants also recommended improving their teacher education program through increasing the level of field experiences in schools, increasing the level of support from their university supervisors/professors, and spreading awareness of the needs of students with disabilities and inclusive practices.

The Saudi educational system is at the beginning of a major reform movement that has significant implications for the entire educational community in KSA. An increased number of schools are implementing changes in their approach to special education and other remedial programs in the name of this movement and the recognition that there is an absence of appropriate teacher preparation, awareness of the needs of students with disabilities, and inadequate support from schools and universities. It is this researcher’s hope that policymakers in the KSA resist political and financial pressures to make fast decisions that don’t properly integrate special education and other special programs into the general education curriculum and classroom. Rather all educators at all levels should collaborate and study the inclusion movement and the issues related to it fully and then guide legislators and policy makers to make the best decisions for educational inclusion. The above premise is supportive for inclusion in all schools in KSA, but educators must become aware of the concepts and layers of inclusion as well as have ongoing professional development within all educational systems, supported by the government.

Implications

There is a universal cry in many countries, including Saudi Arabia, for quality education and the key for quality education is teacher preparation (Hussain, 2010). In Saudi Arabia,
schools are under an increased pressure to change. This pressure is coming from many sources: governments and Saudi citizens want more accountability and more skilled and educated labor, businesses want higher standards and better use of education funding. This concern is akin to the growing popularity of school choice in the United States, where parents are asking for better educational options for their children, including appropriate services for the growing population of children with disabilities.

Moreover, this study was formed based on social constructivism theory, which suggests that individuals construct their understandings of a particular construct through interaction with others. The findings of this study indicate that the participants’ views on inclusion and their experiences as preservice teachers in a special education teacher preparation program in the KSA were influenced, at least in part, by the various interactions they had with university faculty, supervising teachers, students with disabilities, and school based administrators. For example, this study suggests that the preservice teachers had limited to no feedback from university faculty, supervising teachers weren’t supportive of inclusion, student with sever disability weren’t welcome in the regular classroom, and there was a week support from the school principle and administration. Thus, preservice teacher construct their negative perspective towered inclusion based on their interaction with individuals surrounding them. Based on these study findings, preservice teachers weren’t provided with an inclusive teacher education program that cultivates positive interactions between preservice teachers and faculty, supervising teachers, and school based administrators with respect to students with disabilities.

Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) expressed that when students interact with a more knowledgeable other, such as tutor, teacher or parent can improve the student’s zone of development. The same could be said for preservice teachers who are at the beginning stage of
developing into a teacher. Having opportunities to interact with teachers and administrators regarding the needs of students with disabilities may provide preservice teachers the chance to close their “proximal zone of development” as a beginning/preservice teacher. Vygotsky stated that interactions with the students through dialogue and scaffolding of instruction can affect the learner’s development (Ornstein & Hukins, 2009). He explained that the student’s social interaction with others helped them in constructing meaning. Vygotsky (1978) also stated that students can learn the most from a skilled tutor or more knowledgeable others. Thus, preservice teachers’ interactions with their supervisor, in-service teachers, or principals can influence their understanding and learning and meaning making. From these findings, we can conclude that the preservice teachers have a negative perspective because of their interaction with others.

Vygotsky (1978) believed that a tutor responding by elaborating and corrective modeling can improve the student’s skills. Eventually, the student can copy and apply what he/she learned by internalizing and applying the lessons in their own lives. With respect to the findings in this study, it is plausible that by mostly observing (without opportunities to debrief with their supervising teachers) prior to actually teaching, the preservice teachers observed simply adopted the perspectives of teachers and administrators. Thus, from the findings, the “others” had a negative perspective and so preservice teachers also had a negative perspective.

Along the same line of thinking, psychologist Albert Bandura stated that a student’s behavioral and cognitive learning is achieved through modeling, guidance, and observation (Graves & Ward, 2012). A student can learn from modeling and instruction through attention, retention, and motivation (Graves & Ward, 2012). Thus, preservice teachers can learn from others’ live modeling and verbal instruction and thereby be affected by their perspectives. From these study findings, it is evident that preservice teachers learn and are affected by in-service
teachers, advisers, university courses, and the practicum. So when the preservice teachers had little support from in-service teachers, limited feedback from advisers, insufficient university courses, and a short-term practicum, all of that affected their perspectives in a negative way. The self-efficacy theory, which defines how people think, believe, and motivate themselves (Bandura, 1994) also has relevance to this study’s findings. Bandura explained that self-efficacy can help predict behavior such as whether someone will engage or not to accomplish their goals. Self-efficacy in education means that one believes that their teaching can influence how well students learn. Research has shown a strong association between self-efficacy in teachers and openness to implementing variety in instruction (Wolters & Dagherty, 2007). Teachers with high self-efficacy are open to adopting and implementing new instruction; by contrast, teachers with low self-efficacy are less likely to adapt new teaching methods to fulfill a child’s need (Woolfson & Brady, 2009, p. 228). Bandura suggested that to increase self-efficacy in teachers, it is important to provide them with sufficient resources and social support. He highlighted that even teachers with strong self-efficacy may not perform the behavior without motivation. This suggests that environment can shape behavior. From the study findings, we can conclude that preservice teachers’ attitude towards inclusion is affected by the environment surrounding them. If the environment is not supporting inclusion, then the preservice teachers are not going to be accepting the inclusion of students with disabilities into the regular classroom.

Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) posit a theory of planned behavior as a way to predict a person’s behavior from their attitudes. They further explained that attitudes toward a particular behavior can be affected by previous experience, knowledge, newly acquired knowledge (Azjen, 1991; Azjen and Finnshbein, 1977). Thus, the negative perspective of these preservice teachers likely was affected by their previous experiences in their practicum school as well as what they
learned from the university. With respect to the findings of this study, perhaps the preservice teachers did not develop a positive ethos of schools with respect to student with disabilities because they were not provided with adequate support from the university. As result of that, preservice teachers developed a negative perspective towards including students with disabilities.

To change preservice teachers’ perspective and to better service students with disabilities, the teacher education programs in Saudi have to change the learning paradigm. For example, they need to provide increased hands-on experiences for pre-service teachers in schools, provide greater levels of support to pre-service teachers during their field experiences, and develop greater levels of collaboration schools.

The pre-service teachers in this study indicated that Saudi universities concentrate on coursework that is theoretical rather than practical in nature (Al-Zoubi & Rahman, 2016). The practicum is the only course that pre-service teachers can enroll in for field experience and it is usually in their last semester. Most of the universities in Saudi are fit with the clinically accompanied model, which means there is no interaction or association between courses and field experience. The primary cause for the separation is the assumption that knowledge and theory lie in the university classes while practice lies in the school-based placements. A large number of teachers of students with disabilities in Saudi stated that their teacher preparation courses were theoretically driven and did not address actual practices in their classrooms (Hussain, 2010). Participants lamented the lack of connection between what they were learning in the university and the actual school context where they would be teaching. Thinking that information and theory by themselves can change perspective is impractical. Another reason for lack of connection between courses and the field is the limited number of advisers as mentioned in this study’s result. Having fewer advisers supervising a large number of preservice teachers
spread across a large geographic area presents challenges. In addition, the university system does not provide any financial support for advisers to visit school sites in remote areas.

Another possible barrier is the lack of high-quality field sites as mentioned by the preservice teachers. For example, the preservice teachers explained that the schools where they were placed lacked resources, materials, specialists, and high-quality special education teachers. Also, preservice teachers mentioned that in-service teachers and school administration were not supportive of inclusion. These reasons could be a part of the weak relationship between coursework and the field.

Importantly, the pre-service teachers in this study pointed out that the in-service teachers they worked with in their practicum were not prepared for inclusion. Hence, the job satisfaction level among practicing special education teachers is controversial among researchers. Teachers need to be prepared to deal with the changes in administrative duties, curriculum, as well as the many facets of teaching students with disabilities (Strydom, Nortje, Beukes, Esterhuys & Westhuizen, 2012). In-service special education teachers need professional development in assessment, assistive technology, behavioral modification, and collaboration with others (Al-Ahmary, 2010; Taylor, 2008; Loiacono and Allen, 2008; Nelson, 2009; Giles, 2009).

Collaboration between universities and local schools to improve pre-service teachers and in-service teachers’ professional development experiences is crucial. High-quality teacher education programs embed learning experiences through closely linked co-partnerships between teacher education programs and schools. There is a need for Saudi preparation programs to be built with a structure that allows all pre-service teachers a forum of ongoing reflection and collaboration. A high quality teacher education program will help bridge the gap between
theoretical knowledge and the actual practice of teaching with real students in the classrooms. This concept of teaching and learning has been emphasized across calls for teacher education programs reform (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2006; NCATE, 2010; Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2010).

Such collaborative structures will empower university educators not only to talk about teaching in the abstract but also provide skilled feedback in the field that enables pre-service teachers to improve. The key for such a program to be successful is what Burn and Mutton (2015) described as “having multiple skilled individuals attending to a variety of tasks that focus on pre-service teachers learning.” When a collaborative partnership between faculty, university supervisor, and in-service teachers is focused on preparing new teachers and professionally growing themselves, then teacher education programs in Saudi can improve.

Providing rich clinical field experiences is critical to preparing quality teachers (Villa, Thousand, Stainback & Stainback, 1992). From these study findings, the pre-service teachers explained that the coursework is isolated from the practice in school. They also stated that the practicum course was during the last semester before graduation. In the practicum, the pre-service teachers were allowed to teach for three months and often in classroom setting that did not model the practices that they had been previously taught in the university course. To bridge the gap between theory and practice, there is a need for extensive field experience tightly coupled with the university coursework. As explained by Ball and Cohen (1999), “expensive clinical work, intensive supervision, expert modeling of practice, and diverse students are all critical to allow candidates to learn practice in practice with students who called for serious teaching skills.” A pre-service teacher should be engaged on field experiences early in the teacher education program. For example, pre-service teachers on the first level can visit multiple
sites to see the different schools, roles, and responsibilities of in-service teachers. On their next level, the frequency of going to schools should be increased. In their final level, pre-service teachers should be exposed to the teaching environment by allowing them to spend more time in schools as they observe and teach classes. This method would help prepare teachers gradually and expose them to more experience, which they need; this method of preparing teachers allows the pre-service teachers to have scaffolded experiences that build on each other.

Moreover, when a pre-service teacher encounters a problem in the field he/she can bring this concern to the teacher educator. These issues can become a base of an inquiry and can be used as both a learning opportunity and a starting point of research for the pre-service educator teacher; therefore the pre-service teacher’s learning can be transformed (Burns et al., 2015). Exposing pre-service teachers to extensive field experience can impact their beliefs, thinking, and reflections in ways that are deemed positive, however, these changes are not always predictable.

Possible solutions to increase the field experience and collaboration between primary schools and universities and to strengthen the connection between courses and field experience include: 1) universities creating a relationship with the school site by designing a new school that provides a high-quality site, or 2) partnering with a local school where university faculty are actively involved in facing issues of developing curriculum and teaching (see e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2006; Gudarrama, Ramsey, & Nath, 2002). Moreover, teacher preparation programs cannot transform on their own, they need ministry of higher education interference to provide equitable training for teachers. All universities in Saudi Arabia are supervised by ministry of higher education, thus, the interfering of the ministry is needed in which to provide experts who
have many years of experience in the field of special education, professional development for in-service teachers, and modern resources.

In addition, the education system should provide appropriate salaries for educators and reconsider the accreditation of universities’ programs. Highly qualified teachers should be distributed throughout the country instead of novice teachers and paid well and sometimes provided rewards for working in hard-to-staff areas (Darling-Hammond, 2015). Reviewing the accreditation of universities’ special education programs is in immediate need, the Saudi education system should focus on critical features that are found in high-quality teacher education programs. In doing this, the Saudi education system should stop funding for universities that do not include critical factors for effective preparation, for example, programs that do not provide supervision, extensive field experience, sufficient knowledge, or collaboration with schools.

Obviously, a change of any kind is complex. To expect change without any challenges is unrealistic. In Saudi there are significant gaps in the training programs for special education teachers; this is evident in the lack of sufficient field experiences, the lack of connections between coursework and field experiences, and the lack of collaboration between universities and schools. These are reasons why university teacher preparation programs are considered weak in the Middle East (McBride & Al-Kateeb, 2010; Al-Kateeb, 2008). Teacher education faculty in Saudi face increasing pressure to strengthen and improve teacher training programs. If university faculty wants to change the current paradigm, they have to “teach to transform” pre-service teachers rather than only teach to transmit information and theory.
**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study aimed to examine pre-service teachers’ perspectives toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general classroom using the interviewing method. There are limited resources in Saudi Arabia when it comes to a new topic (Al-Ahmadi, 2009), such as inclusion in the education system. The need for such research has been and continues to be embraced by many scholars like Al-Faiz (2006); Alahmadi (2009); Alquraini (2012); Haimour (2013); Hassan et al. (2015) and AlKhateeb and Alkhateeb et al. (2016). Future research could use other methodologies to investigate this study’s topic more in-depth including through longitudinal research utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research designs and associated methods. For example, future research could incorporate a mixed methods design or observations in conjunction with interviews instead of just interviews. Also, this study focuses on female pre-service teachers’ perspective only. Future studies could investigate pre-service teachers and university advisers together in the same setting or in the male school setting to get a clear picture of what is happening and why it is happening in Saudi teacher education program. Moreover, this study focused on pre-service teachers at only one university, Umm-al-Qura University. New research could study pre-service teachers’ perspective at other universities. Continuing to study pre-service teachers’ perspectives has potential for furthering understandings of how they experience their teacher education programs and providing insight into how to approve these programs them across Saudi Arabia, particularly in relation to preparing teachers to successfully engage in inclusive practices. In this study, pre-service teachers point out the need for more field experience as one recommendation for improving their program. Future research could study the impact of increased hands-on activities and experience in schools on the development of pre-service teachers. Participants in this study also pointed out that there are some unrelated
mandatory courses in the university curriculum. To this end, future research could center on how university coordinators make decisions regarding courses in the teacher education program.

In Saudi Arabia, there is a limited number of research studies available related to inclusion and pre-service teachers. Conducting research regarding these issues will add to the existing literature on special education settings and the need for sensitiveness while enacting legislation, mostly in circumstances where special education teacher education programs are new. Moreover, Daniels (2000) and Alexander (2004) stress the need for relevant special education research studies to be conducted that emphasized new areas of educational innovation, so as to help countries make determinations to improve special education, whether the country is in a new stage, like Saudi Arabia, or at an advanced level like the United States.

**Reflexivity**

One of the basic features of qualitative inquiry is that the researcher is considered to be the main instrument and that the credibility and the quality of the research findings depend on the researcher’s skills (Patton, 2002). An essential skill of a qualitative researcher is the ability to be aware and reflective of his/her philosophical assumptions that guide his/her view of the world to be more transparent and ethical regarding the findings of the study. He/She should reflect on how these assumptions and values or beliefs shape his/her reality, to respect the experience of those he/she studies and to understand them and continually investigate her/his relationship with them, and to continually question his/her interpretation. Before and during the research process, I thought about and articulated my experience.

As an international student, I am very interested in learning about pre-service teachers in the United States. Since I came here in 2014, this interest started to grow over time and I kept
finding myself reading about teacher preparation. In one of the courses, we were supposed to write about special education policies and since I am from Saudi Arabia I decided to write about our policies. During this process, I found a couple of differences and similarities regarding regulations in the US and KSA. Then I started questioning why I was interested in the teacher education in the US and I kept reflecting back to Saudi and how they deal with their pre-service teachers. I think this motivation is related to my job. In Saudi Arabia, I am a teacher educator at the University of Umm Al-Qura in Saudi. I remember showing up the first day for my job wearing a white shirt and black trousers. The guard at the gate would not let me in. She asked me whether I have attended a Saudi University before. From the look on my face, she could tell that I did not understand what she meant by saying that. She said that one of the fundamental rules of the university was that ladies were not allowed to wear pants, which was why my outfit was against the dress code. Reflecting on that made me realize that I needed to know more about the policy and history of special education in Saudi Arabia and try to take advantage of my experiences in United States to gain a deeper understanding.

This study motivates me to develop and enhance the teacher education programs in my country. My strategy is to contribute to the body of knowledge related to teacher preparation and eventually improving the special needs programs to provide better service to students with disabilities. I feel obligated to improve the special educational system for the students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. This study made me realize that the teacher education program at the University of Umm Al-Qura needs an intensive endeavor from different resources to reconstruct the teacher education program. Ironically, in the past I came back to my home country with different clothes, this time I am coming back with different ideals about education and inclusion. I wonder how my home country will react?
REFERENCES


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Guadarrama, I. N. (Ed.). (2002). Forging alliances in community and thought. IAP


*Exceptional Children*, 60, 6.


Appendix A: IRB Approval

April 14, 2017

Sarah Binmahfooz  
Teaching and Learning  
Tampa, FL 33612

RE: Expedited Approval for Initial Review  
IRB#: Pro00029316  
Title: Saudi Preservice Teachers’ Perspective about Inclusion

Study Approval Period: 4/13/2017 to 4/13/2018

Dear Ms. Binmahfooz:

On 4/13/2017, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and APPROVED the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
protocol.docx

Consent/Accept Document(s)*:
pro00029316_version1_03202017_Arabic.docx.pdf
Pro00029316_Version1_03202017.docx.pdf

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent documents are valid until the consent document is amended and approved.

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:
Appendix B: Interview Protocol Question

Interview Guide for the first interview

**Interviewees:** pre-service teacher/student

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Place:**

**Subject:** Preservice teachers’ perspectives on inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Allocated</th>
<th>Interviewer Questions</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 - 2 min.</td>
<td>Open the interview:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>· Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Share the purpose of the interview and what is the research is about.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Any question may range up to 5-7 min or longer in combination with another question, as appropriate by the IE and there isn’t any particular order for the questions.

**Questions**
- Tell me about you?
- Why did you choose this field?
- How many students with special needs are in your classroom?
- Where do you believe students with disabilities are better served?
- What are your expectations for students with disabilities in your classroom? And why?

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### Interview Guide for the second interview

**Interviewees:** pre-service teacher/student

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Place:**

**Subject:** Preservice teachers’ perspectives on inclusion

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time Allocated</th>
<th>Interviewer Objective/Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 min.</td>
<td>Open the interview:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Share the purpose of the interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Any question may range up to 5-7 min or longer in combination with another question, as appropriate by the IE

| Question 1 | What perceptions do you have related to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom?  
a) Tell me about your experience with students with disabilities.  
b) Where do you believe students with disabilities are better served?  
c) How do you respond to students with disabilities? |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Question 2 | What are your expectations for students with disabilities in your classroom?  
a) To what extent can students with disabilities meet your expectations?  
b) Why can/cannot students with disabilities meet your expectations? |
| Question 3 | What recommendations do you have for your preparation program to help pre-service teachers learn to teach students with disabilities in their classrooms?  
a) Describe how you have been/not have been successful in your experience working with students with disabilities.  
b) What factors do you believe contributed to the extent of your success when working with students with disabilities?  
c) Describe any difficulties/success you experienced when attempting to meet the needs of students with disabilities.  
d) What factors do you believe may have contributed to the difficulties/success you experienced when attempting to meet the needs of students with special needs? |
### Interview Guide for the third interview

**Interviewees:** pre-service teacher/student

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Place:**

**Subject:** Preservice teachers’ perspectives on inclusion

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time Allocated</th>
<th>Interviewer Questions</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 - 2 min.</td>
<td>Open the interview:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>· Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Share the purpose of the interview</td>
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</table>

*Any question may range up to 5-7 min or longer in combination with another question, as appropriate by the IE and there isn’t any particular order for the questions.*

**Questions**

- Explain “extent of” or describe to further prompt the interviewee for further clarification, if necessary
- What do you mean here by …. ?
- Give me an example of?
- Could you explain to me what happened here?
Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

August 29, 2018

To: Umm al Qura University

Re: SARAH BINMAHFOOZ Student ID: S0899353

I am writing this letter of support for Sarah Binmahfooz, a doctoral candidate at the University of South Florida for whom I serve as Major Professor. Sarah is a very serious and dedicated student who always produces high quality work. In order for Sarah to complete her dissertation study she will need your cooperation. Sarah’s study revolves around the perspectives of preservice special education teachers in the United Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regarding inclusion of students with disabilities. Sarah will need to collect data from students in your institution’s special education teacher preparation program. This will include up to ten (10) students who are (1) from the special education program, (2) have been through the practicum, and (3) have internet access for 30-60 minutes at a time for online interviews. Your institution’s cooperation is critical for Sarah to complete her dissertation study and graduate with her Ph.D. in Special Education at USF. Thank you in advance for your kind consideration of this request.

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

Sincerely,

David H. Allsopp, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean for Education Preparation and Partnerships
David C. Anchin Endowed Chair for Education Innovation
Director of the David C. Anchin Center
Professor, Special Education
College of Education
University of South Florida
dallsopp@usf.edu
Informed Consent to Participate in Research Involving Minimal Risk

MS1_Pro 00029316

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher or study staff to discuss this consent form with you, please ask him/her to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

We are asking you to take part in a research study called: Saudi Preservice Teachers’ Perspective about Inclusion. The person who is in charge of this research study is Sarah Binmahfooz. This person is called the Principal Investigator. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge. She is being guided in this research by David Allsopp. The research will be conducted via an online communication program and there is no specific site.

Purpose of the study

This study will examine the attitudes of preservice teachers as it pertains to inclusive education, emphasizing on prior research on the attitudinal impact of preservice teachers, as well as training for inclusion. The main emphasis of this study is

1. To offer a contribution to the knowledge of special education, especially in the developing countries such as Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

2. To identify and address challenges that teachers education programs face in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

3. To provide a clear understanding of the preservice teacher’s perspective as well as giving an overview of beliefs regarding special education that can help KSA personnel and policy makers come up with programs helpful to children with learning disabilities.
Why are you being asked to take part?

We are asking you to take part in this research study because you are a Saudi preservice teacher and your prospective can help with improving the teacher education program in Saudi and to deepening our understanding concerning this topic.

Study Procedures:

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participant have to log in to their account in Skype or any online communication program that allows for a clear communication for the 3 interviews.
- The interviews questions are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>What perceptions do you have related to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom?</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) Tell me about your experience with students with disabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Where do you believe students with disabilities are better served?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) How do you respond to students with disabilities?</td>
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<table>
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<th>Question 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>What are your expectations for students with disabilities in your classroom?</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) To what extent can students with disabilities meet your expectations?</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Why can/cannot students with disabilities meet your expectations?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Question 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What recommendations do you have for your preparation program to help preservice teachers learn to teach students with disabilities in their classrooms?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Describe how you have been/not have been successful in your experience working with students with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) What factors do you believe contributed to the extent of your success when working with students with disabilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Describe any difficulties/success you experienced when attempting to meet the needs of students with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) What factors do you believe may have contributed to the difficulties/success you experienced when attempting to meet the needs of students with special needs?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The expected duration of the interviews will be between thirty minutes to an hour and it will be 3 interviews;
- There is no specific place it is going to be online;
- Audio-taping will be used, the participant is going to be informed of taping and, if applicable, given the option to agree to the recording. Only the researcher will have access to these tapes,
the tapes will be maintained for five years after the Final Report is submitted to the IRB and when the time comes the researcher will delete all the files related to the research.

**Total Number of Participants**
About 10 individuals will take part in this study at USF.

**Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal**
Alternatives to participating in the study include: if a student doesn’t want to participate I will ask another student.
You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. Decision to not participate will not affect your student status (course grade) or job status.

**Benefits**
You will receive no benefit(s) by participating in this research study.

**Risks or Discomfort**
This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

**Compensation**
You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

**Costs**
It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**
We will keep your study records private and confidential. Certain people may need to see your study records. Anyone who looks at your records must keep them confidential. These individuals include:

- The Principal Investigator, and the major professor.
- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates this research.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study, and individuals who provide oversight to ensure that we are doing the study in the right way.
- The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, including staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance.
We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints
If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, or experience an unanticipated problem, call Sarah Binmahfooz at 813-278-0967.
If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at RSCH-IRB@usf.edu.

Consent to Take Part in this Research Study
I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study __________________________ Date __________

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study __________________________

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent
I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

Signature of Person obtaining Informed Consent __________________________ Date __________

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent __________________________
موافقة مسئولة للمشاركة في بحث يتضمن العدد الأدنى من المخاطر

رقم الدراسة 16

عندما أطلقت ملك المشارك في دراسة بحثية تتضمن الدراسات البحثية الأفراد الذين اختاروا المشاركة فقط، كما يسمى هذا المستند الاستمارة موافقة مستميتة. يرجى قراءة هذه المعلومات بعناية وخذ الوقت الكافي لاحترام قرارك. مغليب في استمارة المقترح في الدراسة لمنافسة هذه الاستمارة الخاصة بالمعلومات. يرجى مغليب من نوعها شرح أي كلمات أو معلومات لا تفهمها بصورة واضحة. كما أن طبيعة الدراسة والمخاطر، والمضايقات، وعدم الارتباط والمعلومات الفاصلة الأخرى بشأن الدراسة مذكورة أدناه.

يُطلب منك المشارك في دراسة بحثية تتضمن مفهوم المعرفة المسلمية ما قبل الخدمة بشأن التضمن والدمج.

الشخص المسؤول عن هذه الدراسة الشخصية هي مسؤول في محفظة مسؤولي الشؤون البحثية. مع ذلك، قد يكون للأشخاص المعنيين أو يمكن أن يكونون بذلك عن الشخص المسؤول. فقد تم توجيهها في هذا البحث من خلال نهج أصولي. كما سيتم إجراء هذه البحث من خلال برنامج التعليم على الإنترنت وليس هناك موقع معين.

هذ الدراسة

ينجاز هذه الدراسة توجيهات المعلمين ما قبل الخدمة لولاها تتعلق بالتعليم الشامل يتناسب مع البحث السابق على الأثر العملي للمعلمين ما قبل الخدمة. بالإضافة للتدريب على التضمن والدمج. كما أن التركيز الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة هو:

1. تقديم مساحة لمعرفة التعليم الخاص، خاصة للدول النامية مثل المملكة العربية السعودية.
2. إعادة تحديد التحديات التي تواجهها برامج التعليم في المملكة العربية السعودية.
3. تقديم مبادرات لتوسيع رؤية الوصول إلى إعادة النظر عامة للتحديات بشأن التعليم الخاص التي يمكن أن يساعد ويليام بالمملكة العربية السعودية وصانع السياسة على إنتاج برامج قائمة للطلاب ذوي المهن.

لما تم الطلب ملك المشاركة؟

تم الطلب ملك المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية لأجل معلم سعودي ما قبل الخدمة. ويمكن لمعلمين أن يساعدوا في تصميم برامج تعليم الطلاب في السعودية وتوسيع همها بما يناسب الموضوع.

إجراءات الدراسة:

1. إنقرت المشاركة في هذه الدراسة. سيتم الطلب ملك:
   • يحتاج شريك المشاركة النموذجي للحصول على سكع أو أي برنامج تعلم على الإنترنت الذي يسمح بخلاص واسع في المقالات:
   • كانت أسلوب البحث

السؤال 1

ما هي التصورات التي لديك المتعلقة بتضمن ودمج الطلاب ذوي الإعاقة؟

1. أخبرني عن خبرتك مع الطلاب ذوي الإعاقة.
2. أين عتقد أن سيتم تعلم الطلاب ذوي الإعاقة بشكل أفضل؟
3. كيف تستجيب للطلاب ذوي الإعاقة؟
السؤال 2
ما هي توقعاتك للطلاب ذوي الإعاقة في فصلك؟
(1) لا يمكن/يمكن للطلاب ذوي الإعاقة تلبية توقعاتك؟
(2) ما يمكن/لا يمكن للطلاب ذوي الإعاقة تلبية توقعاتك؟

السؤال 3
ما هي التوصيات التي تليك لبرنامج إعداد لمساعدة المعلمين ما قبل الخدمة؟
(1) كيف كسبت نجاحك في العمل مع الطلاب ذوي الإعاقة؟
(2) ما هي العوامل التي تعتقد أنها ساهمت في نجاحك عند العمل مع الطلاب ذوي الإعاقة؟
(3) كيف تقيم الذكاء العقلي للطلاب ذوي الإعاقة؟
(4) ما هي العوامل التي تعتقد أنها ساهمت في الصعوبات/النجاحات التي شاهدتها عند تدريس الطلاب ذوي الإعاقة؟

الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة

- ستكون الفترة الزمنية المتوقعة للمقابلات ما بين ثلاثين دقيقة إلى ساعة وستكون 3 مقابلات.
- ليس هناك مكان خاص، يتم إلى أن يكون على الإنترنت.
- سيتم تسجيل الصوت، وسيتم إخطار المشارك بالتسجيل. إن كانت ممكناً، بإعطاء الخيار للموافقة.
- على التسجيل. كما سيكون لدي الباحث فقط وسيلة الوصول لهذه الشروط، سيتم الاحتفاظ بهذه
- الشركات لفترة 5 سنوات بعد إرسال التقرير النهائي إلى مجلس المراجعة المؤسسة ومتى يحين الوقت
- سيقوم الباحث بنموذج جميع الملفات المتعلقة بالبحث.

إجمالي عدد المشاركين:
- ستشارك حوالي عدد أفراد في هذه الدورة في جامعة جنوب قلوريدا.

البندال/المشاركة الطوعية / الإنسحاب
تضمن البندال للمشاركة في الدورة: إن لم يرغب الطلاب في المشاركة ستقوم بسؤال طالب آخر. يمكن
المشاركة فقط في هذه الدورة إن أردت أن تكون متطوعة يجب ألا تشعر بأن هناك أي ضغوط أو
مشاركة في الدورة. كما لديك مطلقة الحرية للمشاركة في هذا البحث أو الإنسحاب في هذه الدورة. كما
أنه أن يكون هناك أي عقوبة أو خسارة للأرجاح الذي �وض ذلك الحصول عليها. إن وقفت في المسار في
هذه الدورة. كما أن قرار عدم المشاركة لن يؤثر على حالة التصريح (درجة الدورة التعليمية 9) أو الحالة
الوطنية.

المعنى
لا تشمل أي مفهوم (منافع) من خلال المشاركة في هذه الدورة البحثية.

المخاطر أو عدم الإرتداء
يجوز هذا البحث أنه لديه الحد الأدنى من المخاطر. هذا يعني أن المخاطر المرتبطة بهذه الدورة هي
نفسي ما تواجه كل يوم. كما أنها معرفة بالمخاطر الإضافية. ليس هناك مخاطر إضافية معرفة لهؤلاء
المشاركين في هذه الدورة.

التعويض
لا تشمل أي مبلغ أو تعويض آخر للمشارك في هذه الدورة.

التكلف
لا يتطلب الأمر شيئًا للمشارك في الدورة.
الخصوصية والسرية

ستحتفظ بسجلاتك الدراسية الخاصة والسرية. كما قد يحتاج أفراد معاينة لرؤية سجلاتك الدراسية. كما أنه يتوجب على أي فرد يفتح لهذا البحث:
- البحث الرئيسي والأقسام الجامعية الأساسية.
- محكمة القضاء الاداري، والمحكمة المحلية التي تتعليم هذا البحث.
- المحكمة المعنية وافراد جامعيون يحتفظون للمشاركة بشكل أكثر، وافراد يقدرون الإفادات للتأكد من أنهم ي INCIDENT بالدراسة بشكل صحيح.
- مجلس الامور المؤسسية لجامعة شمال كاليفورنيا (IRB) والموظفين ذوي الصلة الذين لديهم مستلزمات إرشادية لهذه الدراسة. يتضمن المشاركين في تزكية وامثاليا بحث جامعة شمال كاليفورنيا.

يمكننا نشر ما تعلمت من هذه الدراسة. وإن طلبنا من ذلك لن تقوم بتسجيل اسمك. كما لن تقوم بنشر أي شيء من شأنه أن يكشف هويتك لآخرين.

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة أو اهتمامات، يمكنك الاتصال برقم هاتف الجهة المعنية (813) 278-0967. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول حقوقك كمشارك في هذه الدراسة، أو لديك شكوى، فقم بإرسالها إلى رابط الاتصال استخدام شكل صيغة قانونية عند: RSCH-IRB@usf.edu (813) 974-5838 أو على الاتصال عبر البريد الإلكتروني

الموافقة على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحتة

أعلى مستويات الموافقة على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة تتضمن أي ضرر. كما أطفال ذلك من خلال توقيع هذه الاستمارة. كما تشمل التواقيع على نسخة من هذه الاستمارة للعمل معنا.

توقيع الشخص المشارك في جزء من الدراسة

الاسم المطبوع لشخص الذي سيشارك في الدراسة.

بيان الطالب الذي يُستند على الموافقة المستنيرة

تمت بالشرح بشكل دقيق للمشارك في الدراسة حول ما توقعها أو توقعتها من مشاركتهم. أكد على أن هذا الموضوع البحت يتطلب اللغة التي تم استخدامها. نشر هذا البحث والحصول على استمارة موافقة مستنيرة على تنفيذه الرئيسي. كما قد هذا الموضوع البحت موافقة مستنيرة قانونية.

توقيع الشخص الذي يُستند على موافقة مستنيرة

الاسم المطبوع لشخص الذي يُستند على موافقة مستنيرة