

**School of Education**

**Special Education Teachers’ Perceptions of the Inclusion of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students in Schools in Saudi Arabia**

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## **Acknowledgment**

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## **List of Abbreviations**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SA** | Saudi Arabia |
| **DHH** | Deaf and hard of hearing |
| **SME** | Saudi Ministry of Education |
| **DGSE** | Directorate General of Special Education |
| **SEN** | Special Educational Needs |
| **LEA** | Local Educational Authority |
| **IDEA** | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act |
| **UNESCO** | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| **UN** | United Nation |
| **UNCF** | United Nations Children's Fund |
| **LD** | Legislation of Disability |
| **IEP** | Individual Education Plan |
| **UA** | universal access |
| **RSEPI** | Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes |

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## **Abstract**

This study explored the Saudi special education male teachers’ perceptions about inclusive education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children (DHH). Three research questions guided the exploration. The first was what are the perceptions of teachers of children who are DHH of inclusive education? Second, what are the challenges and difficulties teachers of children who are DHH face daily? Third, what are the teacher’s views, suggestions, and visions for improving the current inclusive education for children who are DHH? This qualitative interpretive study recruited twenty-one teachers of children who are DHH in general inclusive primary schools as participants who took part in semi-structured interviews. The researcher adopted the inductive analysis method to analyse the transcripts of the interviews. In addition, the study employed the thematic analysis approach suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006). Data analysis generated three main themes. First was the overall teachers’ perceptions of inclusion. It was found that the way the teachers perceive inclusion is influenced by the concepts of normality and the view that the purpose of inclusion is to support students to achieve social acceptance. It was also revealed that the practices of inclusion has caused children who are DHH to be more excluded from their peers in inclusive schools. The second theme focuses on teachers’ perceptions of the factors influencing their role as inclusive educators. Teachers revealed their frustration with an inappropriate general curriculum, the lack of awareness of disability (deafness) among their colleagues and in the system, and the lack of clear working guidelines that make inclusive schools challenging working environments. The third theme reflects how the teachers perceive children who are DHH’s experience at inclusive schools. They suggested that the children’s experiences were affected by language delay resulting from hearing impairment and the diagnostic process in Saudi Arabia that determines the educational placement. Teachers also suggested that public classrooms are the best placement for many children who are hard of hearing (HH).

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# Chapter One: Research Introduction and Background of the Study

## **1.0 Chapter Introduction**

Over the last 20 years, the philosophy of inclusive education for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or with learning difficulties has changed dramatically; therefore, numerous countries have put effort into encouraging the education of those students in mainstream schools (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Before the emergence of inclusion, working in the field of special education had been seen as a humanitarian and charitable work “rather than as a politically constructed domain that defines the nature and limits of ‘normality’” (Armstrong\*, 2005, p. 135). In 1994, Saudi Arabia (SA) moved towards inclusive education by designing a national project which targeted all students with SEN to be integrated into regular schools. By the 2006-2007 academic year the number of students involved in the project had increased from 66 to 3,239 (male and female) (Al-Mousa, 2010). The project targeted two groups of students, firstly, those who were already in mainstream schools but still in need of some special programs in their environment such as gifted and talented students, blind students, students with learning disabilities, students with physical disabilities, behavioural and emotional disturbed students, and students with communication disorders. Secondly, those students who receive educational services in segregated schools such as Deaf and Hard of Hearing students (DHH), blind students, students with intellectual disability, autistic students, and multi-disabled students (Al-Mousa, 2010). Concerning the inclusive education for DHH students in SA, the Saudi Ministry of Education (SME) in an official report in 2013 showed that 78% of students who are DHH received education in inclusive programs, while 22% remained in segregated schools. This percentage shows a huge change and difference in the way of how children with DHH are educated which may give a positive indicator for some people with interest in inclusion education. However, DHH inclusion has been complex and surrounded by many linguistic and communicative issues (Cohen, 1994). Further, controversy about where and how children who are DHH should be taught (such as Oralism vs Manualism instruction methods & medical view vs social view towards Deafness) is one of many such controversies in the field of DHH education. For example, the medical view (model) of deafness in its extreme advocate for inclusion sees segregation (special school) for children who are DHH as similar to racial segregation (Schildroth & Hotto, 1994). On the other hand, one of the main rationales behind DHH special schools is that public schools, considering the linguistic delay for many children who are DHH, can be the most restricted environment (linguistically and socially) of most DHH students (Johnson & Cohen, 1994; Moores, 2001).

In SA, many teachers of the DHH are influenced by those controversies for many years, therefore this study was an attempt to understand the complexity of DHH inclusion from the point of view of teachers within the context of SA.

The next section gives an overview of the structure of this thesis and focus of each chapter.

## **1.1 Thesis Structure Overview**

This thesis is presented in nine chapters as follows

**Chapter one- Introduction**

 This chapter gives an overview of the current study in terms of its context and classification as a study concerned with the inclusive education of children who are DHH at the primary stage and with DHH education. The chapter also contains a presentation of the research questions and objectives of the study that it sought to answer by conducting interviews with teachers. the chapter ends with a presentation of some of the key terms used throughout this thesis.

**Chapter two - Research context**

This chapter aims to give the reader an overview of the research environment and context of the study in terms of education system in SA, and cultural aspects of the country from which the data were collected. The chapter begins by giving an overview of the country's geographical and economic location, followed by a summary of the public and special education systems, with an explanation of the most important laws and legislation related to disability as well as the rights for Saudi disabled people. In the last section, the chapter focuses on the education of the DHH in particular and the role of their teachers, who were the participants in this study.

**Chapter three - Inclusive education**

This chapter is the first part of the literature review. It focuses on reviewing of the literature of inclusive education in terms of history, origins, definitions, meanings, and the most important basic principles on which it was built. In the last section of the chapter, the history of inclusion in SA is reviewed along with an overview of the stages in how it was practiced and developed.

**Chapter four - Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

This chapter is the second part of the literature review. It is concerned with reviewing how ‘deafness’ and ‘hard of hearing’ are understood, drawing on models of disabilities, terminologies, and related definitions. Also, a description of communication modes, and instruction methods for children who are DHH will be covered. The chapter provides a discussion of inclusion in the context of educating children who are DHH and how it is conceptualised by identifying some of the educational considerations, which have primarily influenced the field. This chapter also reviews some of the key ideas which have underpinned the inclusion of children who are DHH over the past years and the most important trends. The chapter concludes with a review of previous research conducted in the area of teachers' perceptions about DHH inclusion.

**Chapter five - Methods**

In this chapter, the stages of conducting the current study was presented in terms of the philosophical framework, research methodology and methods, data collection and analysis procedure. In addition, the chapter explained any difficulties that the researcher faced during the data collection and analysis stages as well as justifying the researcher's choices and selections.

**Chapter six- Data analysis part one**

This chapter is the first of three chapters devoted to presenting and discussing the findings of my study. Each theme is discussed in a separate chapter in addition to its associated subthemes. This chapter presents the first theme ‘Teachers’ of the DHH Understanding of the Philosophy of Inclusion. Under this theme there are four sub-themes divided into four main areas of DHH inclusion. (a) how teachers conceptualise inclusion as philosophy and practice. (b) Teachers’ understandings of what makes practice inclusive. (c) Teachers' Views on the Impact of Administrative Systems on Inclusion. (d) Isolation: The Impact of Practising Inclusion.

**Chapter seven**: **Data analysis part two**

This chapter is the second chapter of the presentation and discussion of the findings. The chapter consists of one main theme and four sub-themes, all of which revolve around ‘Teachers’ Perceptions of The Factors Affecting their Role in Inclusive Schools’. The sub-themes discuss (a) Frustration as a Factor Influencing Teachers Role in Inclusive Education. (b) The General Curriculum and its Influence on Teachers’ Roles. (c) Teachers’ Views on the Impact of their Colleagues’ Awareness of Disability on their work. (d) Teachers’ Views of The Impact of The Level of Collaboration and the Lack of Work Guidelines in Inclusive Schools.

**Chapter eight: Data analysis part three**

This chapter is the third chapter of the presentation and discussion of the findings. This chapter focuses on the third theme, which revolves around ‘Teachers’ Perceptions of The Experience of Their Children Who are DHH in Inclusive Schools’. This theme includes three sub-themes about the factors impacting children's experiences in inclusion as follow: (a) Teachers’ Views of the Impact of Diagnosis on Children’s Experiences in Inclusive School Language delay (b) Teachers’ Views of the Impact of Language Delay on Children's Experiences in Inclusive Schools. (c) Teachers’ Views of the Impact of Partial Inclusion on the Experience of Children Who are HH

**Chapter nine - Conclusions**

The final chapter of this thesis provides summaries of the findings in light of three research questions. The chapter also draws some suggestions and practical recommendations for those interested in inclusion in SA. In the other sections of this chapter, the limitations and difficulties that have associated the implementation and writing of this research will be clarified as well as proposing some areas for future studies that may contribute to the exploration of inclusion in SA from other points of view. At the end of this chapter my personal experience and the new skills that he learned during his research journey are explained**.**

## **1.2 The Aim of My Study**

The aim of my study was to investigate and explore the experiences and perceptions of teachers of DHH who are involved in inclusive education programs in SA. It involved an in-depth focus on their daily challenges and opportunities, which they face daily as an inclusive teacher of children who are DHH. Additionally, the study explored the teachers’ understandings and conceptions about inclusive education as well as their perceptions of its policy. Moreover, teachers’ attitudes, thoughts, and suggestions provide rich and essential information towards such a project because of their critical role. This study’s findings will help decision-makers assess and improve the current inclusive education practices especially for children who are DHH.

The next section sets out my research question and their associated objectives.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What are the teachers’ of the DHH perceptions and conceptions towards the inclusion of students who are DHH in SA?
2. What are the difficulties and challenges that teachers of DHH encounter in DHH inclusive programs in SA?
3. What are the teachers of the DHH visions, ideas, or suggestions to improve current inclusive practices for children who are DHH in SA?

### **1.3.1 Research Objectives**

**1**- Exploring the meanings adopted by teachers of DHH about inclusive education as an educational philosophy and the factors that contributed to building those meanings through years of experience.

**2-** Exploring factors that teachers believe greatly influence the process of the inclusion and affect their performance and the experiences of their students who are DHH.

**3-** Contribute more to literature related to inclusive education in the Saudi context in general and in the field of education for the DHH in particular.

**4-** Understanding the level of services provided to students who are DHH in inclusive settings and identifying the educational needs for success in inclusion.

**5-** To understand how teachers of the DHH perceive their students' experiences at inclusive schools.

In the coming sections I explained my motivation and justification to carry out this research.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Within the literature of special education in general, and in the Deaf education literature in particular, there is a lack of research on Saudi Arabia (SA) (Al Reyes & Bent Ali, 2016a). The area I have decided to study in this research is considered one of the recent educational philosophies that many countries are attempting to apply with regard to children who are DHH (Hanafi, 2008). Therefore, it is hoped that this research will add to the effort by enriching the DHH education literature in S A. Moreover, the findings of this research would be helpful for capturing the current inclusion for DHH in SA and providing suggestions and recommendations for the decision-makers. This research generated valuable information to the Saudi Ministry of Education to address the strengths and weaknesses of the ongoing inclusive programs and their process. I personally believe it is crucial because it may provoke additional research that will help enhance education for DHH in this particular context. Although there have been some few attempts in exploring the inclusion for children who are DHH in SA (for example, Al Reyes & Bent Ali, 2016a; Hanafi, 2008), this study, to the best of my knowledge, is one of few qualitative studies conducted with teachers of the DHH in this location of SA.

## **1.5 Justification for Conducting this Research**

Education in SA, particularly DHH education, has substantially changed over the last twenty years. For instance, all children who are DHH in the past were taught in segregated schools with special (limited) curriculums and without access to higher education. Recently, the situation was completely different for those children. Throughout SA, there are about 316 inclusive programs serving children who are DHH (Aldabas, 2015). In addition, in 2004 and according to (Al-Mousa, 2010), DHH inclusive programs started to adopt the general curriculum used in Saudi public schools, which means that children who are DHH have access to the same materials as their hearing peers. Most recently, in 2011, the first official higher education program for DHH was established by King Saud University in Riyadh (Al Reyes, 2014). In consideration of all those changes, it is very important to identify challenges, needs, and possible improvements for these movements in DHH education. This research attempted to provide teachers of DHH with a platform and space to share their experiences about inclusive education and express their suggestions, visions, and constructive criticisms to reach an in-depth understanding of this provision in SA.

## **1.6 Terminologies and Key Words Used in This Study**

**Perceptions**

 Ideas, opinions, thoughts a group of people have in regard to how something seems. (Cambridge dictionary, 2021).

**Inclusion /inclusive education**

In this study, the terms inclusion and inclusive education are used to refer to the action of placing children who are DHH in public schools in the context of SA. The reason behind that is that in the Arabic language, which is the first language of the participants, there is no equivalent word to specifically describe “Mainstreaming”. In addition, in the context of this research, the Arabic word “دمج” is the official term that is used in documents, research, and discussion by teachers.

**Disabled people**

This term differentiates disability from impairment and refers to the social difficulties that prevent people from living their lives independently. According to the social model of disability, it is necessary to focus on the effects that people face that prevent them from reaching their needs Oliver & Barnes (2010).

**Children with special educational needs SEN**

This term refers to those children who are diagnosed with needs mentally, emotionally, physically, or socially, and then in need of special therapy, intervention, or care by a specialist (Alkahtani, 2016).

**Deaf and hard of hearing (DHH)**

The word Deaf with upper case is an indication of deafness as an identity for people or a society that use sign language primarily to communicate and share their Deaf culture (Moores, 2001). When it is used with the lower-case d, it medically indicates the case of any hearing problems in which an individual is diagnosed with a hearing loss that is 69 Db or more and the deafness is described as severe or profound (Marschark & Hauser, 2012). While hard of hearing term indicates that an individual is diagnosed with hearing loss less than 69Db and spoken language is the main way of communication through using hearing aids and training the residuals hearing. This study used both terms with capitalising as an abbreviation to refer to children who DHH and receive education in the inclusive settings.

**Regular/General classroom teachers**

Teachers who have a bachelor’s degree in a specific subject area and teach children in the general primary classrooms relying on the general national curriculum provided by the ministry of education.

**Special education teachers**

Teachers who have a bachelor’s degree in special education and are qualified to teach in any special educational setting according to their study focus (category of disability).

**Teachers of Deaf and hard of hearing students**

Teachers who have a bachelor’s degree in special education with a focus in hearing impairment (DHH education) and are qualified to teach in special/segregated DHH schools or in DHH inclusive programs attached to a public school.

## **1.7 Chapter summary**

This chapter defines the general direction of this current study as a study concerned primarily with inclusion of children who are DHH through their teachers because of their important role in the application process. The study was carried out in search of an answer to three research questions related to teachers' perceptions in general and the difficulties they face in inclusion environments, in addition to suggestions or visions that would contribute to the development of services provided to students in inclusion programs. The justifications for choosing a qualitative method to conduct this research due to its rarity in SA, especially on the subject of inclusive education, were also explained. There was also a presentation of the most important terms used frequently in the coming chapters and their interpretations within the limits of the current study.

# Chapter Two: The Educational Research Context in Saudi Arabia (SA)

## **2.0 Chapter introduction**

The previous chapter summarises the overall purpose of my study. This chapter provides the reader with a brief overview of the Saudi educational system and its processes, policies, and structures. It will also explain how children with special educational needs (SENs), in general, and children who are DHH, in particular, are involved within the system according to Saudi legislations and policies. I explain how the general and special education systems are fundamentally different in terms of the nature of the teaching, the number of students, and the content of the curriculum. In addition, the history of educating children who are DHH in SA and their educational options, and representation in classes attached to public schools or special school institutes will be discussed. The chapter also briefly discusses the Islamic view of disability and how the religious teachings of the Saudi society urge attention and sympathy with disabled people.

## **2.1 Overview of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (SA)**

The Kingdom of SA was founded in 1939 by King Abd Al-Aziz bin Abd al-Rahman Al Saud (The World Factbook, 2018). It is the largest country in the Arabian Peninsula, sharing borders with all other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. It has a population of 32.94 million people (The World Bank, 2018). Economically, SA is one of the world’s largest oil producers (BBCNews, 2018) (See the SA map in appendix #1). In the last five years, SA spent nearly an average 130,000.000.000 Saudi Riyale (equal to 26463921967.96 GP) each year in education as the number of students in all stages reaches 6187776 (male & female) (Ministry of Education, 2022). The percentage of disabled people in S A is estimated at about 10% of the total population, where their number is estimated at about according to the last statistic in 2017 about 3200000. It is estimated that the number of people who are DHH is about 80282 (General Authority for statistics, 2022).

In the next section, I will provide an overview of the structure and stages of the Saudi educational system.

## **2.2 Educational System in SA**

The modern form of education in SA started with the establishment of the Ministry of Education in 1953 (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 2006). Since then, the education system has grown in many different aspects such as administrational structure (responsibilities), educational policies (new policies adopted), and philosophies (for example, inclusion, after many years of segregation for SENs students). Mainly, SA is a country where Islamic rules are followed in many aspects of life including education (Alyami, 2014). Further, the whole educational system in SA is mainly influenced by the holy book of Quran and what has been authentically passed down by prophet Mohammed since about 1400 years ago. As a result, education policy is also based on many religious and social ideologies. As an example, generally Islamic laws require segregation between males and females (who are not direct relatives), which resulted in a segregated educational system based on gender (Rabaah, Doaa, & Asma, 2016). In addition, education policy also guarantees free education for all citizens in all levels (general & higher) of education; nevertheless, it also provides free education for non-citizens in the general levels (up to 18 years old) (Al Shaer, 2007). Regarding education levels, there are two main levels of education in SA: general and higher education. General education is concerned with the compulsory education procedure from the age of 3 until the end of secondary school at the age of 18. The higher level relates to any educational activities after students have finished the general level. The general level of education is the focus of my research. The general education level can be divided into 4 main stages: (1) pre-primary; (2) primary; (3) intermediate; and (4) secondary (Rabaah et al., 2016; SAn Cultural Mission, 2006). At the pre-primary stage, children are enrolled at the age of 3 and taught (play-based education) as preparation for the next stage until they reach their fifth year. At the age of six, students start the primary stage, which is compulsory for all, and lasts for 6 years. They are introduced to different subject areas such as Islamic studies, Arabic language, maths, science, and social studies (Rabaah et al., 2016; SAn Cultural Mission, 2006; Sedgwick, 2001). After completion of the primary schooling, students move to the intermediate level. The duration for this stage starts at the age of 12 and continues to the age of 15 (3 years). Students at this level are similarly taught the same subjects but at an advanced level; however, English language teaching is introduced in this stage for the first-time (Sedgwick, 2001). Upon finishing the intermediate schooling in the general education level, the secondary school stage commences duration from 15 to 18). At this level of education, and specifically in the second year, students are required to follow one of two main tracks (areas of focus): scientific studies or humanities studies (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 2006; Sedgwick, 2001). That decision or selection will decide somehow the student’s academic future. For instance, a student in humanities cannot follow any scientific discipline at the higher education level (university).

Having talked about the general levels of education, the next section is concerned with the legislative aspect of disability in SA.

## **2.3 Disability Notion, Policy, and Regulation in SA.**

The best way to start this section is by briefly discussing the concept of disability with a focus on the Saudi context. That is because understanding disability is different from place to another, and the influence people adopt is never the same (Devlieger, 2005).

Disability is known as any physical or mental impairment that affects people’s life continuously and prevents them from living day-to-day life (Goodley, 2011). As a result, disability somehow “evokes a marginalised place” for the disabled person within society (Goodley, 2011, p. 1). In Sa, as an Arab Muslim country, the concept of disability is influenced by many different perspectives such as Islamic (religious) view, medical view, and social view. I will explain each of these in turn. Within the Islamic view, (based in what is mentioned in the two main sources of Islam, the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah which is what has been authentically narrated from prophet Mohammed’s life) disability is viewed as existing as a natural part of life, but also that disabled people and disadvantages should be treated well and get the appropriate care they need (Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud, & Shahminan, 2012; Bazna & Hatab, 2005). As an example, for the Islamic view toward people with disability is what the Holy Qur’an (80-1-10) mentioned about the story of prophet Mohammed when he turned away from a blind man who wanted to learn about Islam (because he was trying to get some of the tribe’s leaders’ attention in Makkah):

(The Prophet) frowned and turned away.Because there came to him the blind man (i.e., ‘Abdullâh bin Umm-Maktûm, who came to the Prophet while he was preaching to one or some of the Quraish chiefs).And how can you know that he might become pure (from sins)?Or he might receive admonition, and the admonition might profit him?As for him who thinks himself self-sufficient,to him you attend;What does it matter to you if he will not become pure (from disbelief: you are only a Messenger, your duty is to convey the Message of Allâh).But as to him who came to you running and is afraid (of Allâh and His punishment). Of him you are neglectful and divert your attention to another.

Second, the medical model view of disability, which is based on the effects of disability on an individual compared to ‘normal’ or non-disabled ones. This view is dominant in most definitions of disability within the SA context including definitions adopted by the Saudi Ministry of Education (SME) as will be explained in detail in the following section (special education in SA) (Al-Jadid, 2013; Al-Mousa, 2010). Thirdly, the social model view that sees disability caused by barriers with society and disability as a difference (like Deafness from the perspective of socio-cultural view) influences the way disability is understood in SA (Devlieger, 2005; Peel, 2006). This view was introduced broadly in 2005 (by some well-known Saudi academics in the field of Deaf education Such as Tarqe Alryes & Yousef Alturki) as a different perspective toward Deafness and to support Deaf communities, Deaf culture, and sign language in SA.

With regard to disability policies, across the globe, disabled individuals, along with supporters, activists, or families, have for many years worked hard and fought for their rights and against exclusion through polities, studies, and education (Davis, 2005; Goodley, 2011). Accordingly, in SA, the first legislation regarding people with disabilities occurred in 1987 (Alquraini, 2010). Legislation of Disability (LD) aims to protect, help, and enhance the rights of people with disabilities who live in SA. As required by LD, a person with disability must go through the process of diagnosis and assessment carried-out by any governmental official (for example, Ministry of Health) to be eligible for the special education free services. It also requires all related agencies to help disabled people to reach self-reliance living by providing any needed training or rehabilitation services (Alquraini, 2010; Ministry of Health, 2018)

The Disabled Care System/Disability Codes (2001) followedtheLD more than ten years later. The following statement is the preface of the Disabled Care System in SA as shown on the King Salman Centre for Disability Research web page (2018, p 8). “The State shall guarantee the right of the disabled to services of prevention, care and rehabilitation. It shall encourage institutions and individuals to contribute to charitable work in the field of disability”. The Saudi government enacted this system in 2000 (Alharbi & Madhesh, 2018). The main purpose here was to help disabled people get free access to any needed services in any field such as health, rehabilitation services (Alquraini, 2010). In addition, the system specifies the kind of services that will be available for disabled people in these areas: health, education, training and rehabilitation, work, social domains, cultural and sports fields, media, and areas of complementary services. For instance, under the educational section the system:

“Includes the provision of educational and educational services at all levels (pre-school, public education, technical education and higher education) to suit the abilities and needs of persons with disabilities and to facilitate their enrolment, while continuously evaluating the curricula and services provided in this field” (King Salman Centre for Disability Research, 2018, p. 2).

Another important development in the field of legislation for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia is theRegulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI).The ministry of education, represented by the Directorate General of Special Education, established these regulations in 2001 as described by Aldabas (2015), in cooperation with a Saudi university that ran a special education department with academics holding degrees in special education (Alquraini, 2010). It was the first Saudi legislation that particularly focused on students with special needs and their educational rights. Generally, this policy initiative followed US special education policies, as guidelines, to help generate similar ones in SA. For example, the US Education for all Handicapped Children (EHC) in 1975 law was adopted in SA to ensure that all students with disabilities in SA should have access to the suitable special education program. Moreover, the RSEPI included categories (for example: hearing disability, learning disability, intellectual disability) for all kinds of disabilities, which are used to place students according to the nature of their disabilities and needs. Furthermore, it described the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and its procedure, members, and elements to be practised in special education programs (Aldabas, 2015; Alquraini, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2018). It is worth mentioning that even though RSEPI has been issued for many years in SA, it is not enacted for it in the educational environment and there is so much weakness related to the implementation of it (Alquraini, 2010).

### **2.3.1 Non-educational Services for disabled People in SA.**

Indeed, under the LD law (described above), the Saudi government supports and encourages any contribution within the field of disability whether institutions or individuals provide it (King Salman Centre for Disability Research, 2018). Numbers of institutions (governmental-owned and civil/charitable organisations) conduct other forms of efforts in SA for disabled people. The main mission of these institutions is to help disabled people and their families to receive any necessary services, which improve the quality of their life, such as rehabilitation, training and employment, assistive technologies, medical and psychological support (Ministry of Labor and Social Development, 2018). For example, Al-Jadid (2013) mentioned that, along with supporting individuals with disability in need, families are given free rehabilitation through institutions supported by the Saudi Ministry of Labor and Social Development. In addition, each person, who is officially diagnosed with a disability, is eligible for financial support and that may include monthly payments, voucher discounts, or free assistive technologies (for example a car, hearing aids) (Ministry of Labor and Social Development, 2018).

Having described the general education system, and broader policies for disability in the previous sections, the next section focus is an overview of the context for children with SEN education in SA.

## **2.4 Special Education in SA**

Before going further in this section, I will first discuss the meaning of ‘special education’ in the Saudi context. Special education refers to the educational aspect of teaching, serving, and supporting students with disabilities or educational needs (Al-Mousa, 2010; Alquraini, 2014; Battal, 2016; Ministry of Education, 2018). Therefore, SA is one of many countries around the world that has developed its own special education system. According to Alquraini (2010) people with disabilities did not receive any educational services in SA prior to 1958, instead, it was their parents' responsibility to provide any necessary needs including education (Al-Ajmi, 2006). The SME tried to educate children with SENs in the existing public schools at that time. However, that attempt did not last for long because it was not ideally planned for (Aldabas, 2015). For instance, school principals and general classroom teachers did not receive any training or preparation to support children with SEN. Later, in 1962, the establishment of the Special Learning Department, under the Ministry of Education, is considered as the formal beginning of special education in SA (Altamimi, Lee, Sayed-Ahmed, & Kassem, 2015). In addition, Al-Mousa (2010) highlighted that special education in SA started differently from many American and European countries by educating children with SEN in regular schools (the attempt discussed earlier) before it transformed toward the segregated learning style. Because of that transformation in education placement, special institutions started to spread throughout the country according to the students’ disability (Al-Mousa, 2010). At the beginning of that spread (around 1960), the first institution (Al-Noor institution) established under the special education department was to serve blind students (Al-Mousa, 2010; Aldabas, 2015). Subsequently, other institutions for all other kinds of disabilities increased dramatically over the following years (Aldabas, 2015). Further, in 1972 the Special Learning Department was upgraded to the Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE) to keep up with the rapid improvement in the special education field.

After many years of segregated education, in 2004 the DGSE at that time adopted the principles of inclusive education as it had gained so much attention intentionally. In the 1990s, different learning settings started to emerge within public schools in SA (Al-Mousa, 2010). In other words, the SME adopted an inclusive education philosophy again but this time with significantly more effort and planning. Today, according to the SME (2018), there are about 10,600 special education programs in mainstream schools across the country serving 133,609 students with different disabilities or needs.

Having described the brief history of the education of children with SEN in SA, I now turn to the placements and educational practices for children who are DHH. Being deaf or hard of hearing is one of the categories of SEN in the Saudi educational system and the focus of my research.

## **2.5 DHH Education and The Educational Placements in SA.**

Generally, DHH education in SA has been influenced by many factors such as the main educational system, special education concepts (deafness as a form of disability), and developments and changes over time (such as those presented earlier, for example inclusive, segregation, administration). According to the Directorate General of Special Education each disability is educationally supervised by a special committee (Ministry of Education, 2018). For example, the ‘Hearing Disability committee’ is responsible for monitoring schools/programs that provide educational services for children who are DHH within the general levels of education.

Historically, the first institutions to educate children who are DHH (one for boys and the other for girls) were established in 1964 in the capital city, Riyadh. This date is known (in Saudi) as the official beginning for DHH education in SA (Ministry of Education, 2018). Those institutions are called ‘Al-Amal institutions’ (schools) where sign language is used in all aspects of teaching (Aldabas, 2015). Up until 2004, Al-Amal institutions adopted limited curriculums in all subject areas. For example, children who are DHH were taught 3 units in maths out of 10 compared with their hearing peers in public schools. Then, the Ministry of Education initiated a new policy that required the use of the same curriculum used in public schools in all DHH schools (Al-Mousa, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2018). This new policy was applied to all new DHH at that time and not for those who were beyond first grade.

Currently and like other students with disabilities in SA, children who are DHH are taught in two main educational settings. First, residentialschools, where students receive educational and residential services and spend most of their time during the week before they can go back home each weekend. This is applied to those who live more than 100-kilometres away from the school. Most students in this kind of setting are identified as Deaf (diagnosed with moderate or profound deafness) and who use sign language as their first mode of communication.

Second, inclusive programs where students are divided by the degree of hearing loss and the mode of communication (Ministry of Education, 2018). Based on that, there are two types of DHH inclusive programs: (1) Deaf classrooms that use a similar approach and philosophy to that adopted in Al-Amal institutions (described above) with the difference that no residential services are provided.

The other inclusive setting (2) is hard of hearing classrooms where students are diagnosed with mild/moderate hearing loss and as such are being taught according to the Oralism approach (a philosophy to educate children who are DHH through spoken language, lip reading, and auditory training with the elimination of sign language (McCullough & Duchesneau, 2015). In both inclusive settings (DHH classrooms), children who are DHH share any social activities (including mealtimes, sports) with their hearing peers during the school day; however, they are taught in separate classrooms within the school for the rest of the day. Consequently, the number of children who are DHH (boys and girls) enrolled in those inclusive programs reached 19,589 in 2014 (Alquraini, 2014).

The following section aims to give an overview of teachers of the DHH qualifications, work tasks, and responsibilities in the context of SA.

## **2.6 Teachers of the DHH in SA**

The DHH education in SA started with only 11 teachers in 1964 (Alquraini, 2014). That is because there were not enough training programs or universities to prepare and qualify teachers to work with DHH children. The first special education department that trained teachers of DHH opened in 1984. By 2002, there were only two departments across the country. The limited numbers of departments and the growing numbers of children who are DHH joining schools created a need for more programs to prepare teachers to meet the educational needs of those children professionally. As of today, there are more than 15 universities responsible for training teachers to work in the field of DHH education. In those universities, teachers are granted a bachelor’s degree in special education with a choice of area of focus such as DHH education, intellectual disability, or autism. Teachers receive more than 125 hours of teaching divided in 8 levels (semesters) and 30 hours out of those 125 must be concentrated in a core area. For example, for a teacher of DHH students, in this case, 30 hours of studying must be in the area of DHH education. In addition, and as a way of encouraging people to work with children who are DHH and with all children with SENs, the Saudi government adds an extra 30% of the monthly salary for all special education teachers (Al Mousa, 2010).

In addition to the previous tasks, teachers of children who are DHH are also required with some additional responsibilities as follows. First, assessing and diagnosing the educational needs for each child in the classroom or during instruction to design an appropriate support plan. Second, teachers should take part of and providing consults for the intervention program if needed for the child. Third, conducting occasional (every month) evaluation of the children’s academic progress within the school system and student’ online records. Fourth, contribute in all related events to the field of DHH education such as conferences, research, or social recognition days or events (for example individuals who are DHH week in SA or the day of sign language in SA) (Ministry of Education, 2021). Moreover, the Saudi Education & Training Evaluation Commission (2020) identified 6 aspects of evaluating teachers of DHH in inclusive schools as follows.

1. Explains the concept, principles and applications of inclusive education.

2. Describes the concepts and principles of universal access (UA).

3. Explains the Multi-Level Support System (MTSS) and its implementation procedures.

4. Defines students' needs for assistive technology.

5. Teachers should use various methods of adaptations and transpositions appropriate for each category of Disability to access the general curriculum.

6. Describes the role of the assistant teacher in the classroom

However, according to some previous studies carried out on the inclusion of children who are DHH, especially in the Arab world, it was shown that many educational systems do not clarify the extent or limits of those tasks required of teachers. For instance, research carried out by Al-Dabanh and Al-Hasn (2009) found that most of the responsibilities and work tasks introduced by the Jordan education system for teachers who work in inclusion are not fully covered due to the lack of clarity of those practical regulations. In another example from the Saudi context, Alnahdi, Saloviita, & Elhadi (2019) investigated pre‐service teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. Participants explained that they accept inclusion, but they worry when it is not clear to what extent their role should be (extra work) and what cost others should pay to implement inclusion.

## **2.7 Chapter summary**

This chapter outlined in detail the context of the current study in SA in terms of the nature of the educational systems, and the educational options available to all students. A comparison was also made between the nature of general education, with its twelve stages, and special education. The fundamental difference between the two systems lies mainly in the nature of the teaching, the number of students, and the curriculum. The history of educating for children who are DHH in SA and the educational options, represented in classes attached to public schools or special school institutes were also shed light on. The chapter also briefly discussed the Islamic view of disability and how the religious teachings of the Saudi society urge attention and sympathy with disabled people.

# Chapter Three: Literature Review Part One: Inclusive Education

## **3.0 Chapter Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I discussed the context of SA as the location of my study as well as its educational system with a brief overview of the educational settings for children with SEN students, and for students who are DHH, in particular. In addition, the overall governmental policies/codes, services, and regulations for disability within the Saudi system were described.

It is worth noting before introducing this chapter that the literature reviews relied mainly, whether in this chapter or in the next chapter, on those studies carried out in the context of where I am studying (UK) and in the context of all the data collection for the research (SA) and on the contexts that affected the researcher during his previous study (US). This literature review focuses on three key areas:

(i) an exploration of inclusion as a philosophy and as an educational practice.

(ii) a consideration of deafness and hearing impairment in the context of inclusive education

(iii) a review of the literature already available which focuses on the ways in which teachers themselves perceive inclusion.

Some literature from outside the UK, US, and SA was reviewed to help broaden the discussion. That review was done in a variety of ways through publicly available search engines such as Google Scholar or what the University of Sheffield Library provides for access to private search databases such as Sage, and The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education. Local search engines in SA were also searched for accessing research written in Arabic, which reflects the data collection environment for this research, such as the Saudi Digital Library. Multiple search terms were used depending on the focus of the section to be reviewed. For example, ‘Teachers' Perceptions towards Inclusion’, ‘Inclusion of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing’, ‘Mainstreaming’ and ‘Inclusive Education for the Deaf’, were used to reach specific studies on the inclusion of children who are DHH in particular. The electronic references were also highly relied upon in this study due to the lack of access to the university library for long periods during the pandemic period.

The idea of ​​inclusive education revolves around three basic elements. First, developing the skills of children with SENs, and others disadvantaged, educationally and socially, through appreciating social diversity and achieving justice and social equality. Emphasizes the right of children with SENs to learn alongside their peers in educational settings. Inclusion from an economic point of view contributes to reducing the expenses that governments pay for the private education sectors, especially in areas remote from cities (Clark, Dyson, Millward, & Robson, 1999; Mitchell, 2014; Schuelka, 2018). However, when the interest started to increase in in research about the early childhood ,through some initiatives and programs in some Western countries, there was a lack of references that emphasized inclusion practices for children with SENs or difficulties, but it happened through the developments that followed later in the fields of early childhood and special education (Odom & Diamond, 1998). Hence, this chapter serves to present the details of the theoretical, historical and educational development of inclusion. The chapter begins by turning its attention to discussing the concept of inclusion and its meanings, definitions, and the confusion usually happens between inclusion and integration. Then, the chapter offers an overview of the history of inclusion influence of the human rights perceptive as well as the most important trends towards inclusion (Landorf and Nevin, 2007). The chapter will also highlight the rationales and main principles presented in the literature of why inclusion is important and should be practiced. The chapter then concludes with an overview of inclusive education in the context of SA.

## **3.1 Definitions of Inclusion**

Many countries across the globe over the last thirty years have considered inclusive education as an important long-term goal in educating children with SENs which requires changes and modifications in their educational systems (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006; Elias Avramidis & Brahm Norwich, 2002; De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). However, each country has taken up inclusion in different ways and described different meanings in the philosophies, policies, and practises they come up with.

Inclusive education within the special education context can be simply described as keeping pupils with disabilities in regular education settings instead of placing them in special settings (De Boer et al. 2011). However, the concept of inclusive education can be understood to go beyond the context of special education and go further than the common question of where children with SEN should be taught? Inclusive education as a broad concept or a philosophy includes all people involved (teachers, staff, students with SEN, other students), schools, and educational systems (Allan, 2006; Stephen Powers, 2002; Runswick‐Cole, 2011). In other words, the idea of inclusive education was not grown especially for only children with SENs or for disabled children, as some people may think (Alharbi & Madhesh, 2018). This view is also pointed out by Carrington (1999) who asserted that at the beginning of discussing inclusive education, it was understood as if it was only an innovation in educating children with SENs, but that the focus changed to think about all students. Similarly, Stubbs (2008) suggested that disabled people were perhaps most likely the group of people excluded from education; therefore, inclusion of disabled people, as well as the concept of SENs and special education have been always linked to inclusion.

However, the shift to thinking about inclusion as being about all children varies from context to context and from nation to nation. In the UK, for instance, inclusive education is sometimes discussed as if it is primarily for students with SENs, whereas, at other times it is used: “as a value system concerned with the rights of all marginalized groups and with building an inclusive society” (Powers, 2002, p. 231). In the same vein, Hodge, (2017) asserted that in all cases, inclusion or social justice must not be limited to financial or accessibility concepts but it should be much deeper than that. It must be understood more deeply through the concepts of coexistence between people in terms of joint work to protect the society and give people the opportunities they want to live as they see fit for them without classifying them by religion, race, educational and economic level.

In the US, as another example, inclusion is understood through two main ideas. The first is what is related to the education of children with SENs in terms of the educational placement (where they are taught) and method and contents of teaching (what to teach). This view is largely used in educational sectors in the form of decisions and regulations (Abery, Tichá, & Kincade, 2017). This view of inclusion can be understood as being closely associated with the main principles and notions of special education. The second view of ​​understanding inclusion is in terms of social aspects such as social acceptance of differences between people and concepts of belonging and self-esteem (Chakraborti-Ghosh, Orellana, & Jones, 2014). However, in any case, there is still confusion and ambiguity in the use of all related terms of inclusion such as mainstreaming, integration as I will describe below. In other words, the use of those terms is influenced by people's view of inclusion whether it is seen as a philosophy or as human right, educational right (Abery, Tichá, & Kincade, 2017; Chakraborti-Ghosh, Orellana, & Jones, 2014). For instance, in SA, the term ‘mainstreaming’ is adopted by the SME to refer to: “educating children with special educational needs in regular education schools and providing them with special education services” (Al-Mousa, 2010, p. 17). Meanwhile, in practice teachers and policy makers use other terms such as ‘inclusive education’ or ‘inclusion’ with so much confusion not only in SA, but among all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states (Weber, 2012). In this respect, Marschark, Young, and Lukomski (2002) asserted that both mainstreaming, and inclusion are concerned with placing all students with SEN into public schools; nevertheless, they are different in practises. Inclusion, on the one hand, means that students are enrolled and supported within the regular classrooms, and they can participate in all aspects of the school day. Hence, it should be seen as a process that includes actions of reformation and restructuring of the inclusive school in order to be sure that all children regardless have the chance to access a wide range of opportunities, academically and socially, provided by the educational system (Hegarty et al,1981). As an example, and according to the UK Code of Practice (DfES, 2001), inclusion is identified as a whole process that makes schools and educational authorities modify their system, understanding, policies, and practises to ensure that all students are included. (Schuelka, 2018). Furthermore, Rieser (2012) explained that inclusion should be grounded fundamentally on the idea of equal opportunities for all children in school and to foster an inclusive school environment, inclusion must be viewed as a continuous action that leads us to the aim of accepting children with SENs (Booth, 1996; Ainscow, 1997; Norwich, 2008).

Those definitions stated above indicated that inclusion should entail a complete transformation of schools and the creation of an environment that includes children with SENs and to ensure that they can take part in general school activities alongside their peers. Furthermore, it has been suggested that, when attempting to implement an inclusive practice, all children with SENs should be taught in regular school or classrooms (Lipsky and Gartner, 1996; Booth, et al., 1998).

While, mainstreaming, on the other hand, refers to educating pupils in an attached special room within the public school and provided with supportive services and aids (Marschark et al., 2002). It is still the case that the terms inclusion, and mainstreaming can be used interchangeably, particularly in the SA context as I will describe in the last section of this chapter. In addition, mainstreaming means to place a child within an extending system. That means to place a child with SEN in a classroom within their local neighbourhood school. in this case the child also can have the opportunity to interact and participate in some of the school activities. Moreover, mainstreaming should provide students with some additional services according to their diagnosis or needs (Madden & Slavin, 1983). In other words, ‘mainstreaming’ is about the need of changing a system to be suitable for learners through some practices which make it part of the wide notion of inclusion (Foreman, 2014; Rieser, 2012; Stinson & Antia, 1999).

Integration is also another concept usually included in the debate about inclusive education. therefore, many professionals and educators who work in education in general and in inclusive schools in specific often use these terms interchangeably, but still they have different meanings from each other (Haegele,2019), even though they are all usually used in relation to the process of moving children with SENs from separate or special educational settings to public one, or less restricted settings, with their non-disabled peers (Marschark et al., 2002). Booth (2000) described integration as when children with SENs participate in social events that happen in public schools. Zionts (2005) also supported this description and described integration as the collaboration of children away from segregated settings alongside in their inclusive and mainstreamed settings. However, and as an example of a definition of integration taken from the Saudi context, Shoqair (2011) defined integration as the need to educate, train and care for disabled people alongside their peers in the same environment. He also clarified that the term ‘inclusion’ is more appropriate when it involves more social aspects of disabled people to society. That means the terms ‘inclusion’ is more appropriate to use to emphasize the social outcomes while ‘integration’ is to emphasize more the occupational aspect about disabled people.

But more broadly, sometimes the idea of ​​integration is interpreted as an adjustment made by disabled people to the context and culture of the school. Hence, in contrast to the way that inclusion has been conceptualised, integration does not require mutual adjustment process that respects the individual differences of children (Sandri, 2014). Thus, in the case of DHH, the integration of children who are DHH in general settings does not always imply that they are involved in the same classrooms as with their hearing peers and share curricula. Rather, it is focused on providing those children with opportunities suitable to their requirements and needs. It is largely based on the need for children who are DHH to feel that they belong in the society through the mainstream settings. The key goal of that is to ensure that children who are DHH are socially included in and be part of the surrounding communities. However, it is not always achieved as school administrative systems play a vital role in supporting success in such environments especially for children who are DHH.

Garcia and Alban‐Metcalfe (1998) explained the constant confusion between the concept of inclusion, mainstreaming, and integration has sometimes meant that their meaning converge. Often all meanings and definitions of all terms refer to the joining of one thing or part to another, larger part of it, to unify a whole picture, insinuating that small part was missing before that unity. That means children with SEN should be taught alongside their peers and have similar access to resources within school, and this is why so many professionals use them as synonyms or without attention to their different practical meanings (Foreman, 2014).

Given this confusion about the meanings and use of the terms ‘inclusion’, ‘mainstreaming’ and ‘integration’, inclusion remains a broader and more comprehensive term than integration and mainstreaming because it contains in its concept both sides (Vislie, 2003). Further, inclusion is not and should not be understood just as an educational philosophy (Hodge, 2017; Powers, 2002). Rather, it should be seen through a broad view to the community itself and the way of building strong, diverse, and accepting society. To achieve that through education, schools should ask how they can meet the needs of a child regardless of any perceived differences (Foreman, 2014; Garcia & Alban‐Metcalfe, 1998). Further, inclusion is a continuous process that should find ways to meet all kinds of diversities as well as using those differences to foster learning positively (Rieser, 2012). Thus, the terminologies and definitions of inclusive education have shifted from the concept of segregated learning to integrated and then finally to inclusive education. This shifting not only reflects the concerns of special educators that children with SENs are not receiving an appropriate education, but also that they are trying to change public attitudes toward inclusion. This ultimately brings them closer to creating and supporting the idea of a fully inclusive community (Thomas, 1997; Barton, 1999; Reid, 2005).

Regardless of confusion that sometimes happens in understanding the concepts of inclusion integration, and mainstreaming, they all suggest that all staff, members, teachers, and systems in inclusive schools must be ready to provide all of the demands and educational services for all children. In addition, they all support to give the right to everyone to access education regardless of his/her need or difference. That practically means, it should be applied to many different groups who do not have access to education, not only those with disabilities. However, even if we assume that there is an agreement in some contexts or places about what inclusive education means in theory, it will be taken up in different ways in practice and the meanings of the terms are still widely contested (Powers, 2002)

The following sections focus on the aspect of the history through which the inclusion developed and the important events that accompanied it, as well as summaries of the rationales behanded it and the approaches for application.

## **3.2 The History and Emergence of Inclusive Education**

In this section, I cover the historical background and conceptual and philosophical roots for inclusion as well as its influence on the education of children in the field of special education.

Historically the emergence of inclusive education was rooted when the civil rights movement reached its peak in the 1960s in the US. The orientation of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was to achieve equal opportunities and rights for all people, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or disability. (Landorf and Nevin, 2007). That made inclusion influenced by the concepts of democracy and it spread across contexts and boundaries where it was subjected to different interpretations and understandings (Nilholm, 2006). As a result, and during the 1970s and 1980s, there were many questions, by researchers, about the nature of the special education field and its practices such as educating children with SENs in segregated schools over the previous years in most Western countries (Hausstätter & Jahnukainen, 2014). Over the following years, some conventions and movements influenced inclusion. To illustrate, I will briefly shed light on some of the key moments in the history of inclusive education through discussion. Other moments will be briefly shown on table 1 below.

According to Stubbs (2008), the World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990) identified some of the difficulties that marginalised groups may face when they joined public educational systems. The Education for All movement was firstly held in Thailand, in 1990 for the purpose of admitting that numbers of children excluded from education, including those with SENs, is large around the world. However, there was no use of the term ‘inclusion’ within its statements and documents. Even so, ''this conference was a landmark conference in the development of thinking about inclusive education (even though the concept of inclusive education was not used at this juncture” (Miles & Singal, 2010, p. 3).

Four years later, in 1994, in Salamanca, Spain, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Conference on Special Needs Education, called for more push and effort in light of The *Education for All* movement (Ainscow, 1997; Artiles & Dyson, 2005). The Salamanca conference drew over 300 participants from 92 states and 25 representatives from some international organisations. The conference tried to encourage for more actions to achieve the goal of the Education for All Policy by increasing the change in the educational systems towards more inclusive education (Ainscow, Slee, & Best, 2019).

Then in 2000, in Dakar, the Education for All provided a framework that aimed to provide every child with a primary level of education by 2015 (Dreyer, 2017). Therefore, UNESCO (2017, p.7) provided a definition of ‘inclusion’, which refers “a process that helps to overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners”. This, of course, required some changes and modification in teaching styles, learning environment, and content. In addition, inclusion through the Salamanca conference was discussed via some specific ideas and concepts:

* Children are fundamentally different in their needs, personalities, and abilities, which is normal.
* Children with SEN and disabilities should join schools near where they live, therefore schools should be prepared and suitable to serve them. That includes curricula and any other resources.
* Inclusion is very important and related to human rights and dignity which need to be socially supported and a schools’ role is crucial in creating an inclusive community (Stubbs, 2008).

Another important convention that influenced inclusive education was the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006. Mainly, its aim was to describe in detail the rights of disabled people and set out the guidelines to carry out these rights. In its article 24 (b) – Education, (CRPD) stated that: “persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live” (United Nations, 2019).

**Table 3- 1 Summary of key dates in the history of inclusive education**



Information retrieved from (Dreyer, 2015; Rieser, 2012; Stubbs, 2008; United Nations, 2019)

### **3.2.1 Rationales behind practising inclusive education**

It is very important in any discussion of inclusion to highlight the reasons and rationales behind it as it became globally practiced by many educational systems. In other words, the question of ‘why should inclusive education be applied?’ should be addressed especially with children with SEN. In this respect, Bailey Jr, McWilliam, Buysse, and Wesley (1998) asserted that inclusion for children with SEN has been influenced by four general beliefs over years as described here: legislative, ethical, empirical, and rational beliefs.

According to the legislative belief, segregation for people based on their abilities, including those in early ages, should not be legal. This has led to the emergence of some legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Similarly, In the UK context, the 1981 Education Act, is underpinned by the idea that children with SEN or disabilities have the right to take part and access resources in public schools (Hassanein, 2015). Drawing on ethical beliefs, segregation is viewed from the perspective of the civil rights movement. Simply put, children with disabilities have the same right to access and participate in daily school as their peers. Further, excluding people from their normal educational and social situations makes people vulnerable (Lusthaus, Gazith, & Lusthaus, 1992). Thirdly, the empirical belief that is built on research evidence that inclusion can positively affect children's development. More specifically, when it came to social skills, play behaviour, and engagement, the data strongly supported the benefits of inclusive environments. (Bailey Jr et al., 1998). In the same vein, Graves and Tracy (1998) pointed out that even in the literature of segregation education there is not enough evidence for its efficacy. Finally, the rational belief assumes that children with disabilities should be only included when there are benefits for them. Namely, it should provide them with “a more challenging learning environment; (b) opportunities to observe and learn from more competent peers; (c) real-life contexts for learning skills; and (d) a more socially responsive and facilitative environment” (Bailey Jr et al., 1998, p. 30).

### **3.2.2 Models of Inclusive Education**

Practically, inclusion can be implemented following numerous models and approaches, however Stubbs has summarised three useful models of inclusion which offer a broad account of these approaches (2008):

#### **The social model**

This model is based on the assumption that change and modification has to be in the educational system and according to the students’ differences and characteristics. It stems from the civil right movement that sees disability caused by society and not by the person’s impairment (Stubbs, 2008).

#### **Twin-track approach**

The twin track technique attempted to combine both sameness and difference at the identical time. On the one hand, this policy calls for mainstreaming, but on the other, it calls for special measures to alleviate the injustices encountered by disabled people (Dhanda, 2008). Hence,this is model assumes that even if the educational system has changed in line with the social model aims, some students and their families still need some other forms of support and resources such as health and social care. Hence, using two approaches in the same time is necessary to reach full inclusion (Stubbs, 2008).

#### **Rights-based approach**

This model assumes that the inability of disabled people to participate in their surrounding communities cannot be entirely attributed to the effects of their disabilities. But there are other societal factors that help to exclude them, such as the design of buildings, means of transportation, the way some institutions work, and even the wrong social attitudes about them (Lawson, 2005). This perspective emphasizes the equal rights of all individuals to use the societal resources available in each individual's immediate environment such as education, health and social services (Browne & Millar, 2016). It namely focusses on education as rights with consideration of other important elements such as social participation, accountability and clarity, and equality (Stubbs, 2008).

The following section serves to give the reader an overview of how meanings, understandings, interpretations of inclusive education differ from contexts to another and then the focus narrowed to the definition and practice of inclusion in the Saudi context in more detail.

## **3.3 Inclusive Education interpretations across geographical, and cultural contexts**

The spread of inclusive education globally, the agreement of many countries to sign up to the Salamanca Statement on inclusive education that emerged from the conference in 1994, and absence of practical and common definitions for implementation have led to different interpretations throughout the world (Reindal, 2016). Therefore, in this section, I intend to explain different meanings of inclusion from different perspectives (languages, countries, or culture) followed by a brief overview of inclusion interpretation in contemporary SA. Before I do so, I would like to start by presenting the four aspects of how inclusion is discussed/defined in literature according to Göransson and Nilholm (2014) in their critical analysis of research on inclusive education. This will help us understand the extent of inclusion meaning in each context as we progress in this section. The four aspects start from specific to broader as shown here.

1. Definition that represents inclusive education as to place children with disabilities in public schools.
2. Specific and individual definitions that describe inclusion as meeting children with disabilities’ needs socially and academically.
3. General definitions that describe inclusion as meeting all children’s needs socially and academically.
4. Definitions that see inclusion as a way of making a society.

In Europe and according to Watkins and Meijer (2016) almost all countries believe that the important European and international declarations and resolutions on special education and inclusion represent the primary concepts underlying national policy and serve as a framework for country-level activity. However, the way in which those principles are applied into educational systems/teaching practices is largely different (Engelbrecht, 2013; Reindal, 2016; Watkins & Meijer, 2016). In the same vein, Farrell and Ainscow (2002) asserted that even after many years of developments and research to support and guideline inclusion, it is still hard to agree or to reach a common definition or practice. This confusion can exist within the same context in a single country rather than different ones. For example, Powers (2002) articulated that the meaning of inclusion in the UK is not direct to understand, rather, it is always different from teachers’ perspectives than literature and from what is being discussed in society. This explained her suggestion of an alternative definition as described below in this quote:

“Inclusive education is best conceived as a response to student diversity based on principles of equity and acceptance that aim to give all children equal rights to participation in mainstream curricula and communities, as valued, accepted, and fully participating members of those communities, and also rights to achieve as much as they can academically, physically, and in their social emotional development” (p.237).

This will help make inclusion more as a set of cultural values system that meets all students’ differences, needs, or disabilities.

Foster et al. (2003, p. 15) in their comparative analysis study of inclusive education definitions in different countries (Sweden, Northland, Greece, and USA) found that there is no “a universal definition of inclusion”. Instead, all definitions they analysed tended to agree in some common ideas as follows; First: there is always a gap between how inclusion is defined in a system or among people than in real practical life. Second, influencing factors of definitions in most countries are not well recognized and sometimes policies can force the use of specific language. Third, because of global connection between most countries through travelling and technologies, what happens in a country concerning inclusion can be easily adopted in another. Further, they found that the concept of inclusion should not be conceptualized without paying attention to other surrounding factors about each state. Namely, history, social values, location, policy, population, development of a country are all-important aspects that can appear within interpretation of inclusion. To illustrate, it was clear in the analysis that the history of slavery in the United States, which has led to the strong opinion that segregation invariably results in the disenfranchisement of people who are segregated. In Sweden as another example, inclusion is always connected to a full and equal participation that leads to a high quality of life. A possible reason beyond this vision is the solid welfare system there, which guarantees a good level of life and education for everyone (Doherty, 2012).

In Nigeria, as an example from Africa, Biermann (2016) claimed that because of various translations of Article 24 UN CRPD, multi-notions, policies, and practices have been generated. Hence, she carried out an analysis of previous efforts conducted in a specific period of time (around 70 documents & 40 interviews). The aim was to explore how inclusive education is discussed, understood, expressed by policy in the fields of special education and disabilities. As results, the analysis led to main four aspects of meanings as below:

First**,** it was clear in official documents of education and disabilities fields in Nigeria that inclusive education is a trend of many countries worldwide, which should educate all children in the same place no matter of their disabilities. However, most policy makers think it is nearly impossible to achieve with current situation of schools and educational system. Therefore, they chose not to include any children with SEN in their practice of inclusion. Second, instead of following the main idea of “one classroom education” as explained above, inclusive education is practiced as just for children with SEN as one way, or by including all other marginalised children as another way. Those two approaches have resulted on “increasing special education professionalisation or tackling educational exclusion” (p.13). Third, educational policies in Nigeria require a free and compulsory education for everyone, which is in accordance with “Education for all” and “inclusive education” regardless of the way. On other words, inclusive education in Nigeria can be simply achieved by providing different settings or placements and without placing all children in one classroom. Forth, national codes were developed to meet the common core of international ones concerning inclusive education no matter the way. The main goal was to reach an inclusive education as the outcomes and to respond to all children needs.

In middle east and around Arabian gulf countries, Gaad (2010) asserted not only that inclusive education is still considered as a new concept for many educational systems there, but also it continues to be a confusing concept when it comes to use of terminologies, definitions, and application by teachers and stakeholders. Further, inclusive education is mostly related to children with disabilities and discussed as a special education concept in general and focusing on where children with SEN should be taught in particular (Gaad, 2010; Weber, 2012). This controversy and confusion around the notion of inclusive education can be attributed to a number of reasons. First, even though many GCC states have accepted and adopted inclusive education as a global movement, in this part of the world literature, the resources are still not available to provide basic information about inclusion (definitions and terminology in particular) in an accessible language (Arabic) (Al Reyes & Bent Ali, 2016b; Altamimi et al., 2015; Dababneh & Al-Hassan, 2009; Gaad, 2010). Furthermore, there is a significant shortage in literature about inclusive education in the GCC states in their mother language. For instance, in the context of SA in particular, Altamimi et al (2015) found that, only two papers out of 116 that discussed inclusive education in SA were in the Arabic language. In addition, some other countries in the same region that use the same language (Arabic) but have so much diversity of population seemed to be another reason for the shortage in literature concerning inclusive education in the Arabic language. Further that diversity may generate different reactions and understanding to any inclusive provision as explained by Gaad (2010, p. 9) about the meaning of inclusive education in the United Arab Emirates in this quote.

“There are various Arab groups, as well as Iranians, Filipinos, Indians and large numbers of Europeans and Americans. They are all known as expatriates (expats) and make up approximately 70% of the population. As might be expected, individuals’ and or groups’ concepts of inclusion tend to differ according to race, culture and background. Therefore, if a certain provision is offered by the government or the private sector to two peers in a primary school, their families could refer to such provision differently due to such diversity”

Therefore, it can be said that the Saudi notion of inclusive education is very much similar to other countries in the area (Weber, 2012). It is usually discussed as part of the concept of and special education for children with SEN. That clearly appears in the official governmental documents and statements used by the SME as well as in discussion and words used by teachers, Arabic writers, and educational policy makers. As it was explained earlier, terminologies of inclusion are used interchangeably, which can be a sign of misunderstanding and SA is not an exemption of that (Al-Mousa, 2010). Thus, and according to the four aspects of inclusion definitions by Göransson and Nilholm’s that I addressed in the previous section the Saudi’s definition can be classified as one of those very specific definitions of inclusion, or on other words, ‘inclusion’ is identified as similar or equal to ‘special education’.

To conclude, interpretations of inclusive education are influenced by many different factors in a context that makes it sometimes appear or practiced uniquely in each country or place.

The next sections explains inclusion within the Saudi educational system and its international influence as well as the aways of applications and monitoring inclusive schools.

## **3.4 How Inclusive Education is Defined and Applied in the Context of SA**

This section aims to give an overview of inclusion in the context of this study to help the reader understand some of the themes and findings related to the administrative and practical aspects of inclusion in SA, which will be presented later in the findings chapters.

SA has based its model for the inclusion of children with SEN on the framework originally designed in the US. The main aim of this approach was to allow those children to receive education in the least restrictive settings possible (Al-Mousa, 2010; Aldabas, 2015). The concept of SEN in SA also was derived from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2007) and has been modified in a number of ways by the SME as I covered in chapter two under the sections of special education and regulations of disability in SA (()). Based on the Saudi concept, children with SENs are included into general classrooms or schools with the provision of support, supplementary teaching aids, and intervention services so they can get access to the same resources and curriculum as their peers in the same school. However, teaching methods and resources have to be adapted to meet the needs of those pupils, while other children who have severe eeds attend dedicated learning units within the school and are taught a simplified version of the subject matter. In addition, the educational system in SA encourages children with SEN to be socially in contact with their peers through non-curricular activities (Ministry of Education, 2022). In relation to the previous practises described, Alquraini (2012) explained that the Saudi schools still have not moved from the partial form of inclusion to full inclusion since partial inclusion policies remain widespread throughout the country. That means according to the Saudi context the partial form of inclusion is to have special classrooms for children with SEN within the public schools. The full form is to have all children in one classroom with support which is not yet reach or practiced. Hence, it is essential to keep in mind that terminologies commonly used to describe inclusive practice could become distorted as a result of the translation process, and therefore fail to accurately mirror the practises in SA, and throughout the Arab world. This is particularly true of terms such as inclusion, mainstreaming and integration, which all have quite different interpretations and describe different types of practises as explained earlier in this chapter under the definitions of inclusion section. For example, translation process of the Arabic word of inclusion (**دمج***Damg)* which is seen as equivalent of all three terms for an Arabic speaker and used in its literal meaning as an action combining or mixing of two things or more (Al-Ghamdi, 2020). Thus, while SA uses the term ‘inclusion’ to describe a particular practice, it does not have the exact same meaning in other contexts such as the US, or the UK where the term is broadly understood as value system of philosophy aimed to the creation of an inclusive and protective society (Hodge, 2017; Powers, 2002).

### **3.4.1 Children’s Eligibility for Inclusive Education in SA**

SA implements two types of inclusion: either partial or full inclusion. Partial inclusion involves children with SEN being taught in separate classrooms and sharing breaks and activities with their typically developing peers. Full inclusion brings all the students together in one classroom, irrespective of whether or not they have disabilities, where they follow the same curriculum although students with SEN have access to the support of a resource room (Al Mousa, 2010). Inclusion in the Saudi educational system aims to serve two groups of students: children attending mainstream schools who are gifted, physically disabled, have learning disabilities, as well as children with weak vision and communication issues (not associated with being DHH) (Al-Mousa, 2010; Aldabas, 2015). The second targeted category includes children who have been taught in special education private schools in the past, and are blind, DHH, on the autism spectrum, and have cognitive and behavioural disorders. The Saudi education system includes gifted children in the category of children with SEN, as well as disabled pupils, and states that both groups of children should be taught alongside their peers in general schools (Al-Khashrmi, 2000). These categories of students, who make up 20 percent of SA’s student population, are provided with free education and any support that will help them learn in the public-school environment (Al-Mousa, 2010; Aldabas, 2015). In addition, eligibility for those children is determined through a process which begins by getting parental consent for their child’s assessment, followed by a period of comprehensive information-gathering on the child and, if necessary, referral to a diagnoses and assessment centre, where a multi-disciplinary team evaluates the child. Once the data gathering is complete, the relevant authorities, which can include teachers, school psychologists and external agencies, assess if the child is qualified for special education services and what type of intervention should be provided to fulfil their requirements (Ministry of Education, 2022).

### **3.4.2 The Stages of Implementing Inclusion in SA**

In SA, there are three main stages in the process of implementing inclusion, namely: planning, implementation and evaluation. The planning step involving the special education administration, under the SME, starts by introducing the general purpose of inclusive education and its goal to be practised in the public schools. This step is mainly targeted at school leaders and teachers. Next, the schools in cooperation with other authorities identified the number of children with SEN in the area of each school in order to clearly determine the number of children eligible and how many programmes are required. The local educational authority in each city then has the responsibility to recommend the best locations for establishing and running an inclusive programmes. This is followed by an inspection of the nominated schools by special education supervisors, who either accept or reject the recommendations. In addition, the local educational authority contacts the special schools (DHH institution as example) to determine children, which currently learn in those schools, who are going to be transferred, holds discussions with parents regarding the new programmes and assigns conveniently located schools to the children. At this point in the process, educational authorities also set about launching an initiative to raise the level of awareness about inclusion and the benefit of public schools (Al-Mousa, 2010; Aldabas, 2015).

In contrast, the implementation stage focuses on the school administrations eligible for inclusion and collects data on students’ various forms of needs and highlights the steps the school has to take to enable and support integration. Special education teachers are now assigned to the schools which will welcome children with SEN, and the classrooms, teaching aids, resources and furniture are modified to accommodate them (Al-Mousa, 1999). After that a special education teacher is appointed (program director) to oversee inclusion practice, organise materials and curriculum that suits the needs of children according to their disability of educational needs and coordinate with other authorities such educational psychology, and health and social services.

Once the stages of planning implementation have been completed successfully. The evaluation stage begins, and each step is monitored and overseen by the people assigned for this role. The overall changes are assessed. Monitors and program directors conduct weekly visits to the schools where inclusion programmes have been introduced to assess the degree to which they have had a positive impact, and to identify any areas of concern. The primary purpose of these monitoring visits is to assess the limit in which children with SEN have benefited from participating in inclusive schools, as well as to establish new ones if the old programmes have been helpful for those children. During the evaluation stage, the inspectors also consider whether or not the school has managed to raise levels of awareness about inclusion and disability, and whether the school culture has become more inclusive overall, as a result of the introduction of inclusion programmes (Al-Mousa, 2004).

## **3.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter is the first part of the literature review conducted in this study to review the concept of inclusion as one of the main elements that are related to my topic. Many definitions of inclusion and inclusive education were reviewed and how they were influenced by different cultural contexts or by the local laws of some country. The chapter provided a brief review of the most important philosophies affecting the emergence of inclusion and practical models for its application, especially in education, was briefly reviewed. The historical sequence of the establishment of inclusion as a philosophy linked to human rights and the right to equality has been reviewed regardless of gender, religion or race, and how these concepts were adopted in the educational sectors, especially with regard to the education of children with SEN. Specifically, how some movements and agreements related to education rights and access to educational resources affected the perception of the special education sector and some educational practices in it. For example, segregated education is viewed negatively, as it limits the beneficiary from the right of social participation and access to the same educational curricula for their peers. From here it was necessary for the field of special education, especially after the emergence of some mandatory laws, to make radical changes in the ways and places of education for children SEN in many of the signatory countries to those laws. The chapter concludes with an overview of the application of inclusive education in SA and the story of the impact of the US model in terms, concepts, and practices. In addition, this section highlights the effects of adopting the US model of inclusion in the Saudi context and the different concepts and translations of inclusive education.

# Chapter Four: Literature Review Part Two: Understanding Deafness and Hard of Hearing (DHH)

## **4.0 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter is the second part of my literature review. It mainly concerns with explaining the notion of hearing disability as the focus of area of the participants of this study. To cover this area, I used the same strategies to cover literature mainly carried out in three contexts as explained in the previous chapter of where I am studying (UK) and in the context of all the data collection for the research (SA) and on the contexts that affected the researcher during his previous study (US). Reviewing literature was done in both language Arabic and English using different resources such as Google Scholar, what the University of Sheffield Library provides for access to private search databases and some local search engines in SA such as the Saudi Digital Library. Multiple search terms were used in both languages to review the notion of DHH such as hearing impairment, Deaf inclusion, hard of hearing, hearing disability.

The chapter starts with description of models of disabilities with the scoop on DHH. After that it highlights the influence of those disability models on definitions, terminologies, and labelling for children who are DHH. Then I provide a description of communication modes and methods used in DHH and instruction. After that, the chapter turns its focus on the discussion around DHH inclusion as well as some of the educational considerations, which have primarily influenced the field. The chapter concludes with a review of teachers’ perceptions about DHH inclusion.

The following section focus on models of understanding disabilities in general with focus on DHH.

## **4.1 Models of Disabilities**

In this section I will discuss models of disabilities in general for several reasons. First, the educational classification in SA still classifies children who are DHH within the categories of special education, which would affect those classifications or definitions. For example, in some educational contexts in SA, children who are DHH are identified as ‘hearing disabled’ or ‘people with hearing disability’. Thus, models of disability help to understand the dimension or way in which disability is understood in the findings chapters later in this study. Secondly, understanding models of disabilities helps to understand the definitions provided about disability and their influences on the formation and implementation of some educational policies (such as inclusion).

(Retief & Letšosa, 2018). Third, and most importantly for this study, the literature related to disability studies in SA, especially written in Arabic, lacks to highlight the importance of those models of disabilities and their influence on the field of special education in general and DHH people in particular.

The word ‘model’ in its general form, and in relation to thinking, can be defined as the framework or pattern individuals follow to understand something or how they make sense of it (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). Meanwhile, the concepts of special education and children with SENs are broadly used to ensure that children with all kinds of disabilities or needs can be included in education systems. Thus, both terms special education and children with SENs include all children with different needs such as those with emotional, physical, medical and learning difficulties and not just those with visible and clear disabilities (Alkahtani, 2016; Cook & Schirmer, 2003). Therefore, Foreman (2005) explains that we must be careful with the terminologies used to refer to children with SENs, as there have been significant debates about the use of terminology for many years. For examples, there are some terms that have been used in the past to describe disabilities, such as handicaps, impairments, but they failed to consider the environmental factors that contribute to aggravating the consequences of disability and focused only on the consequences for the health condition of individuals (Simeonsson, Lollar, Hollowell, & Adams, 2000). Namely, the term ‘impairment’ in its medical perspective was used to describe any psychological, functional, physical, or anatomical weakness or abnormality of people (WHO,1981; Oliver, 2017). While the word ‘handicapped’ has been used to refer to difficulties caused by impairments or disabilities that restrict an individual from carrying out a normal function (this depends on age, gender, social and cultural factors) (WHO,1981). In regard to people who are DHH, there were also some terms which followed similar patterns of focusing on the consequences of hearing impairment on individuals such as ‘deaf and mute’, handicap of deafness’, or ‘auditorially handicapped’ (Moores, 2001).

However, during the past recent years, some viewpoints emerged, especially the social ones, on which many disabled people or those interested in disability relied to change the discourse used about disability and look at it from a human rights point of view that gives them the right to independence and control over their personal lives instead of focusing on physical and functional characteristics (Oliver, 2017). Example of shifting in the terminologies and classifications about disability over years is what has been put forward in 1978 by the British government when establishing the Warnock Committee who were tasked with investigating and overseeing the education of handicapped students, and it was this committee that first coined the term ‘special educational needs’ (SEN) to use instead of the term ‘handicapped’ (Warnock, 1978). In SA, as another example, especially with regard to people who are Deaf, they were not any influence of the social perspective about deafness as an identity before 2005. In that year, the first scientific paper was published which discussed the medical and social views of deafness and the impact of each view on Deaf people from a social and educational point of views. From the social point of view, Deaf people are viewed through a social perspective as a cultural minority that lives within a large community and has its own culture and language (sign language) which distinguishes it from other societies. As for the educational aspect, the local educational system in SA can consider the spoken language and the sign language in providing educational services to these children regardless of their educational placement or what is called bilingual, bicultural approach) Al Reye, 2016).

Nonetheless, Warnock and Norwich (2010) highlighted a number of issues with the term SEN, such as it is too general and representative of all different special educational needs. However, it is important to consider that naming every single category of special needs can be very challenging, particularly in school settings. This shows that describing such phenomena is difficult and complex. In addition, SENs term still focuses in one way or another on educational difficulties within the personal characteristics of children (Runswick‐Cole & Hodge, 2009).

Therefore, and before going further in this chapter to, it is important to discuss the different models that can be used to make sense of disability. This is because understanding how disabled people experience life is crucial in order to make progress in this field ( Mason, 1990). For instance, education for children who are DHH can be improved if their needs are further understood. Thus, in the recent years in the SA, opinions regarding which models of DHH education are most effective have changed significantly, and there is still much debate regarding which one is most suitable in the field of DHH education. Therefore, understanding these models can impact the educational services for those children and help in how to meet their educational needs in schools.

From a personal point of view, as a researcher in the field of educating children who are DHH, model of disability is the intellectual framework through which the condition is understood. By that I mean not only disability, but many phenomena in our daily lives. For example, the personality values of some people may influence their choices or the way they think and treat others. So, I think that people who always look for pure perfection in things or people will tend to view disability through a medical perspective. If a person is flexible and realistic in evaluating things and people, it is likely that the view of disability will be more realistic and consider many social and environmental influences. Therefore, I believe that the way we view disability is primarily personal or emanating from our understanding of our surroundings in general.

There are three main theoretical perspectives have been put forward in the wider literature pertaining to special educational and disabilities namely the medical, social, and interactional perspectives (Cline & Frederickson, 2009; Dewsbury∗, Clarke, Randall, Rouncefield, & Sommerville, 2004). It is often believed that those models succeed each other. However, it is better to think of them differently and to consider each model as being dominant at a different place and time. This idea is supported by Devlieger (2005), who explains that it is illusory to think that one perspective can totally replace another. Rather, it is a matter of dominance in a specific context at a specific time. In other words, new models of thinking may not have been developed yet and even when they are developed, this does not mean that older dominant schools of thought are completely disregarded.

### **4.1.1 The Medical Model**

According to this model of thinking, it is believed that the disability and its difficulties or consequences are referred within the individuals or children (Campbell & Oliver, 2013; Dewsbury∗ et al., 2004). In addition, disability is seen as a bad event for the person himself and his family alike, and it must be prevented or treated (Kittay & Carlson, 2010; Retief & Letšosa, 2018). Hence, children who are DHH in this case are impaired and in need of medical treatment especially in their early years, such as cochlear implant, to get access to spoken language through oral communication and lip-reading (Power, 2005). In other words, the medical model of disability suggests some medical or clinical solutions to help diagnose children who are DHH and help them to speak and communicate like their hearing peers (Young, 1999).

From an extreme medical view about children who are DHH, external factors that impact their education, such as the educational placement or method of teaching, are not taken into account. Further, focus is primarily put on biological and psychological impairments as it is assumed that the disability is caused by physical or mental impairment. As a result, medical professionals who specialise in the disabilities areas view and treat disability as a medical issue that can be rectified or cured by removing the impairment or using medication (Alturkee, 2005).

Additionally, and after the diagnostic process, the medical model of disabilities tends to categorise children with SENs or students who are unable to learn in a conventional manner into different groups based on the nature of their problems and needs. This classification can help devise special treatments and educational services that meet their needs specifically. However, it remains according to the medical model that those educational services must be provided in the ’normal’ way as possible, or in the least, close to those provided for ‘normal’ children (Hutchison, 1995). Lynas (2013) pointed out that, from a medical model perspective, students must change in order to benefit from the general education system. Also, how far a person deviates from a social standard determines the extent of their disability or impairment, and how far people depart from social norms determine the severity of a disability or impairment (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997; Marks, 1997). Therefor the medical model generally considers that humans are adaptable, whereas society is rigid and immutable. This suggests that it is the disabled individual’s responsibility to adapt to adverse situations (Terzi, 2010).

### **4.1.2 The Social Model**

The emergence of this model is considered as a reaction to the shortcomings that plague the medical model of disability, and it was inspired by the disability activist movements in Britain in the last century (Retief & Letšosa, 2018). Therefore, this model is sometimes called by other social or political concepts that assure the right of minorities or the independent life for people (Smart, 2009). The social model then views disability as being the product of one’s environment rather than innate characteristics (Oliver, 1996). In addition, it assumes that it is the responsibility of the society to make the necessary efforts to remove barriers that may isolate disabled people (Campbell & Oliver, 2013; Devlieger, 2005). In other words, the social model takes into account the importance of removing barriers in society and education and identified Deaf people as a minority group with a unique culture and language (sign language). Moreover, sign language according to the social view of disability is considered to be a natural form of communication under the social model and is not regarded as being in any way inferior to spoken language forms (Knight & Swanwick, 1999; Ladd, 2003).

The social model considers the difficulties experienced by children who are DHH to be solved in the educational environment rather than in the children themselves. That means rather than trying to change or ‘cure’ those children to fit the educational system as their hearing peers, the focuses should be placed on reducing barriers within the system and make it suitable to meet their needs (Taylor, 1999).  In a similar fashion, the social approach assumes that teachers and communities should adapt their beliefs and change educational settings to suit the needs of all students. That is crucial in achieving the successful inclusion of all children with SENs into educational systems (Smith & Smith, 2000; Villa & Thousand, 2005).

The key purpose of developing the social model was to break down barriers and eliminate obstacles in the education system to ensure that children with SENs have the same opportunities as their peers to select their own way of living and the educational options they preferred.  This model also encourages schools to adapt different teaching methods and learning environment to include all students (Ainscow, 1999). This model has turned the focus away from students' problems and towards the issues that occur within the school and classroom settings that obstruct learning (Ainscow, 2005). The model serves as a strong critique of special education in that it assumes that disability is a part of normal life, and not an exception to it (Campbell and Oliver, 2013). It has completely transformed how disability is viewed and has had a significant influence on the development of legislations that supported the equality in education and anti-discriminatory based on ability.

The social model is considered to be superior to the medical one because it has focused on the environmental difficulties faced by disabled people. it incorporates realistic goals and focuses on the struggles experienced by oppressed groups. Thus, it contributed to the development of the social and educational environments and made them better for living and learning for those people (Terzi, 2010).

### **4.1.3 Interactional Model**

The interactional model is known to see disabilities from three main aspects, the person himself, disability, and the function of that disabled person (Smart, 2009). That means participation constraints are issues that an individual may face as a result of their involvement. These three elements are grouped together under the functioning, disability, and health. All of these three elements are linked to one another and may interact with one another, as well as with personal and environmental circumstances (Geertzen, 2008). Additionally, Furthermore, it is considered that the degree of a child's educational demands is a direct result of the complex interactions that occur between education, the level of support received, and the child's strengths and needs when examined through an interactional lens (Frederickson and Cline, 2009). It places a high priority on the dynamics of school and student relationships, believing that these interactions are crucial in deciding whether learning is helped or hampered (Skidmore, 1996; Smart, 2009). Hence, the interactional model is considered to be beneficial because it considers the root challenges in the educational environment and within the child (Buntinx & Schalock, 2010). Also, the interactional model of disability view could facilitate inclusive education in terms of conceptualising SEN as it incorporates both social and medical models. According to Cooper and Upton (1990), there are evident links between this conceptualisation and the ecosystem approach, in which it is argued that human behaviours are direct results of interactions between environmental factors, social experiences and internal motivations. Furthermore, the World Health Organization (2001) developed the Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health in response to the growing interest in comprehending the complexities of personal circumstances and environmental factors. After a series of comprehensive field trials and international deliberations, this classification was officially adopted to replace the International Classification of Impairment, Disability, and Handicap (WHO, 1980). Geertzen (2008) points out that this transition indicates a significant move away from “the traditional medical model” and towards the “bio-psycho-social model” (p.277).

This approach is being increasingly favoured by researchers from around the world. That is because it truly helps to understand what children with SENs educational needs are if we consider them to be children with personal identities in a specific social setting (Frederickson and Cline, 2009). Moreover, learning challenges that arise in school settings are directly caused by the relationship between students, schools, and the educational context (Booth, 1996). Gearheart et al. (1992) explain that, in the field of educating children with SENs, special educational obstacles should be considered products of the interaction between the child and the educational setting. Keogh, Gallimore, and Weisner (1997) also support this view, arguing that a student's learning skills are interrelated with the environmental context and cannot be considered separately.

Next section explains the influence of models of disabilities on the terminologies used in the field of DHH education and their related definitions.

## **4.2 DHH Definitions and terminologies**

Throughout the literature and over time, deafness and hard of hearing is discussed by use of different terminologies depending on the context, field of study, or modules of disability such as hearing disability, hearing impairment, Deaf (with a capital D as a minority cultural group), and hearing handicapped (Ladd, 2003). In this respect, Obasi (2008,p.457) mentioned that deafness “is an all-embracing term that is often attributed to both the audiological difference and the socially constructed differences with the inferred inferior status to Deaf people”. In addition, Frisina 1974 (as cited in Moores, 2001) recognised that at some points in time the use of the word ‘Deaf’ varied to an extent where it sounded similar to all other related words (or as synonyms) to describe the case of losing the ability to hear. Because of confusion inherent in using such generic terms and their negativities, and the developments in regulations for disability, there was a need to redefine deafness for educational purposes (ASHA, 1981; Moores, 2001). For this reason, a committee was formed in the US to suggest new definitions to describe the term ‘deaf and hard of hearing’ in 1973. In the following years, 1975 in particular, and after a long governmental process, the new definitions were accepted by the Executive Committee of the Conference of Executives of American Schools for the Deaf ("Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Define Deaf and Hard of Hearing," 1975). Deafness, put simply, means that when an individual is unable to rely on his or her hearing ability alone to understand speech with or without aid. In contrast, hard of hearing is to have difficulties, but not completely, using ears to understand speech with or without aiding. However, DHH people are widely varied in their needs and abilities when it comes to communication and learning (Moores, 2001; "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Define Deaf and Hard of Hearing," 1975).

### **4.2.1 Classification and Labelling**

Children who are DHH are generally classified in SA based on two criteria. First, according to the age at the start of deafness which divides deafness into two types:

1. When deafness occurs at an age before the acquisition of spoken language, it is described as **pre-lingual deafness**.
2. When deafness presents during or after the process of the development of spoken language, which is known as **post-lingual deafness**.

However, and based on these classifications, for example, all new-born children would be included under the pre-lingual type. As a result, using such broad classifications were not enough to remove the confusion around terminologies. This explains why some teachers of the DHH tend to include the degree of hearing loss along with the above classification to get a specific and descriptive classification (Moores, 2001). This indeed leads me to the second way to classify and identify DHH children, by the degree of their hearing loss (as a medical view or classification). Under this classification children who are DHH are categorised into four main groups as follow:

1. **Mild hearing loss**: this level ranges from 26 to 54 dB and children who are diagnosed with this level are identified as ‘hard of hearing’. Mainly, oral methods such as lip reading and visual cued speech along with an emphasis on amplification and residual hearing are employed in teaching.
2. **Moderate hearing loss**:the hearing loss at this category ranges from 55 to 69 dB and this category is similar to the previous one on commutation modes, method of instruction, and labelling.
3. **Severe hearing loss**:at this stage, degree of hearing loss starts from 70 up to 89 dB. Generally, under this criterion, children are mostly known as Deaf. Usually, total communication (mixed method of using Oralism, Manualism, and auditory training at the same time or as suitable for the students) is used with this category of DHH children.
4. **Profound hearing loss** starts from 90 and beyond dB. Sign language is the main way of communication and learning. Bilingualism (Bibi refers to the bilingual-bicultural method when children who are DHH use sign language and a written form of a spoken language) is the preferred philosophy of education.

**Table 4- 1Hearing Impairment Medical classification**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Classification** | **Degree** | **labelling** | **Method of Communication** |
| **Mild hearing loss** | 26 - 54 dB | HH | Oralism |
| **Moderate hearing loss** | 55 - 69 dB | HH | Oralism |
| **Severe hearing loss** | 70 - 89 dB | D | Mixed |
| **Profound hearing loss** | 90 and beyond dB | D | Bilingual bicultural |

## **4.3 Characteristics of Children who are DHH**

Disability without a doubt can affect the development of any child in many ways and the extent of its impact can differ from child to another and from disability to another. Hearing ability is very connected to spoken language development. Therefore, hearing impairment has its impacts on language acquisition from an early age, which inevitably, leads to many aspects of struggles and consequences.

In the following section, I briefly address the impacts of hearing disability on language, education, and social/psychological developments.

### **4.3.1 Language**

Indeed, language development and communication methods are considered one of the main issues that embody some difficulties for children who are DHH in general, and in learning in particular. It has generated so much debate over years by people with an interest in DHH education and other related fields (Al Reyes, 2016). Since the 1700s, the controversy has been always about what the best ways (oral or manual methods) to help children who are DHH fill the linguistic gap after they have been discovered and diagnosed with hearing loss (Easterbrooks & Baker, 2002). Yet, there was an agreement on the importance of a language intervention as early as possible regardless of the approach followed or philosophy. To make it clearer, according to literature on deaf literacy in the US, the reading comprehension achievement of an 18 years old DHH student is equal to a 7-year-old hearing child (this is based on English language context) (Easterbrooks & Baker, 2002). Similarly, in SA, children who are DHH continue to struggle with Arabic language at higher education levels where most of them show lower achievements in reading and writing skills (Al Zahrani, 2015). The main reason for this struggle is that most children who are DHH (about 90 %) are born and raised in hearing families and are having difficulty to develop either spoken language or sign language. Consequently, a Deaf child reaches school age with virtually no basic (first) language and nearly after the appropriate age (critical period 2-5/7 years) of language acquisition (Brennan, 2003; Easterbrooks & Baker, 2002; Moores, 2001). This in fact explains why children who are DHH were sometimes, through research in the past, identified as to have less intellectual ability (Al Reyes, 2016; Gee & Goodhart, 1985; Remine, Brown, Care, & Rickards, 2007). Even in the best case of a DHH child with hearing parents who are learning sign language to communicate with their child, the struggle will continue. The lack of both visual (nativization when parents’ second language becomes the child's first language) and auditory (uncompleted message because of hearing loss) inputs will cause a delay in developing a sufficient language (Easterbrooks & Baker, 2002; Gee & Goodhart, 1985). However, Deaf children who were born and raised by Deaf parents/parents are in a much better position (Gee & Goodhart, 1985). The early exposure of sign language inputs form native signers help them developing language normally because “interactions between deaf mothers and deaf infants and between hearing mothers and hearing infants was similar; therefore, it is not the children's deafness that impacts maternal behaviour, but rather the mismatch between the mother's and infant's hearing status” (Meadow-Orlans 1997 as cited in Easterbrooks & Baker, 2002, p. 59).

### **4.3.2 Cognition and Learning**

Language delay as described previously is strongly connected to many social, academic, and psychological struggles especially for children who are DHH. Therefore, “the link between cognitive functioning and language has long been of interest to investigators, with DHH individuals frequently being seen as the ultimate example of how the two are necessarily intertwined or not depending on the theoretical orientation of the observer” (Marschark & Hauser, 2008, p. 4). However, there was always an argument about research findings concerning the performance of children who are DHH on some of the very well-known intelligence tests such as the Stanford-Binet or Wechsler (1951) for some reasons. First, performance on such tests required fluent language. That means their validity for DHH individuals’ verbal IQ is not considered as an accurate measurement tool (Moores, 2001; Remine et al., 2007). Another issue is that scores on non-verbal section of IQs imply that DHH people’s performance is not significantly different from their hearing peers, yet non-verbal intelligence is not sufficient when it comes to the range of skills needed in classroom learning (Marschark & Knoors, 2012). In addition, changing ideas and concepts about the nature of intelligence (fixed or grows/ single or multiple entities) has driven for further recognition that IQ tests do not consider any environmental, cultural, or early life circumstances for Deaf children. (Marschark & Hauser, 2008; Moores & Martin, 2006). In other words, available IQ tests are not suitable linguistically to rely on if we want to examine DHH children’s intelligence because simply they’re not prepared to do so. However, the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children 3rd edition (WISC III) is the first test to develop a version to use clinically with children who are DHH as documented by (Remine et al., 2007). Moreover, Remine et al. (2007) found that studies used the WISC III show that “the participants’ performance IQ scores range from 88 to 106 (M = 99) and verbal IQ scores range from 75 to 81 (M = 78), with mean performance IQ scores at least 19 points greater than mean verbal IQ scores”. (p.148). But the issue is not just about the IQ scores and intelligence level or how children who are DHH are cognitively similar/different from their hearing peers as it has been proven by research over years. Instead, cognitive development is not always about how smart people are, but it has other aspects that can be only improved through classroom instruction in the classroom. That is because those aspects work as a foundation for developing cognition in children who are DHH which includes knowledge and knowledge organisation, metacognition, memory, integration of information and learning, and executive function (Marschark, Spencer, Adams, & Sapere, 2011a, 2011b).

Educationally, and over the years, educating children who are DHH has gone through some significant changes and struggles, which started more than half a century ago (Moores & Martin, 2006). To illustrate, the domination of Oralism ideology, as a deep-rooted ideology in the Deaf education field, has led to the prevention of the employment of sign language in instruction. This ban was enacted in the Milan conference (known as the ‘International Congress for the Improvement of the Condition of Deaf Mutes’) in 1880, and its influences extended to reach Deaf communities and cultures around the world for about eighty years (Moores, 2001, 2010; Snoddon & Underwood, 2017).

Another aspect of struggle in the field of Deaf education is highlighted by Moores and Martin (2006), that over the last decades, teachers of the DHH have been confused by what, and where, and how children who are DHH should be taught. An aspect of that confusion was influenced by trends in the general field of education such as the right of children who are DHH to get access to the same curriculum as their hearing peers (what). Also, the academic placement of children who are DHH (where) represents one of the main movements in the field of special education toward inclusion. The other trend is rooted in one of the main debates within the field of DHH education, which can be summarised as how curriculum should be delivered to DHH pupils in schools (how). Alternatively, what is the most appropriate method of communication to be employed in educating DHH students: oral communication, manual communication, or a bilingual approach?

### **4.3.3 Deaf individuals as a bilingual- bicultural group**

Additionally, the way in which deafness is conceptualised influences the use of terminologies and labelling. Indeed, this was addressed by Charrow and Wilbur (1975, p. 353) who stated that:

“The problem of educating deaf children can be looked at from two points of view. Traditionally, deaf children have been regarded as a handicapped group, whose inability to hear imposed severe limitations on how they could learn […] But there is another way of viewing deaf children: as a linguistic minority, like Mexican Americans, or Chinese Americans, or other non-native English speakers”.

As an example, from the Saudi context, deafness is educationally classified (and defined) as a part of the special education categories (disabilities). It is referred to as ‘hearing disability’ and individuals are identified as ‘Deaf’ or ‘hard of hearing person’ through official reports and documentations (Ministry of Education, 2018). Meanwhile, in social life, people use different words such as ‘deaf & mute’ or ‘mute’ to identify people with hearing problems. This in fact represents either a lack of awareness about Deaf people or a negative understanding of deafness as an identity in Deaf culture. In this respect, Charrow and Wilbur (1975) asserted that “a deaf child with no other handicaps is "normal," and very comparable in many ways to a minority child whose native language is not English”. Perhaps because of that, deaf communities and individuals themselves do not accept the disability as an identity; instead, they tend to express themselves as “in favour of the cultural and linguistic minority construction” (Obasi, 2008, p. 457). Nevertheless, 90 percent of people involved in Deaf communities come (or born to hearing families) from ‘hearing’ communities, while only 10 percent of them were born to Deaf parents (Charrow & Wilbur, 1975).

The next section provides an overview of the different debates in the education of children who are DHH

## **4.4 DHH Education and Inclusive Education Discourse**

Controversy about where and how children who are DHH should be taught (such as Oralism vs Manualism instruction methods & medical view vs social view towards Deafness) is one of many such controversies in the field of DHH education. For instance, on the first hand, the call to end separation for children who are DHH in special schools or classes and integrating them in public schools roots back to the period of the 1880s in the US and some European nations when Alexander Graham Bell stood against Deaf schools, culture, language, and intermarriage (Johnson & Cohen, 1994). His stance influenced the medical/deficiency view of deafness up to current times. During that era, Bell assumed that by integrating both Deaf and hearing students in public schools, speech, languages, and behaviour of the main community (hearing community) will be acquired by Deaf naturally (Johnson & Cohen, 1994; Moores, 2001). From this assumption, one of the main educational philosophies of instructing children who are DHH known as Oralism developed. Simply, it pushes for the use of speech through auditory training, lip-reading, and aiding in inclusive schools. Recently, Oralism supports the search for medical and technological solutions (for example cochlear implantation) (Foster et al., 2003). To sum up this view, Deaf as compared to hearing people have a hearing problem (deficit) that needs to be fixed (Peel, 2006). Further, the medical view (model) of deafness along with the extreme advocate for inclusion sees segregation (special school) for children who are DHH as similar to racial segregation (Schildroth & Hotto, 1994).

On the other hand, however, the form of segregated schools for Deaf started way before the idea of integration (Schildroth & Hotto, 1994). As an example, the first school for the Deaf (special school) in the US was founded in 1817 (Johnson & Cohen, 1994; Moores, 2001). Discussing DHH special schools and Manualism cannot continue without referring to the effort of Edward Gallaudet who played an important role in establishing Deaf special schools (in the US) with combined philosophy (oral-manual). Similarly, in the UK, where Deaf education was originally developed, Bulwer’s work (made manual expressions) in 1648 influenced the use of hands as the natural way that Deaf people can communicate (Moores, 2001). One of the main rationales behind DHH special schools is that public schools, along with the linguistic delay discussed above, can be the most restricted environment (linguistically) of most DHH students. Further, inclusion, as based on civil rights, is more a political concept than educational practice (Johnson & Cohen, 1994). Also, Deaf as a minority group (social-cultural model), has, for many years, shown a solid and unique identity expressed through an authentic and natural language, and as such they should be respected and identified separately (Ladd, 2003; Peel, 2006).

In between the above stances there is a third one which assumes that all options (of placement), all methods (communication & instruction sometimes referred to as total communication) should be available for all DHH students. The criterion of what to follow or use should be based on what is suitable for every individual DHH student. I also believe in Deafness as an identity, yet Deaf people also have the right to choose different ones or follow different models (Johnson & Cohen, 1994; Ladd, 2003).

The next section aims to shed some light on the importance of teachers’ stances of inclusive education because of their critical role in it.

## **4.5 Teachers’ Perceptions Towards DHH Inclusive Education**

Simply, the word perception as described in the Cambridge dictionary refers to what a group of people think of, understand, and see things. Hence, perceptions of all of those involved in an inclusive setting (students and their parents, teachers, school principals…etc.) are very important and valuable to be investigated through research. However, my study is focused on teachers’ perception because of my personal interest, as a former DHH teacher, and to keep the focus of the study tight. Also, it is argued here that studying and investigating what people, especially teachers, think of inclusive education as an educational concept and practice is critical in terms of their commitment to implement it and provide feedback to stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes possible (Elias Avramidis & Brahm Norwich, 2002). Further, it is not only teachers’ assumptions about inclusive education that can directly affect their design of instruction, but also the way they treat children with SEN who are involved in inclusive settings (Dababneh & Al-Hassan, 2009; Vermeulen, Denessen, & Knoors, 2012). Generally speaking, most teachers hold a positive stance from the main philosophy of inclusion; however, the literature has also shown some negativity among teachers to an extent where they reject to even take part of it (Cambridge-Johnson, Hunter-Johnson, & Newton, 2014). Based on those assumptions, it is paramount to give a space, through research, for teachers to express their feelings and ideas from their experience in order to foster the positivity they have toward inclusion (Hung & Paul, 2013).

Within the field of special education, research in perceptions toward inclusive education vary so much in terms of their focus according to many elements such as, disability categories, classroom teachers, or special education teachers. Yet, DHH students' inclusion, as a group, has not been studied as intensively as any other SEN students (Vermeulen et al., 2012). Perhaps, DHH inclusion is surrounded by a lot of issues regarding communication and the acquisition of spoken language through curriculum in inclusive settings (Jarvis, 2002).

Next section summarises some examples of previous literature in the area of DHH inclusion.

### **4.5 1 A review of Research Findings of Teachers’ of DHH Perceptions about Inclusive Education.**

In this section, I present some examples of research carried-out on the topic of teachers’ perceptions toward DHH students’ inclusion. I chose to review those studies based on two main perspectives: national and international. Under the national studies part, I reviewed two examples from SA, as the context of my study, and to have a better understanding of how inclusive education is understood, practiced, and discussed there. In this regard and through my search, I found that most Saudi studies conducted in DHH inclusion followed a quantitative approach (Abu Shaira, 2013; Al Reyes & Bent Ali, 2016b; Hanafi, 2008). From here, and in the international studies part, some qualitative studies were reviewed, to give the reader different views of DHH inclusion from different contexts. In addition, and through this section, I explain how my study stands out from those previous attempts.

Hanafi (2008) conducted a field study in Riyadh to investigate the requirements of integrating Deaf students in regular schools from the point of view of employees in the field of DHH education. It particularly aimed at exploring: (a) the best educational option for Deaf students (segregated, self-contained, or regular school); (b) the requirements for successful inclusive education for Deaf; and (c) the most available element for successful integration. The study included 211 participants (111 special education/Deaf teachers, 24 school principals, 50 regular classroom teachers, and 25 others) all of whom worked in the DHH education field. A survey was developed to cover five aspects of requirements: (a) requirements that related to employees, (b) school environment, (c) families of (d) Deaf students, (e) and others. Results from this study showed that most participants see the attached classroom in regular schools as the most appropriate placement option for DHH students. The study also asserted the need for more and appropriate perpetration for all people included within inclusive settings with a priority on teachers. Similarly, Hanafi (2008) recommended much more effort in raising the awareness of DHH students’ characteristics and needs especially among those within inclusive settings. By analysing the above study, as a Saudi example of research in inclusive education, the first thing to realise is that this study was conducted 10 years ago, which means a lot of changes (for example, educational systems, thoughts about inclusion) have happened in regard to inclusive education since then. Concerning this, Yuknis (2015) pointed out that attitudes toward the inclusive education of SEN students cannot be shifted over a short-term period; instead, they need a longer time with actual experience and involvement in inclusive settings. Moreover, I share the view of Dababneh and Al-Hassan (2009), that perceptions, particularly those developed by teachers, toward inclusion should be investigated regularly. Doing so will regularly improve inclusive implementation and help identify any weaknesses or problems. This indeed represents one of my main reasons for proposing to study perceptions toward DHH inclusive education using a qualitative approach, which makes my intended study stand out from Hanafi’s study. Another issue related to the Saudi literature in inclusive education is that, and from personal experience and as clearly shown in literature, most studies conducted on SEN students’ inclusion have adopted quantitative methodologies. A possible reason for this is that researchers are attempting to include as many participants as they can to get a general view of inclusion in the Saudi educational context. For instance, Hanafi’s study examined a sample of 211 participants (not only teachers) working in the DHH education field. This is a very wide sample compared to my targeted number (20 Teachers of the DHH) and does not represent in depth what and how those participants understand inclusion. This is very important in terms of how teachers or employees develop their views, beliefs, and perceptions toward inclusion. This idea is supported by Vermeulen et al. (2012) who asserted that teachers’ appraisal is influenced by their thoughts and perceptions about an event. From here, my study specifically focused on teachers of the DHH and tried to understand their knowledge about inclusion as a concept in terms of deafness/disability, daily experience within the field of DHH education, and the Saudi educational system.

Another study by Al Reyes and Bent Ali (2016b) explored obstacles to comprehensive inclusion of children who are DHH in the preschool stage from the perspective of their teachers. The study focused on obstacles in relation to children who are DHH and their teachers, parents, school administration, curriculum, and learning environment. Further, to understand how teachers’ answers differ according to their subject area of teaching, major of studying, and the category of their students (Deaf, hard of hearing, other disabilities). The number of participants in this study reached 84 teachers of the DHH from three different cities (Jeddah, Riyadh, and Dammam). A questionnaire was developed to cover six aspects of barriers, mentioned earlier, through 58 questions. Results from this study are summarized as follows; first, challenges related to the learning environment came as the highest obstacle as shown in teachers’ responses. For example, most teachers assured the absence of a clear plan for implementing inclusive education on any level not only in the preschool stage. In addition, funding, high number of students, lack of professionals (sign language interpreter for instance), unprepared classrooms, and supportive services in school were highly pointed out. Second, concerning Teachers of the DHH’ aspect in the questionnaire, a number of responses highlighted the heavy teaching burdens as the highest challenge, which make them pessimistic about participating in inclusive education. Third, answers to administrative issues reassured the lack of planning by school leaders as well as the lack of awareness about disability among employees in school. Fourth, findings revealed numerous issues that were highly related to children who are DHH in comprehensive inclusive settings. To illustrate, feeling isolated and different in public classrooms, language barriers that lead to less social interaction with other students. In the fifth aspect, that discussed any issues related to the students’ families, it was clear that parents were not sufficiently convinced about the importance of inclusion, its process, and its positive impact on improving the achievement levels of their children. Perhaps the reason for this is their fear that their children will fail in the presence of their hearing peers. This mainly explains how family is one of the most practical impediments of inclusion. Finally, findings concerning curriculum highly confirmed that the curriculum does not meet the needs of DHH students. This includes how curriculum is presented, how topics and language is selected, and absence of Deaf culture.

Another study conducted by Vermeulen et al. (2012) in the Netherlands explored classroom teachers’ practices, beliefs, and emotions about including children who are DHH in mainstream schools. In this qualitative study, nine classroom teachers from two schools were interviewed regarding their experience of having a DHH student (2 cases) in the classroom. Two main research questions were proposed: (a) “to what extent do teachers report planned differentiation practices as the result of the inclusion of children who are DHH in mainstream education? (b) How teachers differentiated behaviour related to their beliefs towards inclusion, their self-efficacy beliefs, their perceptions of expectations of others and their emotions regarding the inclusion of DHH students?” (p.176). To answer these questions, an interview checklist was designed to cover five themes: teachers’ behaviour in class; beliefs; emotions; background; and educational setting. Data was coded and analysed using NVivo software. The results of the Vermeulen et al. (2012) study showed that teachers’ behaviour in inclusive settings was not very strongly connected with their emotions and beliefs. In addition, it was found that the governmental system about inclusion was stressful for teachers and that they did not see it as beneficial as claimed. In association with these findings, my study will look further for teachers’ suggestions and future visions about inclusion for SEN students, and DHH in particular, and they will have a chance to criticise and evaluate the ongoing process of implementing inclusion in SA. This view is in line with what Elias Avramidis and Brahm Norwich (2002) asserted that “a key element in the successful implementation of the policy is the views of the personnel who have the major responsibility for implementing it” (p.130). Further, it was strongly seen through the results of the Vermeulen et al. (2012) study that some teachers’ emotions and beliefs are formed by their professional identity. For instance, a teacher who had a successful experience teaching D/HH students in inclusive settings, he or she will develop positive feelings about inclusive education as a concept. In my future study, this will be taken further to discuss the teachers’ training and preparation (pre-service & in-service) background and how that affects their conceptualisation and performance regarding inclusion as an education philosophy. The reason for doing so is as Cambridge-Johnson et al. (2014) found in their study of ‘Teachers’ Attitudes toward Inclusive Education’ that teachers in interviews expressed their need of training in how to design curricula compatible with SEN students’ needs in inclusive settings. Additionally, Vermeulen et al. (2012) found that some of the teachers’ negative attitudes toward including children who are DHH in regular classrooms were caused by the students’ disruptive behaviours. In other words, teachers' feeling seemed like a reaction but not a developed emotion. In the same vein, evidence from disability studies has asserted that the nature of disability influenced teachers’ behaviour in inclusion (Elias Avramidis & Brahm Norwich, 2002). Therefore, my study will discuss the view of deafness.

Another interesting qualitative study by Cambridge-Johnson et al. (2014) aimed to explore teachers’ attitude towards inclusive education in the Bahamas. It focused on understanding any factors that influence their beliefs about inclusive education as well as any suggestions for better practices and future improvements. Eight high school teachers of who took part in an inclusive program were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was employed to generate themes to answer three main questions as follows; what attitudes teachers have about inclusive education (a). What factors have influenced their perceptions (b). What teachers recommend/suggest for reaching the best practices and improvements (c). Findings showed that even though most teachers hold a positive view of inclusion in general, some appeared not to be sure about how it should be properly practiced or implemented. Further, it was found that limited knowledge about inclusion, practice training, and limited access to resources have negatively affected teachers’ feelings about inclusive education in general. Meanwhile, similar opportunities for students in schools, teachers’ training, and clearing stigma about inclusive education were highly pointed out as reasons for teachers’ positive perceptions towards inclusion. In addition, to achieve the best possible practice of inclusive education, participants indicated some perspectives that should be reconsidered by the educational system. First, the number of students in classrooms is higher than it should be in an inclusive setting, which makes it too hard to meet needs for all students. Another issue is that the curriculum is not suitable to include all students’ needs, diversity, and abilities. In other words, the curriculum should be modified to achieve inclusion successfully.

## **4.6 Chapter Summary**

The second part of the literature review highlighted hearing impairment mainly. Therefore, the chapter began by discussing models towards disability in general and deafness in particular. The medical view of deafness or hearing impairment is not very different from other disabilities in terms of impairment, inability or assessment. In contrast, the social model sees deafness in terms of focusing on the difference in the linguistic and cultural characteristics of people who are D or HH. According to each model, there are social medical classifications for individuals who are DHH in terms of descriptive labelling and terminology. For example, from the point of view of the social model, the word deaf is used with the capital letter D to denote the identity of the Deaf community, in which individuals share the same language and culture. While the medical model focuses on the deficit in the hearing ability and the amount of hearing loss, and based on these degrees, people are classified as deaf or hard of hearing. The chapter also shed light on the personal characteristics of children who are DHH and the consequences of hearing loss linguistically and academically. It can be summarised that the relationship between hearing and acquiring spoken language is very negative. As a result of this effect, many children appear to have a low academic level, not because of mental abilities, but because of the lack of linguistic and social experiences. The chapter also gave an insight into the controversy associated with including children who are DHH in exchange for separate education for them in private schools. Those who support separate education consider these environments to be the natural place if we consider deafness from a socio-cultural point of view that accepts difference (a cultural minority). Opponents of this type of education consider that private schools limit their social participation and the right to access the public curricula, compared to their peers in public education. This chapter concludes with a review of some of the literature related to teachers’ perceptions of inclusion for children who are DHH and the factors affecting them. It discussed some examples of previous studies in this regard from the Saudi context and compared them with a different international context in the process of research.

# Chapter Five: Research Methodology

## **5.0 Chapter introduction**

Following the literature review in the previous chapter, this chapter serves to describe the methodological aspects of my research. The chapter starts by outlining the selected research approach and paradigm adopted to carry out this study. I will discuss the research methodology, the overall research design, procedure for collecting and analysing data, and any ethical issues associated with carrying out this study. In addition, my stance and positionality, as the researcher, while conducting this study will be highlighted in this chapter to give the reader much more insight into my approach.

Before going further in this chapter and as a reminder for my readers, I will restate once again my research questions that this study seeks to answer.

1. What are the teachers’ of the DHH perceptions and conceptions towards the inclusion of students who are DHH in SA?
2. What are the difficulties and challenges that teacher of DHH encounter in DHH inclusive programs in SA?
3. What are the teachers of the DHH visions, ideas, or suggestions to improve current inclusive practices for children who are DHH in SA?

The next section gives an overview of the research methodology.

## **5.1 Research methodology**

The point of departure in this part of the discussion is a definition presented in Wellington (2015, p. 33) of the concept of research methodology because of its simple and clear words especially to those who are confused by research terminologies.

“The methodology is defined by the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as the ‘science of method ‘or, more historically, as ‘treatise on method’. My interpretation of methodology is this: the activity or business of choosing, reﬂecting upon, evaluating and justifying the methods you use.”

From this quotation it becomes clear that the methodology is the general framework in which the researcher explains his/her reasons, justifications, and choices for the method of data collection that was employed to answer his research questions. In many definitions of the term ‘methodology’, the word ‘method’ is somehow variously included. To understand the relationship between these two concepts, one must also define the research method before explaining how they are related to each other. The research method is known as the specific tools employed by researchers to gather and analyse data in their inquiries such as interviews, observations, or surveys (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). Even though method and methodology are sometimes used interchangeably or as synonyms, especially in a research context, my interpretation of them is that the research method appears as a part or branch of the whole methodology for conducting any research. This is because of some considerations; first, research methodology works as an umbrella where under it a researcher can justify, rationalise, and present how she or he is going to conduct his study (procedure). Therefore, methodology is seen as a set of guidelines that will be followed to carry out research, while a method is one stage of that whole set of rules or procedures (Daly, 2003). Second, there are different forms of relations between methodology and method but if they are visualised hierarchically, a methodology is usually placed in the middle, whereas a method comes in the bottom part (see figure 4-2) (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). Third, the researcher’s ontological and epistemological assumptions influence his selection of a specific methodology as will be discussed later in this chapter. Then his or her selected methodology will influence the rest of research strategies, including what method or methods should he or she use following those assumptions (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). Hence, the choice of any research methodology is influenced by several elements that become clear in three stages during the conduct of research. First, is the question of whether the researcher believes that there is an external reality that must be accessed and discovered through research, or that the task of the researcher lies in reaching and discovering people’s views on a particular issue in their natural environments in which they coexist with that issue. Secondly, based on the previous two assumptions mentioned above, the researcher can determine the theoretical perspective of the research and under which perspective it falls positivism, interpretivism, feminism as I will describe next in the positionality section in page (79). Third, the research methodology is also influenced by the researchers’ impression about whether the research should start by adopting an analytical theory or model of data or relying on the data themselves to build an analytical research theory (Gray, 2013). Therefore, the researcher's understanding of the philosophical assumptions related to the nature of truth and the relationship between “the knower and the known’’ is a crucial step to take an appropriate philosophical position and adopt and choose the research paradigm (Elshafie, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.108). Therefore, in the section that follows, in more detail, I will discuss the research paradigm in general, and then the main two research paradigms, ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Also, justifications for the selected paradigm in my study will be provided through the discussion.

**Figure 5- 1 Relationship between Epistemology, Methodology, and Method**

Diagram

Description automatically generated

(Retrieved from Carter and Little, 2007, p. 1317)

## **5.2 Research paradigm**

The word paradigm in the Oxford English Dictionary (2018) refers to an exemplar, pattern, or model of something. In the research context, it is used much more broadly than its literal meaning, therefore, there are many different definitions for a research paradigm. For instance, the word paradigm is used to point to the framework of doing research, which should include the research problem, assumptions (epistemological & methodological) relevant to the research, and what is to be done with the research findings (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). Further, Guba and Lincoln (1994) assert that the research paradigm “may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles” (p.107). In other words, it is how we see, think of, the world including what we cannot prove about it (or metaphysics), and our attempts to understand it (research) because we, as human beings, act as we think (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, the above definitions appear to be somehow very general and broad when we practically think of social scientific research. Thus, other scholars tend to define the qualitative paradigm, in which this study is located, in a specific detailed way. For example, Neuman (2014), in his definition of the qualitative paradigm, included (a) assumptions that influence the research, (b) the research questions, (c) problems to be solved, (d) techniques to conduct the research, (e) and finally models or examples for similar research. All those elements work as what he called a “system of thinking” that functions as the board framework for research (p.96). According to the different definitions of the research paradigm presented earlier, a paradigm includes a combination of thoughts and actions to create a thinking map (Neuman, 2014).

However, the researcher’s assumptions, thoughts, or set of beliefs of the world play such a significant role in deciding or dominating his/her investigation methodology (actions). As an illustration of those assumptions, a researcher who believes that there is only one reality (positivist) cannot employ an interpretive approach to his research methodology. This view is asserted by Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 1) that “all social scientists approach their subject via explicit or implicit assumptions about the nature of the social world and how it may be investigated”. Hence, not only that all those elements included in the paradigm definitions earlier must appear complementary and coherent in a logical way, but also in accordance with the researcher's ontological assumptions. In addition to that, stating the research problem, “what is to be studied'', and the purpose of the research is also an important aspect of choosing any research paradigm (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 116).

Therefore, the adoption of the research paradigm always begins with an identification of the philosophical assumptions of ontology and epistemology and their relationship to the research methodology. In the next section, I provide brief definitions for all these concepts as an Introduction for discussion about the research paradigm.

### **5.2.1 Ontology, Epistemology, and Methodology**

The concept of ontology revolves primarily around the question of the nature of knowledge and what can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The main issue is whether truth and social knowledge are certain and exist independently of human minds or whether they are created through their social life and interaction within their surroundings. If we draw on the social sciences this question can be formulated as follows: is the truth common, or is it just a set of specific contexts experienced by different individuals? (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Epistemology, in its simplest form, is concerned with answering two main questions: the first is what the difference between knowledge, beliefs, and opinions is, and the second is how we know what we think we know (Scott & Usher, 2011). Methodology is “a theory and analysis of how research should proceed '' and to justify the research method to be used in research (Carter & Little, 2007; Harding, 1987, p. 2). All three concepts work together to reveal the researcher's view of the world and to determine the research position that he or she adopts during his or her research journey (Berryman, 2019).

### **5.2.2 The Positivist Paradigm**

The positivist paradigm assumes that the truth is certain, independent, and abstract from the context of the research, specifically from its participants and implementers (Bryman, 2012). It seeks through research to prove or negate a hypothesis or reveal the relationships between things by discovering cause and effect. The positivist paradigm was known as the scientific method of research in the nineteenth century (Fox, 2008; Panhwar, Ansari, & Shah, 2017). Ontologically, positivism considers that reality is tangible, exists externally and can be independently revealed or studied. In other words, the role of the researcher here is to observe the objective reality impartially to ensure the truth of the results (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Scotland, 2012).

One of the most important criticisms of this philosophy, especially when it was dominant over research in the natural sciences, where empirical observation was the tool to reach results and theories that can be generalised, is that it does not recognize other sources of knowledge production, especially those results from human and social experiences (Fox, 2008. Because of the many criticisms of this philosophy by those interested, especially in the field of social sciences, it was necessary to reconsider the philosophical nature on which this approach was built and replace it with another approach called post-positivism (Clark, 1998; Fox, 2008). According to Panhwar et al. (2017), post-positivism is not considered as a compromise to combine qualitative and quantitative research methods or between the positivist or interpretive approaches but rather aims to diversify research methods. In other words, a variety of research methods are chosen following the desired research questions, hypotheses, and objectives.

In general, it can be said that the discussion about post-positivism contributed significantly to raising the value of qualitative research in terms of targeted data and methods of analysis (Fox, 2008). Qualitative data are sometimes radically “reinterpreted in terms derived from art and literature, including the production of fictions or poems and/or the promotion of various kinds of performance art” (Hammersley, 2019, p. 182). As a qualitative researcher, I agree with Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007), who argues that quantitative studies cannot be completely unbiased and qualitative studies cannot be completely imaginary. But rather, qualitative studies have to rely on some subjectivity if the researcher wants to study complex human behaviours and personal experiences. This is also confirmed by what was referred to by Bryman (2012) that the analysis of relationships between variables in quantitative studies depicts social and human life statically and independently from people, especially those who participate in it.

Therefore, I adopted the interpretivist approach, which I will discuss below, to implement this study, which appears in line with the general objective and the research questions to be answered.

### **5.2.3 The Interpretive Paradigm**

The Interpretivist paradigm emerges from the premise that knowledge exists and is created in the human mind through social contexts (Bryman, 2012). Hence, this approach is concerned with the factors that affect those contexts. That is, human social behaviours cannot be studied in the same way as physical phenomena (Panhwar et al., 2017). Social researchers then seek to reach this distinction from the natural sciences, which cannot take into account the different circumstances surrounding the phenomenon. Therefore, achieving understandings and meanings for an event relies much on the reflections of both the participant and researcher (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). Interpretivist epistemology requires looking in-depth at the subjective meanings of any social event (Bryman, 2012; Kankam, 2019).

The Interpretivist paradigm is usually discussed with other concepts such as constructionism, naturalism (Elshafie, 2013). Schwandt (1998) asserted that constructivist, constructivism, interpretive and interpretivism, are terms used in the methodology of social science very commonly, yet, what they mean depends on who uses them. Correspondingly, all of those adopting those persuasions agree on the importance of understanding social life from the perspective of those who live in it. Similarly, Hammond and Wellington (2013) define the relationship between the constructivism and interpretivism concepts as “a subset of the other” or emanate from each other (p.90); however, it is challenging to consider a single angle to describe them. Alternatively, one can describe them as different concepts but closely similar in viewing people as the main factor of making meanings (Hammond & Wellington, 2013; Schwandt, 1998).

The following section is an overview justification for choosing a qualitative approach to conduct this research.

## **5.3 Qualitative Interpretive Approach Adopted in My Study**

In this section of this chapter, I will clarify the research approach that was adopted to carry out this study and clarify my position as a researcher and the justifications behind choosing this qualitative method.

At the outset, it must be mentioned that this study aims in general to understand the perceptions and opinions of teachers of children who are DHH about the inclusive education process and their role in it in particular. Accordingly, this study falls largely under the field of studies of inclusive education and is mainly concerned with inclusive education of children with SEN in the mainstream schools. To explore and understand the process of including children who are DHH in public education schools in SA, this study focused on teachers as an essential element in any inclusive education initiative and their effective and influential role in the implementation process. This study also adopted a qualitative approach to gain understanding and various perspectives on inclusion and to reach experiences and opinions as was indicated in the literature review chapter. In SA, there is limited research focused on inclusive education and the majority of previous studies have been carried out using quantitative approaches, especially those that focused on DHH inclusive programs.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a research approach is a depiction of the way we think about the world around us, especially those phenomena and events that cannot be proven. Therefore, all our actions or steps to understand that world, including our research, cannot be done without relying on a research approach. As mentioned previously under the research methodology section, researchers differ in their research approaches influenced by several intellectual and philosophical factors. Therefore, I, as a qualitative researcher, aspire to understand a particular intended social event through those people who are affected by it on a daily and permanent basis (Schwandt, 1998). Not only that, but the interpretation of the surrounding universe must also depend on observing the natural environments of the target events and not through experimental studies (Anderson & Arsenault, 2005). Those interpretations and “meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation” (Creswell et al., 2007, p. 20). In addition, qualitative research is characterised by the fact that it gives the researcher the possibility to understand and present the process of the social world as well as the individuals who create those social processes, who are also an important element when we want to understand a social phenomenon through research (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991).

Qualitative research is fundamental in the field of education if we consider that generally, qualitative research is interpretive, as described by Stake (2010), to focus on individuals and human experiences to better understand any educational phenomena and events (inclusive education in this case) (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2009). This is because knowledge is usually produced far from school environments by researchers and people far from the practical and daily aspect of education (decision-makers, for example, which sometimes creates a gap between the theoretical and practical reality (Winkle-Wagner, Hunter, & Ortloff, 2009). As a result, research that is interested in developing or assessing educational processes becomes useless and ineffective (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011). In other words, there must be a greater role for teachers in research, either by encouraging them to conduct research on their own or by relying on them as a primary source of knowledge by researchers who are interested in educational fields.

As a qualitative, interpretivist researcher, I am fully aware that this research approach adopted in this study has its limits, and many criticisms have been addressed in the literature. For example, what was highlighted by Alharahsheh and Pius (2020), an interpretive approach does not enable the researcher to explain his results numerically and statistically, which helps to generalise the results to other events. Still, it always focuses on delving into the studied events and trying to understand the complexities and interpretations. That, undoubtedly, requires much more time and effort, especially during the analysis process (Bryman, 2012; Denscombe, 2010). Also, the criticisms that are always raised about the interpretive approach is that the interpretations provided by the researcher are often affected by his/her previous experiences, feelings, and beliefs because of the ontological assumptions of subjectivity (Pham, 2018). Also, Mack (2010, p. 4) indicated that one of the most common criticisms of the interpretive approach is that it ignores “the political and ideological impact on knowledge and social reality”.

However, based on the purpose of my study, I adopted the qualitative approach for the following reasons. First, it is in accordance with Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007) that if a researcher aims to look at and explore the experience of a person from a first-person perspective, he or she must choose a qualitative approach because it is the natural way to do so. This is because, in general, the word qualitative often refers to social research, in which the researcher deals with written or audible data rather than numerical ones (Carter & Little, 2007). In this case, the goal of the analysis is to reach an understanding of human behaviour based on those written data (interview transcripts). Secondly, as an advantage of adopting a qualitative approach, a researcher can investigate the social world from different perspectives. He or she, for example, can learn how it works, how participants imagine and discuss events in it, and how situations within the social world relate to participants (Mason, 2002). Thirdly, I share with Wellington (2015) that data collected in qualitative research comes from a natural setting for the participants and can be loaded with very descriptive and rich information about a social phenomenon. So, people who live in a situation are well placed to represent it and understand it more than others (for example, my study focuses on teachers’ perceptions toward inclusive education because they have the primary responsibility to implement it as well as they are part of it).

From here, I looked forward to qualitatively exploring and understanding DHH teachers’ attitudes and perceptions in their natural setting, where they have practised and worked with pupils on inclusion programs in Jeddah city, SA. In addition, I also aimed to investigate those teachers’ feelings, conceptions, needs, and experiences about their role in the implementation of an inclusive education project adopted by the SME. Indeed, those intentions underpin my research questions and objectives, which I have stated in chapter one. Therefore, I firmly believe that a qualitative approach is very appropriate for seeking answers for them as well as it suits the aim, nature of my topic and purpose of my study.

## **5.4 Positionality**

Positionality means to acknowledge, as the researcher, that my stance may influence my study in some ways, such as the choice of the research topic; the research questions; how and what data will be collected and in which ways that data will be interpreted (Stewart-Withers, Banks, Mcgregor, & MeoSewabu, 2014). Therefore, this section focuses on my ontological and epistemological positioning as well as my values, experiences, beliefs, and thoughts, which may influence my selections in this study. Concerning this view, Sikes (2004) pointed out that where we come from as researchers significantly influences our choice of methodology and research procedures. In other words, what is our view of the social reality (ontology), what is our view of the form of knowledge (epistemology), and how we see people’s interaction and relation with their environment, inevitably, will have implications for us in many aspects of our research? In addition, and as stated by Wellington (2015, p. 87) that positionality to be required and included in our research “is also part of the activity of epistemology, i.e., being aware of what we know, how we know it and equally what we don’t know, or what could equally be called reflexivity or metacognition”.

“Qualitative research is a form of inquiry in which researchers interpret what they see, hear, and understand. The researchers' interpretations cannot be separated from their background, history, context, and prior understandings” (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 39). For this reason, in the following section, I will briefly present my historical background and experience that formed my interest in choosing the topic and carrying out this study.

### **5.4.1 My Life History**

In the academic year 2006-2007, I completed my BA degree in special education (with an emphasis on DHH education) from King Saud University in the capital city of KSA, Riyadh. I was nominated by the Saudi Ministry of Education to work as a teacher of DHH at Jeddah DHH primary institution (residential school for DHH students). My role was to provide educational services to DHH pupils who joined the institution. That included teaching, interpretation (translation from and to sign language), supervision for other services such as housing, hearing diagnosis, or hearing aids support. Four years later, I was awarded a full scholarship from the Saudi Ministry of Education to pursue my studies in the field of DHH education in the USA. By the end of 2013, I graduated from Kent State University in OH with a master’s degree in DHH education. The master program prepares graduate students to gain a teaching license along with a master certification in DHH education as required by the educational department in the State of Ohio, USA. During my study, I was required to teach and practice in different educational contexts with DHH students, which helped me to experience and develop a broader understanding of inclusive education for DHH, which was different from what I was used to before at the segregated DHH School in Jeddah. After completing my studies in the US, I was promoted to work for The University of Jeddah as a lecturer at the college of education, special education program. In this program, we prepare students to become teachers of the DHH with a BA degree. Specifically, I was responsible for the sign language training program where students can develop their ability to communicate with the Deaf community. I also supervised teachers in training who were assigned to work for DHH education programs in Jeddah before they complete their BA degree in DHH education.

In 2018, I was awarded a full scholarship by The University of Jeddah to pursue my PhD study in DHH education in the UK. Thus, in April 2018, I started my PhD study at The University of Sheffield to continue my journey of what I started 12 years ago in DHH education.

In conclusion above, my previous career as a teacher of DHH, education, and experience formed my interest to continue my study in inclusive education for students who DHH in SA. They triggered my thoughts to ask many questions about Deaf education, particularly the inclusive philosophy. In other words, why DHH education seems to be more developed in some places (like in The United States than in SA in my case) than others. Why are there still segregation schools for children who are DHH in some countries (like in SA in my case)? Why Children who are DHH are not fully included in mainstream schools. In addition, this study also seeks to reach multiple meanings of inclusive education in different cultural contexts other than those current and common in SA by reviewing the literature related to this in other countries and then comparing them with the findings and interpretations revealed in this study.

### **5.4.2 My Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions**

In qualitative research, it is essential to understand that there is no one way to conduct research. The way that a researcher wants to use depends on many factors such as his beliefs about the form of social life and what can be known about it (ontology), the nature of knowledge and how it can be gained (epistemology), the research goal, participants, and the researcher’s environment and position (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Therefore, it is difficult for any researcher to research without relating to ontological and epistemological assumptions (Sikes, 2004). I view “the social world as being of a much softer, personal and humanly created kind that will select from a comparable range of recent and emerging techniques – accounts, participant observation and personal constructs” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 20). In addition, I agree with the idea that knowledge is “socially constructed, subjectively experienced and the result of human thought as expressed through language” (Sikes, 2004, p. 20). It means that people build subjective meanings of their experience in the world where they live; those meanings are varied and multiple, which leads the researcher to investigate the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or assumptions.

Accordingly, and based on the ontological and epistemological assumptions that I described here, the qualitative interpretive approach was chosen to carry out this research to obtain an understanding of thinking, ideas, motivations, and needs of teachers toward the services that are provided for children who are DHH at the mainstream schools. Furthermore, it helped me uncover patterns in thoughts, views, and suggestions from participants’ perspectives more than percentages and numbers. This view is supported by what Blumer (as cited in Opie, 2004) pointed out “complexity of human life could not be interpreted by quantitative analysis” (p.19).

The following section addresses the steps taken to collect and analyse data. Through the discussion of this section, I will also provide the reader with the rationales behind each step and any relevant challenge or developments through the process.

## **5.5 Data Collection Procedure (method)**

This section of this chapter aims to provide a detailed explanation of the process of data collection and analysis in this study. The importance of clarifying the detailed procedures for conducting research is that it allows re-conducting the study for those who are interested in it (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007). That includes the data collection tools and steps taken and the difficulties and challenges associated with each procedure. Therefore, in this next section, I will explain the process of conducting interviews and the justifications for choosing semi-structured interviews and clarify the challenges that were encountered while conducting them.

### **5.5.1 Interviewing**

Here, I will describe the rationales behind my selection of the interview as a method of collecting data in my present study. The following section then discusses the interview style (semi-structure) and the associated challenges.

Before I do so, it is worth mentioning that most of us, as researchers or human beings, have somehow experienced an interview at some point in our life to apply, as an example, for a job or a degree (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2009). Therefore, we are somehow familiar with the concept of interviewing (as interviewee or interviewer) to gain or present information. Generally, an interview is defined as a form of a conversation between two or more people. It can be conducted via telephone, face-to-face, or online applications (Hammond & Wellington, 2013; E. Teijlingen, 2014). As a researcher, I have several reasons to use interviews as my method to gain data in this research; first is that my view is in line with what was pointed out by Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007) that interviews have the potential to get the researcher further than any other methods. In other words, unlike surveys that are used to get a broad view of a situation, an interview can take the researcher deep into the interviewee’s perceptions, values, impressions, and visions and ask for more clarifications about an event (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). In the same vein, Denscombe (2010) affirms that: “although interviews can be used for the collection of straightforward factual information, their potential as a data collection method is better exploited when they are applied to the exploration of more complex and subtle phenomena” (p.173). In addition, interviews can give the participant plenty of space to express his experience or story with more details, making them one of the most preferred methods by some qualitative researchers (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Roulston, 2010b). I agree with Lichtman (2014) that deep and focused interviews can lead to rich and powerful data.

However, interviews still have their weaknesses and disadvantages. For instance, they are very time consuming and need so much effort compared to other methods such as questionnaires and surveys (Opdenakker, 2006). In addition, in some circumstances, an interviewer has to deal with some vulnerable and sensitive participants (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). As in my study, most of the participants were very comfortable with the interview approach, which made the interviews exciting and allowed me to raise many topics. However, two participants looked hesitant during the interviews which was clear by their reserved answers on some questions, especially those questions included or require mentioning people in certain positions within the school, such as the program director or the school principal. This had an impact on the fluency of their interviews in a way that did not make them spontaneous. I had to confirm their rights as participants in this study and the confidentiality of the information provided in it. They have the right to change their opinions about not participating whenever they feel that without giving justifications. One of these participants requested that his interview be removed the next day, and this was done in his presence.

As my research focuses on investigating teachers’ of the DHH perceptions, thoughts, and ideas from their point of view toward inclusive programs, my study adopted a face-to-face semi-structured interview as a method for data collection (see below). Therefore, the interviews were appropriate for this study because they allowed me to search and talk about in-depth details related to DHH inclusion precisely and in the context of the natural environments (inclusive schools) for the participating teachers. Furthermore, the interviews helped to form positive relationships before starting with the pre questions prepared questions. For example, I started the interviews by asking the participants about their educational experiences generally to warm up. That appeared to allow many of them to talk later comfortably and richly about the situation of inclusion. Not only that, but interviews, by their nature as a tool for collecting data, enabled me to give the participants the right to choose the place and time of the interview, which contributes to obtaining detailed data in a way that contributes to enriching the results of this study. All interviews in this study were carried out in Arabic and like a spontaneous and simple conversation in terms of the language used and style to gain the participants' confidence and create a positive and effective atmosphere. However, spontaneous language (Slang) during the interviews raised some challenges later during transcribing, analysing and translating data that appeared like many adjustments and corrections, as shown later in this chapter under the data translation section.

The following part discusses the semi-structured interview type I employed in this study.

### **5.5.2 Semi-Structured Interview**

A semi-structured interview is considered as a compromise between an unstructured interview approach and a structured interview schedule. Semi-structured interviews give the researcher more flexibility to seek rich data within the interviewee’s answers (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007). E. Teijlingen (2014, p.17) describes a semi-structured interview as a set of “predetermined questions, but the order can be modified based upon the interviewer's perception of what seems most appropriate. Question-wording can be changed, and explanations are given; inappropriate questions for a particular interviewee can be omitted, or addition alone included”. In other words, although semi-structured interviews use similar questions, or guide, with all participants, It also allows the interviewer to change direction (widen inquiries, for example) during the interview, as the interviewee wants to explain ideas widely or even to raise ones that aren’t in the interview checklist (Denscombe, 2010; Lichtman, 2014). However, some novices, mainly, find expanding questions during the interview uncomfortable; therefore, some tend to abide by their predetermined interview questions (Lichtman, 2014).

Moreover, the main focus during the semi-structured interviews must be on how the interviewee is explaining his or her understanding of the situation (Bryman, 2012). Hence, semi-structured was very appropriate for this study, and it allowed me to seek deep and complex ideas, perceptions, and understanding (Barriball & While, 1994). For example, during the interviews of my study, some of the participants were very excited to talk immediately about the curriculum as soon as the conversation started, so I had to hold on until they finished and then return to my pre-prepared interview questions. I felt that most of my participants began their conversation with what seems important about inclusive education; therefore, I had to manage the dialogue in the direction they desired and then return to some points to be covered. This strategy helped me not disturb the participants and gave them enough space and time to express their concerns. However, it required a lot of effort and continuous observation of my interview guide to ensure that all questions were covered. A semi-structured interview has also helped me discover new aspects or changes of inclusion in Saudi other than those I previously knew. For example, before doing this study, I had never thought of how some actions could turn an inclusive school into an exclusive environment for some children until many participants in this study provided many specific examples and details as will be discussed in the next chapter in the fourth sub-theme. I believe that face-to-face semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate method to reach that kind of information described earlier which gave an insight into the reality of the situation of many inclusion programs. I say this because I thought of using focus groups to collect data; however, I had some concerns. According to Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008), focused groups require appropriate levels of communication and interaction between the participants, which I cannot assume in any case from my personal experience as a former teacher due to the competitive school atmosphere. Also, research culture in S A, especially precipitation in research, is usually seen via questionnaires and interviews, hence using a focused group may need more time and preparation to be used (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2012; Gill et al., 2008). Moreover, the time chosen to collect data was near the end of the academic year when schools are usually less active, and teachers leave home earlier than usual; therefore, interviews gave my participants and me more flexibility to arrange a time on an individual basis at the convenience of every single participant.

I used a digital audio recorder to record interviews to allow later translation (from Arabic - as the participant's first language- to English) and transcription. I also made sure to have extra batteries and use my phone simultaneously to record in case of any technical issues. However, the quality of recording sound was affected by the nature of most school environments. For instance, according to the Saudi school fire safety system, carpet and fabric are not allowed inside classrooms or meeting rooms which causes high levels of echo. It required much more focus during transcriptions to make sure about what participants said precisely.

Further, I took notes as interviews were recorded to help me identify key points to be used during my data analysis procedure (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007). However, taking notes during an interview may distract or reduce my ability to keep my eye contact and communication fluent, so I kept this technique to minimum use when necessary (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). In addition, Roulston (2010a, p. 208) added that when “recordings of interview data are transcribed in detail to analyse how data are co-constructed by speakers (e.g., pauses, repairs, laughter and turn-taking may be relevant features for analysis)”. Therefore, notes attached to the participants’ profiles were beneficial during my analysis and transcription later. (See appendix 6 for interview guide and questions)

### **5.5.3 Piloting interview questions (pilot study)**

“The term ‘pilot studies’ refers to mini versions of a full-scale study (also called ‘feasibility studies), as well as the specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview schedule” (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001, p. 1). As an important stage of researching in general, and using interviews as a method in particular, scheduling and piloting research instruments (interview questions) comes in the second stage, according to Cohen et al. (2007). This important step helps the researcher test out his or her questions before asking them in real interviews to eliminate any ambiguity involved in the interview questions or enhance their quality (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007). In the same respect, Atkins and Wallace (2012, p. 6) suggested that “it is a very good idea to treat the first interview we conduct in the course of our research as a pilot or practice interview”. That gives us, as researchers, a chance to review our mistakes and develop our interview questions (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Wellington, 2015). Thus, the same interview questions were tested out with 3 teachers of the DHH one week before collecting official data, which helped me get much more familiar with the interview questions and assess their quality and clarity. In addition, all those three pilot interviews were included in the analysis of this study.

## **5.6 Participants**

There are two main approaches to identifying the sample to be studied in qualitative studies: theoretical sampling and purposive (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003). The fundamental difference between these two types is that the theoretical sample is always a continuous process during data collection until the emergence of the theory to the researcher through the data. Therefore, the data is the leading indicator for the researcher, through which he can tend to target other theories or even compare theories. As a result of this procedure, the research sample can be generalised when using this type of sample. On the other hand, in purposive sampling, the researcher does not target participants randomly but instead targets people or sites strategically. In other words, this means that the targeted people and locations are relevant in one way or another to the goal and research questions to be implemented. Like the approach used to specify my research sample, purposive sampling means that the researcher selects some members to represent a situation based on some criteria (Cohen et al., 2007; Ritchie et al., 2003). The standards that were relied upon to identify the participants in this study are the city (Jeddah) in which the research is conducted, the discipline of the targeted teachers (education of the deaf and hard of hearing), the educational stage in which the participants work (elementary schools), and the educational environment (Inclusive programs/mainstream schools).

The city of Jeddah was chosen because it is the primary location for the researcher's work, which contributed to easing access, mobility, and stability during data collection. According to the SME, there are seven elementary schools for children who are DHH in the research city, of which 6 of them are officially labelled as inclusive educational placement. However, all of those six schools practice inclusion from the first grade (6 years) to the sixth primary grade (12 years), as there are no inclusive programs for children who are DHH in the intermediate and secondary levels.

Twenty-one teachers agreed to participate in this study from all six schools, including those interviewed in the pilot study stage. However, one participant asked for his interview to be withdrawn a day later after his interview. Therefore, I made sure that he was present in withdrawing his interview from the recorder and destroying his consent form. That left me with a total of 20 recorded interviews. (Please see table 5-1 below for participant details). The number of participants in this study seems to align with what Bryman (2012) recommended: the minimum sample size of qualitative studies should be 12 participants.

**Table 5- 1 Participants’ Details**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NO** | **Code** | **Qualification** | **Years Ex** | **Site** | **Interview Date** |
| 1 | Abha | BA Special/ DHH education | 10 | 1 | 4/4/2019 |
| 2 | Asir | BA Special/ DHH education | 13 | 1 | 4/4/2019 |
| 3 | Yamba | BA Special/ DHH education | 10 | 1 | 4/4/2019 |
| 4 | Najran | BA Special/ DHH education | 14 | 1 | 7/4/2019 |
| 5 | Khamis | BA Special/ DHH education | 9 | 2 | 9/4/2019 |
| 6 | Qasim | BA Special/ DHH education | 8 | 2 | 9/4/2019 |
| 7 | Madina | BA Special/ DHH education | 5 | 2 | 10/4/2019 |
| 8 | Baha | BA Special/ DHH education | 9 | 2 | 10/4/2019 |
| 9 | Makkah | BA Special/ DHH education | 10 | 3 | 14/4/2019 |
| 10 | Damam | BA Special/ DHH education | 10 | 3 | 14/4/2019 |
| 11 | Buraidah | BA Special/ DHH education | 8 | 3 | 15/4/2019 |
| 12 | Jeddah | BA Special/ DHH education | 9 | 4 | 15/4/2019 |
| 13 | Taif | BA Special/ DHH education | 8 | 4 | 15/4/2019 |
| 14 | Hail | BA Special/ DHH education | 10 | 4 | 15/4/2019 |
| 15 | Jazan | BA Special/ DHH education | 14 | 5 | 16/4/2019 |
| 16 | Tabuk | BA Special/ DHH education | 12 | 5 | 16/4/2019 |
| 17 | Riyadh | BA Special/ DHH education | 13 | 5 | 16/4/2019 |
| 18 | Dawadm | BA Special/DHH education | 17 | 6 | 28/ 3/ 2019 |
| 19 | Aqiq | BA Special/ DHH education | 15 | 6 | 28/ 3/ 2019 |
| 20 | Namas | BA Special/ DHH education | 16 | 6 | 28/ 3/ 2019 |

## **5.7 Data Analysis**

Based on the research focus, a researcher can analyse his data following either inductive, deductive approaches, or a combination of the two simultaneously (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Gray, 2013). Those three ways used by researchers are similar to what people use daily to understand the surrounding world, as stated by (Cohen, 2011). Using an inductive approach means researchers identifying patterns within data to reach a general conclusion about a situation. In other words, they start from the bottom of their data up to build the big and general ideas represented by those patterns. In contrast, a deductive analysis approach often means following a top-down analysis towards logically testing theories or hypotheses. A mixture of both methods means that findings raised from data can be tested against current theory or model to investigate differences and make comparisons (Gray, 2013; Hammond & Wellington, 2013). Figure 1-4 illustrates the two main (inductive & deductive) reasoning approaches’ process.

**Figure 5- 2 Inductive and deductive analysis**

Deductive

Theory

Hypothesis

Observation

Confirmation

Theory

Hypothesis

Pattern

Observation

Inductive

Retrieved from (Trochim & Donnelly, 2006)

Figure 1-4 shows that the inductive approach is the opposite of the deductive one and builds a new theory. However, that opposition does not appear clearly during analysis, and yet both techniques are often applied simultaneously with qualitative data (Armat, Assarroudi, Rad, Sharifi, & Heydari, 2018). Therefore, a theory emerges from an inductive analysis to describe a phenomenon in the data content that can still be compared/tested with existing ones deductively (Hammond & Wellington, 2013).

In this present study of DHH teachers’ perceptions of inclusion, I followed the inductive analysis approach because it helped me identify the specific details about DHH inclusion (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). As mentioned in the first chapter of this study, DHH inclusion in SA needs to be explored in-depth from teachers’ perspectives to generate unique knowledge. Also, many previous studies about DHH inclusion in SA (Al Reyes & Bent Ali, 2016b; Hanafi, 2008) that adopted a deductive approach failed to provide a clear and detailed description of the situation. This view is confirmed by Armat et al. (2018) that the inductive analysis approach is better when there is a shortage of findings of a situation. However, I am aware that being from the same field as my participants will, without a doubt, have influenced my analysis. As described by Mason (2002, p. 149) that many qualitative researchers “will probably see yourself as inevitably and inextricably implicated in the data generation and interpretation processes, and you will therefore seek a reading of data which captures or expresses those relationships”.

### **4.7.1 Method of Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis**

There are different ways to analyse qualitative data presented in the literature, and there is no one way that can be applied to all kinds of data (Denscombe, 2010). Choosing the appropriate approach depends on many elements, such as the purpose of the research, researchers’ knowledge and experience, and research methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, I utilised the six phases of the thematic analysis approach presented by Braun and Clarke (2006) for several reasons. First, is in line with what suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006, pp. 9,8) that “thematic analysis does not require the detailed theoretical and technological knowledge of approaches such as grounded theory and DA, it can offer a more accessible form of analysis, particularly for those early in a qualitative research career”. Second, thematic analysis is commonly used in qualitative data because of its simplicity and flexibility where an analyst can systematically extract meanings and ideas “without threatening depth of analysis” (Javadi & Zarea, 2016, p. 39). Third, thematic analysis is an appropriate tool to understand how a group of people conceptualise a phenomenon, especially if data was collected verbally or textually (Joffe, 2012). However, throughout my journey of analysis, I have tried applying the Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to strengthen my analysis. However, it was challenging to me as a beginner researcher and analyst, to understand the differences between IPA and thematic analysis in terms of presenting and highlighting the data even though they both have similar steps of analysis and are thematically oriented (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

**Table 5- 2 Stages of Thematic Analysis**

Shape

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

(Retrieved from Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87)

The following section explained how I applied each phase in my analysis in this present study.

#### **Familiarisation With the Data**

In my study, this stage started from the beginning of listening, describing, and reading interviews and continued throughout the whole process of analysis. According to Neuman (2014), this stage can also include recognising initial patterns and ideas through the data. For example, during interviews in my study, almost all participants raised their concerns about the curriculum, which appeared to be one of the main themes later. I also realised that going back and forth (transcribing) to data helped me build even more insight into the data before starting the analysis. It was also helpful for me to use general marking to reference the keywords found in the data during this stage. For example, I used the word “feelings” when I read something related to teachers’ feelings or reaction to DHH inclusion which is very helpful when doing the form coding later (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition, I used both languages (Arabic & English) at this stage according to what best describes the situation in my mind to help me remember my marking later. In other words, sometimes, while reading the transcripts, I thought of how a story mentioned by the participant, for example, can be presented in English during analysis. In such cases, I used English words to mark that story like ‘’ frustration’’, ‘’promotion’’.

**Producing Initial Codes**

This phase starts when an analyst has exciting ideas from his data set that help create an initial code. Coding is considered part of the analysis where researchers gather and organise their data in a meaningful way (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, codes for some researchers are similar to themes, while others see codes as the bricks to build a theme (Bryman, 2012). In this study, it was very challenging to understand the difference between codes, subthemes, and main themes at the early stage of analysis. It was clear to read about their differences in the relevant literature and understand how they relate to each other, but they sometimes felt the same when it came to my data and my codes. The main issue was that some codes could fit into different categories while others seemed powerful concepts that should be presented in my study. An excellent example of this situation was the “independent environment” theme built on three concepts, access, classroom arrangement, and participation. The common idea behind all those concepts was that children who are DHH are isolated from the rest of school, but all of them were powerful. After many revisions and discussions with my supervisors, those concepts represent mainly the impact of practising inclusion.

#### **Looking for Possible Themes**

This stage occurs when all data has been marked and coded, so analysis can be taken into wider meaningful groups by matching similar codes to create a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At the beginning of my analysis, I made a list that divided codes according to my research questions’ focuses as teachers’ perceptions, challenges, and suggestions analysis. However, to strengthen my analysis critically, I changed the three lenses/focuses mentioned earlier to new ones that represent the most crucial element of any inclusive program, including understanding, teachers, and children. Initial themes and subthemes were then modified, developed, or excluded (see Tables 3-5 for an overviewof centralthemes and related subthemes). I also reviewed some relevant literature to help build my main themes again. The main challenge here was how to find the common concepts under the new three focuses using the same codes from the initial analysis. Therefore, this stage, and the other following two, was a continuous procedure. I had to go back and forth to my transcripts to help me understand how and when an issue was mentioned during the interview and which kinds of language was used to describe it. That has also made me realise the importance of reviewing my initial themes and avoiding repetition.

#### **Reviewing Themes**

This stage is where some themes appear as non-real ones (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, this stage helps an analyst to know if he/she is in the right direction or not. One way to apply this stage is to compare the candidate themes with the natural data/extracts identified. It also helps organise themes in more in-depth and into homogenous categories. I also used this stage to eliminate unrealistic themes included in my list. For example, some participants highlighted how HH students should be included differently from Deaf ones in inclusive schools, which was identified as a theme under the third research question (suggestions) as “promotion inclusion” in the initial analysis. Then this became a sub-theme under the third theme of children’s who are DHH performance in inclusion after revising my analysis focus. Indeed, this stage is also continuous and needs many modifications and classification even after writing my first draft of reports.

#### **Defining and Naming Themes**

After reviewing themes, it is critical to name them in a way that represents their essence (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition, the names of themes should give the reader an immediate impression about what the theme will be about and how this theme is compatible with the whole story of the data (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). This stage was very much related to the previous one to make it repetitive and continuous. Naming themes depends on what the theme is about and the overall concept it represents; therefore, theme names in this study changed as the revisions continued. It was tricky with most themes and subthemes to reach a phrase meaning the concepts clearly for the reader, yet it was constructive to discuss and share those with my supervisors to decide on the appropriate ones.

#### **Producing the Report**

“The write-up of a thematic analysis should provide a concise, coherent, logical, nonrepetitive, and interesting account of the data within and across themes” (Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 10, 11). It also should provide enough and relevant evidence from the data to support themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, my three findings chapters describe how this stage was conducted and participants' quotes and link those findings with my research questions and relevant literature. During this stage, the strategy of focusing on linguistic contexts was used in presenting the participants' opinions. This was done by presenting explanations of the quotations with clarification of their linguistic connotations or possible meanings. For example, a participant used phrases such as “inclusion was not perfect and never will be” to express their dissatisfaction with the current status of inclusion. These linguistic contexts were used during the writing of the analysis chapters to give more sense to the interpretation of the findings in this study. That is because closer look at texts with a broad view of the context of the study in mind can help to draw firmer conclusions about data. (Fairclough, 1992; Ifversen, 2003)

**Table 5- 3 Overview of main themes and sub-themes**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Main themes** | **sub-themes** | **Description** |
| **Teachers’ Perceptions and Understanding of Inclusion as Philosophy and Practice** | * Teachers’ of the DHH Understanding of the Philosophy of Inclusion * Teachers’ understandings of what makes practice inclusive * Teachers' Views on the Impact of Administrative Systems on Inclusion * Isolation: The Impact of Practising Inclusion | The focus of this category is the concept of inclusion. First, the aim was to understand how teachers conceptualise inclusive education represented by the first two sub-themes. The second aim was to capture the actual situation of DHH inclusive programs designated by the last two sub-themes. |
| **Teachers’ Perceptions of The Factors Affecting their Role in Inclusive Schools** | * Frustration as a Factor Influencing Teachers Role in Inclusive Education Curriculum and high expectations * The General Curriculum and its Influence on Teachers’ Roles * Teachers’ Views on the Impact of their Colleagues’ Awareness of Disability on their Roles * Teachers’ Views of The Impact of The Level of Collaboration and the Lack of Work Guidelines in Inclusive Schools | This category is designed to highlight teachers' daily experience, feelings, and work about their role as members of the inclusive ed system. It also serves to identify what they think are the factors that affect them the most, both positively and negatively. |
| **Teachers’ Perceptions of The Experience of Their Children Who are DHH in Inclusive Schools** | * Teachers’ Views of the Impact of Diagnosis on Children’s Experiences in Inclusive School Language delay * Teachers’ Views of the Impact of Language Delay on Children's Experiences in Inclusive Schools * Teachers’ Views of the Impact of Partial Inclusion on the Experience of Children Who are HH | children who are DHH are the focus of all sub-themes in this category. It aims to give an overview of children who are DHH in the inclusive programs through their teachers' opinions. It also identifies the most challenging and promising issues about their experience in those programs. |

The following section describes how I translated data during analysis and the related challenges and issues.

## **5.8 Data Translation**

Conducting research that requires collecting data in a language different from the investigation will require accurate and organised translation. The interpretations and basic meanings contained in the participants’ speech are well presented (Esposito, 2001). Therefore, all bilingual researchers are required to specify the time and type of data to be translated and included in the research report in a meaningful and consistent way (Shklarov, 2007). This task is not easy for many researchers who conduct their research in culturally and linguistically different environments. It causes many challenges and difficulties during data analysis or its projection on other research contexts, especially if we consider the increase in the amount of research of this type in recent years, according to what was reported (Crane, Lombard, & Tenz, 2009). Because of that, many concepts and ideas in some cultures and societies cannot be translated and interpreted into other cultural contexts or languages (Esposito, 2001) ​. An example of that is what is used in many languages of metaphors associated with a specific culture. However, it isn't easy to find an exact match in the language of the research audience (Adami & Pinto, 2019). Therefore, the researcher must translate his data in line with his research methodology and the general philosophical framework of the study. For example, a researcher who adopts an interpretive approach will assume that he will make linguistic and cultural interpretations of the participants' answers.

In this study, the researcher preferred to do the translation personally for several reasons. First, a researcher who performs his research in two different cultures and translates the data himself may avoid the different interpretations if he includes a translator from outside the research context or language (Smith, Peterson, & Thomas, 2008). For example, hiring an Arabic-speaking person, the primary language of the participants in this research, to translate interviews into English does not guarantee a complete understanding of all the terms and concepts associated with the research’s field. Second, all participants in my study used informal Arabic slang that any translator could not understand. Third, the interviews contain a lot of academic terms related to the field of study (inclusive education, disability, deafness etc.) that need accurate translation to the appropriate match in the English language, as will be discussed later in this section.

Therefore, it wasn't easy to involve a third party in translating the data to ensure that it was translated appropriately and accurately by someone (me) familiar with all those linguistic, cultural, and academic terms. Fourth, translating data by myself in my study helped me spend more time and deep reading of my data during all of the analysis stages. Fifth, writing and translating interviews helped retrieve the atmosphere, memories, and feelings surrounding each interview, which helped understand many of the interpretations and meanings of the conversations.

However, translating data was not done quickly or without challenges. One of the most critical difficulties in translating the participants' answers was the Arabic terminology related to disability and inclusive education, which is entirely different in SA than in the United Kingdom. Many of the participants use some of the terms accepted and used officially in SA, but they are not accepted elsewhere. It required me to do an extra search to find the acceptable match for those terms in the context of where my study will be presented. An example of this, which was mentioned in some interviews, is the term mental retardation to refer to intellectual disability. When this term is translated in its original form as noted by the participant, it appears inconsistent with what is commonly accepted in other environments. Another example also occurred when participants discussed inclusion by using only one word (Damg دمج). This word can represent many other related ones (mainstreaming, full inclusion, integration) to inclusive education in the Saudi context. As a result, I had to go back and forth to the original recording/transcripts to get the exact meaning for that word from the context to translate it.

In addition to the above, literal translation and preserving the original text for most extracts was not possible because it will, according to Birbili (2000), make the writing of the research report appear clumsy and difficult to read. Instead, it was necessary to adjust and rewrite most of the extracts included in this study to preserve the most significant number of terms and words received from the participants and be consistent. I used this strategy mostly with the Arabic versions of all quotes (from informal to formal) and then rewrote them into English ones. Also, many job titles had to be included in the analysis for which there was no exact equivalent in the English language. For example, through the data, the so-called “resident supervisor of the program” always appears in the participants’ talk about the inclusive programs in SA. When this term is translated in the original form, it seems incomprehensible, which made me use alternative words such as (program director) to clarify this idea to the reader quickly and clearly. However, on the other hand, this technique makes the citations sometimes longer and distracting for the reader because they all were included within the quotes extracted.

In general, the data in this study was translated by the researcher during the analysis process. Several linguistic modifications were made to the texts included in the analysis report to ensure their appearance in an understandable and consistent linguistic structure as much as possible while preserving the cultural and linguistic characteristics mentioned in the participants’ speech (Hennink, 2007).

In the following section, I aim to explain to the reader the challenges and difficulties that accompanied the stage of data analysis and writing the findings chapters during the total lockdown and the spread of the COVID\_19 pandemic.

## **5.9 The Impact of the Pandemic on The Process of This Research**

“Early researchers were arguably worst affected; the loss of more than 6 months of a 3–4-year PhD study has the potential to prevent the achievement of sufficient results by the end of the PhD study”**.** (Alam, Rampes, & Ma, 2021, p. 313)

As an international PhD student, with a family, the university facilities and spaces are the most comfortable place to work quietly. However, when the epidemic began to spread in the United Kingdom it was difficult to continue working inside the university building as most students usually used to work from 9 am to 5 pm. In addition, the opportunity of benefiting from other academic services such as accessing the library or printing was also lost. Therefore, working at home with limited resources and with the presence of a family was like an impossible task at the beginning of the crisis.  As it is known, during the data analysis stage, the researcher needs time to review the literature and permanent access to research databases that help him reach the expected findings. However, and honestly, the workplace at that time or the work itself was not the priority for many people, but the situation was like a challenge to stay safe and provide the basic needs for the family. Therefore, I decided to go back to my home country to hopefully settle and continue my work abroad. As travelling by airways shut down, it took me two months to get permission to travel on the evacuation flights provided by the Saudi government for those wishing to return home during the pandemic. Upon arriving in SA, the situation was not much better than in the UK in terms of lockdown, number of cases, restrictions, and quarantine. As a student studying abroad, I did not have the minimum basic needs to continue working during the total closure, such as private housing, a suitable place to work or access to the Internet, as my permanent settlement at that time was in the city of Sheffield in the United Kingdom and not in SA. That situation lasted about four difficult unproductive months. Moreover, being infected with the Corona virus along with other six family members during those months was another obstacle to continuing any work. After that, it was time to return back to the UK as some restrictions were lifted, however, as soon as I arrived in mid-September 2020, things turned to get worse again in regard to the pandemic. As an example, at the time of the year a second lockdown was already appearing in the horizon that affects our study and life once again. Further, access to the university facilities and services was limited to the minimum and a pre-booking for study spaces was always required in advance. Therefore, I realised after that, especially after imposing the third closure at the beginning of the year 2021, that it is necessary to work everywhere, whether at home or the places available at the university alike. Adaptation was the only solution, even with fatigue and distraction at work in multiple places, which was a permanent feature of work during that period.

## **5.10 Ethical Considerations**

This area deals with and highlights the importance of how research should be ethically conducted in general and how I particularly approached my selected participants. Primarily, the word ‘ethically’ goes further to reach many aspects of our research. In other words, all research should be carried out, written, and conducted in light of the ethical norms of doing research. Still, to briefly describe it here, a researcher should consider that he or she “has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informants” (Creswell, 2003, p. 23). Consequently, this study was conducted following research ethics guidelines at The University of Sheffield and should not cause any harm or risk at any level to the participants. However, there are some concerning issues regarding conducting such a study. First, the research method chosen in this study is interviewing, which requires a more extended amount of time from the participants. That may cause some participants not to complete the period necessary for the interview or answering all questions. Although this did not happen in this study, some started getting bored early during the interviews by giving short and specific answers. Sometimes, some participants asked about the duration of the interview and the number of questions. In such cases, I had to be flexible and understanding and ask them if they would prefer another time first and interview for other reasons. The reason behind this is that the period that was set for data collection for this study was in the last weeks of the academic year in SA. During those days, teachers are not required to be fully present at school during the school day either because of the students' high absence or limited educational procedure during these weeks. It was a race against time to visit all the specified schools before the end of the school year; however, my concerns were that these inactive weeks might make some school principals force teachers to participate in this study. As a result, two teachers who had previously registered with the school administration to participate and then requested to withdraw before the day set for the interview. (See appendix 2 for ethical approval).

### **5.9.1 Seeking Official Permission**

Approaching participants and accessing locations to carry an investigation should align with research ethical codes and protocol. In this respect, Cohen et al. (2007) stated that researchers should not think they have the right to access any location. Instead, it is a procedure that they must obtain prior permission and show a high level of responsibility to respect the ethics of research by obtaining official permission and respecting the laws of the site to be visited. In other words, being a researcher does not give you the right to be exempt from adhering to the rules of access to search sites. Therefore, accessing schools in this study was officially approved by the local education authority, and permission formally was gained from the local education authority in the city three weeks before the data collection time (See appendix for a copy of official approval). In addition, contact with school officials was also provided with official permission, which helped me arrange appointments with schools’ principals in sufficient time before visits and meetings with teachers.

That was not enough to make access easy. Still, it was necessary to coordinate daily and continuously with school administrations to determine the appropriate times for conducting preliminary introductory interviews about my research with those wishing to participate and coordinate the proper times for each participant. The great challenge was that most teachers preferred to conduct interviews during the official working hours and in the school building, which added more pressure in coordinating the times to not conflict with their teaching tasks during the school day. Also, the time chosen to conduct data for my study coincides with the end of the academic year in SA. It is considered a period of pressure on schools due to the conduct of final exams and final assessment procedures.

### **5.9.2 Informed Consent**

Informed consent refers to a written document showing a participant is willing and sufficiently informed to participate in a study (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2009). As addressed by Bryman (2012), the aim of those forms is that a researcher is assured his or her participants had the opportunity to be fully informed about the nature of the study and has signed evidence in the event something is raised by a participant or someone else. In light of the above, all participants in my proposed study were given a comprehensive description of the process of this study and its goals and requirements. In addition, as the researcher, I made sure to have signed informed consent for each participant involved before the interviewing process started. (See appendix# 4 & 5 for English Arabic versions of consent form & Participant information sheet)

### **5.9.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity**

As mentioned earlier, ethical research must not lead to any negative consequences for the participants. That inevitability includes participants who have agreed to be involved in my study. Therefore, protecting and anonymising their names, schools, and any other personal information was a priority. This was highlighted by Mcauley (2003, p. 4) that “one of the most important aspects of social research is the protection of the participants’ identity”. Therefore, there was no participant or school discussed by name or identification; instead, they were coded by numbers and letters to ensure complete confidentiality and anonymity. In addition, the data of my study is not accessible or revealed to any person except my supervisor and me. Further, data was securely stored in my file store (student account) with The University of Sheffield. After completing this study, the data collected will be destroyed.

## **5.10 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, the stages of conducting the current study were presented in terms of the philosophical framework, research methodology and methods, data collection and analysis procedure. In addition, the chapter explained any difficulties that the researcher faced during the data collection and analysis stages as well as justifying the researcher's choices and selections.

This study aimed to answer three research questions, the first is what are the teachers’ perceptions of DHH inclusion?  The second is what are the difficulties and challenges teachers face in the inclusion environments?  The third is what are the teachers’ ideas and visions for the development of inclusion processes in SA. This study targeted teachers of the DHH in general inclusive schools as a primary source for collecting information through semi-structured interviews. 21 DHH inclusive teachers participated in this study with an average of up to 40 minutes per interview, with one case of withdrawal from the research one day after his interview.

This study is a qualitative interpretive study in which the researcher makes interpretations of the data subjectively. Therefore, this study adopted the inductive analysis method to analyse the interview transcripts of the participants in their Arabic forms and then translate the quotations into English with a focus on the essential words in each extract.

 In its early stages, the analysis focused on the three research questions as analysis lenses, and after the emergence of the initial themes and the review, it was found that there is an opportunity to make the analysis more powerful and focused by adopting other methods such as IPA or DA. After several unsuccessful attempts, the thematic analysis was adopted again as a main analysis tool, with the analysis lenses changed from research questions to three other aspects that represent the most important elements of any inclusion process, inclusion idea, teachers, and students. Therefore, the idea of ​​inclusion was analysed in terms of several aspects such as administration and practice.  Then the focus was placed on teachers’ role because of their important destruction in the implementation of the inclusion.  The last focus was placed on the children who are DHH as a third main element benefiting from the inclusion.

Translating data from Arabic into English was one of the biggest challenges that the researcher faced during the analysis stage due to the cultural and linguistic difference between the data collected and the context in which the research is written and presented. For example, there were many concepts of inclusion and terminologies of disabilities that were not acceptable in the context of writing the research, as result, much more time was required from the researcher to translate the date in an acceptable way. In addition, during analysing data, there were many difficulties that the researcher faced when naming and classifying the themes, as many of them overlapped and may apply to many aspects. Therefore, some of them were merged or deleted to make the presentation logical and cleared for the reader.

# Chapter Six: Data Analysis and Findings Part One: Understanding of Inclusion as Philosophy and Practice

## **6.0 Chapter introduction**

In the previous chapters, I discussed the context of the study, the relevant literature, and the overall research design adopted to carry out this research. As shown in the methodology chapter in the table 5-1 findings are categorized into three main themes. Each main theme and its related sub-themes will be discussed in separate chapters. This chapter is the first one, out of three chapters to present findings, which focuses on the first main theme, which presents how teachers themselves understand inclusion as a philosophy and as a practice. This theme is developed through four sub-themes (see figure 1-6 below) (a) DHH teachers’ understanding of the purpose of inclusion, which captures how inclusion is seen to reduce the gap between disabled and nondisabled students. (b) Teachers’ understanding of what makes practice inclusive drawing on two typologies of inclusion characterised as ‘partial’ or ‘full’ inclusion. (c) Teachers’ views on the impact of administrative systems on practicing inclusion which makes most inclusive programs run independently from the public school. (d) The impact of practising inclusion which explains how inclusion can be very isolating or excluding for many of children who are DHH in mainstream schools.

The aim of this first theme was to develop an understanding of how teachers of the DHH who participated in this study conceptualise inclusive education; this is the focus of the discussion in the first two sub-themes. The second aim of this chapter was to capture the ongoing procedure of DHH inclusive programs designated by the last two sub-themes. The other two main themes will be discussed in separate chapters respectively after this chapter.

**Figure 6- 1 The First Main Theme and Related Subthemes**

## **6.1 The First Theme:** Teachers’ Perceptions and Understanding of Inclusion as Philosophy and Practice

The focus of this first theme is teachers’ understanding of inclusive education as a global education philosophy and practice. It highlights and explores how inclusive education is understood by teachers of children who are DHH in the context of this study in SA. The four following sub themes presented the main perceptions that constructed from the data analysis.

### **6.1.1 The First Subtheme:** Teachers’ of the DHH Understanding of the Philosophy of Inclusion

This sub-theme captures the interpretation, understanding, and definitions of inclusive education provided by the teachers of DHH in this research. Interview questions focused on teachers’ understanding of what inclusion is as a philosophy. That is because it is difficult to create and practice inclusion without first understanding what this term means, what the foundations of this sort of education are, what is unique to it, and what other professionals have done in this educational sector (Maria, 2013). In addition, understanding how individuals, especially those taking part in inclusive education, see, understand, and think about inclusive education is the vital feedback that will help guide the process of inclusion (Cambridge-Johnson et al., 2014).

 In this study, most teachers of the DHH highlighted the social benefits and outcomes as the main purpose of any inclusive education project which is especially important as inclusion was and has to be linked to democracy and human rights in the first place (Nilholm, 2006). In other words, teachers understand inclusive education as a social initiative more than educational. Inclusion is understood as a concern for children with SEN, rather than a philosophy about the education of all children. For instance, a DHH teacher explained inclusion as:

“An idea aims to give children with SEN a chance to interact with other students in a public school. This will help remove barriers between them and improve the level of acceptance from society. As an example, when a person is seen in public wearing hearing aids this should not be strange for people, which means inclusion has a social goal in the first place”. (Baha)

It is clear from this answer that there is a frequent emphasis on the social outcomes that can be achieved from inclusion at the level of the child himself and the level of society. For example, this teacher pointed out the importance of inclusion in raising the level of social awareness about disability and acceptance of disabled people and the interaction with them, in addition to removing any barriers and difficulties. These kinds of definitions presented above usually refer to locational inclusion and the “employment of the terminology of weakness and disability is patronising and degrading, as these terms inevitably lead to a narrow, contrived view of inclusion” (Hodkinson, 2011, p. 181). Further, the emphasis on the social aspects of inclusion contrasted with the lack of focus on the educational aspect of inclusion. For example, accessing curriculum and resources as an important value of inclusion was rarely mentioned throughout the data and was usually associated with or followed by a discussion of the “social” aspect of inclusion during the discussion as shown in this statement.

“I see inclusion as placing students SEN in the same environment educationally and socially as their normal peers to help them live a normal life and not feel less than others”. (Hail)

Definitions of inclusive education can range from specific to broad and there is no one global agreement on that as we saw in the literature review (page). However, it generally refers to education for all students regardless of disability, gender, or difference with equal access to curriculum and resources, and with more focus on fostering diversity in schools (Ballard as cited in Carrington, 1999). Moreover, it is argued that the principles of inclusive education should be understood as values that lead us to an inclusive society as a whole and not just an educational practice for a group of people or students (Ainscow et al., 2006). This view was also supported by Jones (2011) who articulated that inclusion happens when we accept differences and celebrate diversity and more of that is to acknowledge those values. However, most definitions of inclusive education provided by teachers of DHH in this study seemed to be influenced by what is happening in their daily experience, work environment, or knowledge obtained during university study. A good example of that was when participants used the same official definitions stated by the SME or learned during college study, yet some of them explained that they were able to shift or developed different conceptualisation after a period working in an inclusive environment (Hodkinson, 2006). One participant explained that:

“The only thing I remember about inclusion from what I studied during university is that it is socially important. I realised that I did not understand what it means until I became an inclusive teacher and there are many teachers like me”. (Yumba)

Another participant also asserted that:

“The common idea I learned about inclusion at college is to put Deaf students in the public schools to include them in the society in the first place. However, that is not happening in reality. As you may know at university, we only get the basics about inclusion and then you learn from experience”. (Tabuk)

The above statements indicated that material about inclusive education usually provided in the teacher preparation programs usually gave more attention to the social aspects of any inclusive initiative rather than the educational aspects *“it is socially important”.* As a result, the understanding of inclusion found in this study appears to be in line with what was found by Holt (2003) that teachers do not see access to curricula and learning resources in the school as one of the criteria for inclusion, but rather that inclusion serves primarily social goals and interests more than academic ones especially for children with SEN.

At the beginning of my data analysis, this sub-theme was generally developed as teachers’ knowledge of inclusion and some examples of participants’ definitions of inclusive education were presented without paying attention to key points or phrases. After an in-depth and repeated reading of the transcripts, revisions of the initial themes, and the search for the common relations between the participants’ answers upon the three questions about understandings of inclusion, it appeared that teachers repeatedly used terms or concepts that reinforce the concept of difference. That is, they used terms such as *‘normal peers’*, *‘reducing* *the gap’* between ‘*normal’* students and children who are DHH. Sometimes they contrasted *‘special classes’* with ‘*regular classes'* and focused on individual differences (Hodkinson, 2011). For example, in the following three short definitions of inclusion all the above concepts were presented.

“Inclusion is to include non-normal with normal in the same place” (Taif)

“Inclusion aims to that our students to be like their normal peers at the general classrooms” (Asir)

“Including our students with their normal peers to melt the differences between them” (Buraidah)

In their discussion of “*reducing the gap”* between children with SEN and their peers, social inclusion emerged as a key concept in most teachers’ understandings of what inclusion means to them. According to this view, children with SEN should be included in public schools to “*be like* '' or nearly similar to their “*normal peers*” at least socially, if not academically. “The main problem is a norm which locates agency, mobility and a centred subjectivity in a naturalised and given human body. Measured against this norm, disabled people will always be constituted as other” (Moser, 2000, p. 201). The influence of ‘normalisation’ upon inclusion meanings by most of the participants can be seen through the language used, terminology, and personal descriptions. As an example, a participant explained inclusion as

“I see inclusion as placing students SEN in the same environment educationally and socially as their normal peers to help them live a normal life and not feel less than others”. (Madinah)

According to Culham and Nind (2003), the concept of inclusive education is different from the concept of normalisation. That difference between the two terms appears when people use terminologies that focus or encourage social participation more. However, because of the dominance of the idea of ​​normalisation for many years on educational policies of children with SEN, teachers automatically associated the concept of ‘normality’ with the emergence of the idea of ​​inclusion, especially about the provision of educational services for those SEN children.

Linked to this idea of ‘normalisation’, it was clear in many of the definitions and descriptions provided by the participants that what inclusion means to them is that there is always ‘a social standard’ by which people are judged in terms of their abilities or compared to what is a social ideal. In other words, their social judgement is focusing on the ‘ideal body’ or ‘normal body’ as a standard and excluding or not counting what is being ‘neutral body’ (Peuravaara, 2013). For example, some of the participants' statements agreed on the social benefits that make inclusion the ideal way to make children with SEN similar or equal, in the eyes of society, to their peers. Therefore, this strong social view was always presented as the criterion for people to become integrated into society and like other ‘normal individuals’ as shown in this quote.

“Inclusion is to include students with hearing problems with their normal peers in the same educational place where they can share some of the non-academic activities”. (Makkah)

Among the aspects of normalisation that appeared in the data is the focus, implicitly or explicitly, on the individual differences between children with SENs and their ‘normal’ peers, which may disappear or diminish through the inclusive environments. Individual differences in this context mean each child is different in learning and abilities. However, according to the literature in this regard, the focus on physical disability or classifying individuals by their apparent disability is often attributed to the influence of the medical model of disability (Saltes, 2013). Based on the medical perspective, children's academic challenges as causally tied to their characteristics adopt disability conceptions as based on individual disabilities. The contrast between impairment, defined as a physiological condition or limitation, and disability, defined as a restriction of action, is critical here (Terzi, 2005). Therefore, medical classifications of disability, such as sensory or mental disability, are always relied upon to reach an understanding of the individual characteristics of the child to determine the appropriate educational and educational services for him (MacKay, 2002).

Through the teachers' discussion about inclusion in this study, the understanding of disability has always been focused on the individual and as something within the child rather than the result of social arrangements. Teachers of the DHH often described a disability as abnormal or by comparing children with SEN to their non-disabled peers as 'normal'. In other words, teachers may not use a direct description to refer to children with SEN only, but to describe their peers in general education classes as “*normal*” or “*perfect*” students (Holt, 2003). As an example, in the following statement of describing inclusive education, the participant used concepts that refer in one way or another to the concept of normality, such as “*normal*”, “*gap*” and “*individual difference*”, despite the use of the term “*special needs*”, which is in its Arabic form and the context of the Saudi culture is considered softer and preferable to using the word “*disabled*”.

“Inclusion is to place children with SEN with their normal peers in the public school to reduce the gap and differences between them to make them prepared for society. This is the main idea of inclusion”. (Buraidah).

Some other teachers used a direct description of the disability and its effects on their Deaf students and explained that it is a ‘*realistic fact’* that cannot be ignored in the child's body. Further, *“hearing problem”* must be acknowledged and described explicitly by terms like ‘disability’ or ‘impairment’ and considered the use of some ‘social terms’ to describe Deaf people as a cultural minority group be a mere euphemism for the truth. Therefore, not only that, but a medical view toward disability also seemed to influence the ways in which inclusion is understood by the teachers in this study. This is not surprising, perhaps, in SA where disability must be acknowledged and approved by an official medical/health institution. The impact of this medical model understanding of disability is clear in how teachers understand inclusion. Furthermore, participants' understanding of deafness as a disability influenced how they understood inclusion. A participant said:

“I cannot ignore that a person with a hearing problem is missing a sense, I don’t like it when some people identify them as a minority [political] group”. (Jeddah)

Although deafness is unlike many other disabilities that have clear visible features, children who are DHH still classified according to the cultural and social classifications circulated according to ability and inability, even if we take into account that people differ in their total capacity or according to the physical organ from one person to another or from one environment to another (Davis, 1995). Also, if we look at deafness from a social point of view or a social model, a Deaf person is not disabled, if we think of the literal meaning of the word “defect”, which is medically the first cause of any disability, when he is the presence of Deaf people who they communicate in the same language and share the same culture and values (Lane, 1995). And yet, this understanding was not one that teachers in this study shared and not what influenced how they understood the philosophy of inclusion.

As data showed under this sub-theme, most teachers’ explanations and definitions of inclusive education expressed a strong social sense of inclusion. In other words, it can be said that the teachers’ concept of inclusion in the context of this study can be summarised as being strongly influenced by the concepts of normalisation and the medical perspective of disability at the same time. Further, inclusive education was always discussed as a concept related to the special education area and not connected to human rights and equality that are central to the philosophy of inclusive education as described in chapter three page (38).

According to Göransson and Nilholm (2014) in their critical analysis of research on inclusive education, the meanings of inclusion range from specific to broad according to its context. In its narrow form, inclusive education indicates to the procedure of placing children with disabilities in public schools to meet their needs socially and academically. While definitions get broader when they suggest meeting all children’s needs socially and academically to make an inclusive society. Based on the above conceptualisations, it can be said that the form of inclusive education meaning provided by most teachers of the DHH in this study is a specific one which is consistent with what was found by Sucuoglu, Bakkaloglu, Iscen Karasu, Demir, and Akalin (2014) in their study of 169 preschool teachers. The study aimed to assess preschool teachers’ knowledge using the Inclusion Knowledge Test (IKT). It was found that most teachers had limited knowledge of inclusion because of their limited access to courses and materials during their studies at the university. Further, some teachers in stated that courses concerning inclusion knowledge were not compulsory in their degree. Similarly, as one of the participants in this study mentioned,

“At the university, many courses just give you a basis without any deep or practical skills, so when you join the field, you find things that you never heard of or looked at during your study”. (Tabuk).

Also, findings of this study confirmed what was highlighted by Carrington (1999) that inclusive education is sometimes understood as if it was an innovation in educating children with SEN, which could be a result of or influenced by the dominated medical view of disability in SA that usually focuses on classifying children with SEN by their abilities (Marks, 1997). Indeed, there is a possible reason for the dominant view towards disability (medical view) in the context of SA. For a person to be eligible to receive special education services in SA, he must be diagnosed by a medical authority accredited by state institutions, including the SME. Not only that but that diagnostic evidence must be submitted to the bodies responsible for financial and social support for disabled people. Therefore, the Ministry of Health in SA is considered the first gateway to prove the status of a disabled person and his eligibility to receive appropriate services needed. On the other hand, many of the terms used in the conversation of the participants in this study, which indicate the adoption of the medical view of disability, are adapted or influenced by the official language used in the official diagnostic letters by the educational and medical authorities in the country. This corresponds to what was mentioned by ([Marks, 1997, p. 86](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MBJSnjE3zrj6my9tM9-6PwltL2UcQISA/edit#heading=h.37m2jsg)) that “policy-makers tend to rely on medical definitions of disability to assess the prevalence of disability and provide treatments, services and benefits”.  In addition to the above, there is also a possible explanation for this form of the notion of inclusive education in this present study.  That is, how inclusive education was first introduced in SA by the ministry of education did not refer to any other groups other than those with disabilities or SEN. This reinforced the concept of inclusion as a part of special education which concerns only with including SEN children in mainstream schools.

In general, it can be said that participants viewed inclusions as being primarily about social inclusion that can be achieved through one school for all. It can also be said that the general orientation of the concept of inclusion revolves around many of the social benefits that can be achieved by applying inclusion for all, students with SEN, general education students, and society. However, teachers also reveal the influence of a medical model understanding of disability and the dominance of normalisation as an approach in their responses.

### **6.1.2 The Second Subtheme:** Teachers’ of the DHH Understandings of What Makes Practice Inclusive

The second sub-theme captures teachers' of children who are DHH understanding of what makes practice inclusive. By this I mean how participants in this study think how inclusion should be practiced. Teachers were asked to respond extensively to the question of what they considered to be the best ways of practising inclusion for children with SEN in general and then for students who DHH in are specific, providing reasons and justifications. As part of exploring teachers’ knowledge about inclusion, it was important for this research to investigate different aspects of inclusive education including philosophy and practice. This is because literature has always shown a relationship between successful inclusion and the level of knowledge about the philosophy of inclusion (Hodkinson, 2005; Zabeli, Shehu, & Anderson, 2021).

In this study, most teachers agreed on that, from their experience working in the field of special education and during their studies at the university, inclusive practices as being implemented in only two possible ways: ‘full inclusion’ or ‘partial inclusion’. ‘Full inclusion’ is understood as when all students are placed in the same classrooms and additional educational services are provided. ‘Partial inclusions’ on the other hand is when students are placed in attached classrooms within the public school and share some activities and subjects alongside with their peers. The collective agreement between the teachers’ answers about the practices of inclusion may be attributed to impacts of the special education teacher training programs they had engaged in as this participant said.

“Honestly, what I remember about inclusion from university days is only full and partial inclusion; however, there was a huge gap between what we have learned and what is there. I learned everything through practice. For example, I did not know the true meaning of inclusion until I started working in an inclusive school. After which I knew what it meant”. (Aqiq)

The above answer highlighted that most of the teachers’ knowledge about inclusive education is built on those two aspects (partial and full which were included in their preparation program). Many other answers confirmed that the ‘partial’ way of practice inclusion is what is required by the SME with children who are DHH at the primary stage. In addition, partial inclusion was identified, by most participants, as the most appropriate form of application with students who are DHH even though there have not been any official attempts to apply the ‘total’ form of inclusion with those students since the add legislation that changed this here, as explained in this following quote.

“What we apply now in SA for DHH is what is known as partial inclusion. There is no full inclusion educationally for our students except for some informal activities in school”. (Asir)

Attempts at ‘full’ inclusion are just applied in some informal (non-academic) school activities, indicating that this type of practice is initiated spontaneously by the program administration or the special education teachers, rather than being mandated in policy. Therefore, teachers felt it would be so much better if opportunities for ‘full inclusion’ were formally mandated in the educational system. This view was also confirmed by another teacher who pointed out that inclusion cannot be useful unless it is in its total form which is in his point of view the only way should be applied with children with SENs as described in this answer.

“This (separate classrooms for children who are DHH attached to mainstream schools in public school) is not what is called inclusion unless they are in the same classroom”. (Jeddah)

It is clear from this quotation above that this participant denies the use of the term inclusion to describe what is currently being practiced, or the so-called partial inclusion *“is not what is called inclusion”*, rather what is actually called inclusion is when all students must be present in one classroom. Therefore, this form of understanding regarding applying inclusive education appeared similar to what was found by Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel, and Tlale (2015) in their study of how teachers understand the procedures that help implement inclusive education in their classrooms and the associated difficulties. It was found that the general atmosphere surrounding inclusion, such as school culture, administrative and educational policies, and laws, formed the general framework for how to implement inclusive practices among many teachers.

Interestingly, some of the answers showed a strong denial of any other methods or practices that can be applied to implement inclusion other than the two mentioned above, especially with children who are DHH indicated by participant (Dammam) in this following statement.

“Inclusion can be only like this partial or full/total and this it’s real meaning”.

Göransson, Nilholm, and Karlsson (201, p. 549), regarding this practical aspect of inclusion, identified more than two options to support children with SEN in inclusive environments: “(a) the pupil gets individualised instruction from a special education teacher at a specific time every week; (b) the pupil receives tutoring in the regular class from a special education teacher; (c) the pupil receives instruction in smaller groups but less than 50% of the time extra teaching resources are in the classroom; (d) or an assistant is in the classroom”.

Although the goal of the discussion with the teachers during interviews was to reach an understanding of their point of view on the best way of practising inclusion with DHH students, most of them began to explain inclusion as a general idea and then moved on to explaining partial and full forms of inclusion as the only two ways of implementation. Therefore, it was necessary to link these explanations and details provided by the teachers with some direct questions about the feasibility of each way for their students who DHH and with SEN. According to most answers and clarifications of the participants, the ‘full inclusion’ is implemented by providing educational services to all students in one school environment (classroom) with the provision of all assistance services for each student according to the type and degree of their disability and educational needs. As for ‘partial inclusion’, it is the placement of students with SEN in special classes within the public school. The following participant confirmed the ‘two ways’ in the following explanation.

“There is another way of inclusion which is to include Children who are DHH with those in a public classroom, and they have their DHH assistive teacher”. (Jizan)

It is noted from the teacher’s use of the word “*another*” to refer to the inclusion in its full form, which implicitly clarifies the concept of the only two ways for the practice of inclusion, but when it comes to the feasibility of which way is suitable for DHH, most teachers explained that full inclusion is almost impossible for several reasons as shown in this following statement.

“From my point of view, including our students in public classrooms is impossible because of the huge individual differences between them and other students. Also, general education teachers are not prepared for that, which means placing them in special classrooms is the only suitable way”. (Qassim)

This view also applies, for example, to autistic children and profoundly Deaf students who learn and communicate in different ways than other children with SEN, which may cause a mismatch between students' needs within the one classroom. That will undoubtedly cause a distraction for both students and teachers as described in the below statement.

“In general, I prefer to include all students with SEN partially, which means that they have their classes, including my Children who are DHH because communication issues may happen and do not forget the ability difference. There are indeed cases of some Children who are DHH who have succeeded in enrolling in public classrooms, but this is rare, it happens every 3 or four years. Therefore, partial inclusion is generally better”. (Abha)

The trend of most teachers of the DHH towards partial inclusion confirms the findings of a recent study on DHH inclusion programs in SA by Alasim (2020). This study aimed to find out the appropriate place for teaching students who are DHH from the point of view of their teachers. The results of this study revealed that a total of 49 teachers out of 84 expressed their preference for the classes attached to regular schools as the best choice for their students who are DHH. While 35 teachers expressed their reasons for choosing this type of inclusion as it gives their students better educational opportunities in a homogeneous and non-competitive educational environment in terms of the number of students and their different abilities. However, this does not mean that there were not any voices or suggestions to support the inclusion in its total form, especially for some students who are HH who are able to be moved to general classrooms gradually because of their limited hearing loss or their acceptable speech ability as it will be deeply presented in the last finding chapter under the third sub theme in page (217). In other words, ‘partial inclusion’ is considered by the teachers to be suitable for children who have disabilities and educational needs that may affect their education in the general classroom with their peers. However, according to Mitchell (2014) being satisfied with applying inclusion in just its partial form only is not associated with the broad concept of the idea of ​inclusive education. One of the most important reasons mentioned in the literature related to this aspect of inclusion is what Madden and Slavin (1983) mentioned that there is strong evidence for many studies that the individualised education of students with SEN, who are taking part in mainstreaming, in general classrooms has a noticeable positive impact on their academic achievement than in special classes.

As mentioned previously, not all DHH inclusive teachers have the same view of supporting partial inclusion, but some voices aspire to expand the practice of inclusion with students in general, especially those who have capabilities that enable them to keep pace with education in public classrooms, even partially during the school day. For example, some teachers of the DHH in this study indicated that they aspire to experience new ways or methods of application of inclusion, which would help their students discover new horizons, even as an experiment, because they felt that this was better than practising one method for many years without change or development. In the following quote, one teacher confirmed how partial inclusion limits his DHH students' learning opportunities.

“I hope to see DHH kids in public classrooms as I was taught at the university many years ago. The ultimate inclusion practice we have here is when our Children who are DHH join other students at school in physics and art education subjects”. (Jeddah)

It is clear from the language used above such as ‘*the ultimate’*, the dissatisfaction with the limited practice of full/total inclusion of all students with SEN in general, which only happens in two subjects as required by educational policy (this means 2 times a week 45 min each). That is because, according to the viewpoint of some teachers in this study, it is necessary to apply total/full inclusion especially for HH students much more in general education classrooms and to include them in more subjects areas in which the level of social-communicative, and interaction is higher, such as social and religious studies. In addition, full participation can lead to many positive benefits for most children with SEN. However, it is difficult to bring all students together and demanding that teachers provide the best and effective instruction for all alike when it is almost impossible (Kauffman, Felder, Ahrbeck, Badar, & Schneiders, 2018).

The issue was not only how children who are DDH should be included, but also a lot of evidence from the data showed that there is so much confusion in using terminologies related to inclusive education such as ‘integration’ and ‘mainstreaming’. This confusion appeared in line with the findings of a Vaughn (1994) study that aimed to find out the teachers’ opinions on inclusion in New Orleans city, USA. It was found that most teachers in this study described inclusion using the word mainstreaming as a synonym for the word inclusion or that it differs from inclusion only in duration. Foreman (2014) added that the above description for ‘partial inclusion’ by most participants is indeed representing the concept of mainstreaming which should with integration leads to inclusion. While definitions or descriptions include terms like ‘total’, ‘full’ or ‘taking part’ implies the “principles of social justice” (Hodkinson, 2011, p. 181).

It also appeared through data that most teachers have similar descriptions of how inclusive education can be practised. It seemed that teachers’ views on the previous question were following what is presented officially by the SME about inclusion as also described in the previous subtheme. In its definition of ‘mainstreaming’, the same two (partial & full) concepts are introduced as part of the implementation procedure and not under the meaning/definition of inclusion section. The official document presented by the SME in 2010 stated these below definitions.

Partial Mainstreaming: This type is accomplished through the establishment of self-contained classes in regular schools. In this service delivery model, students with special educational needs receive their special education in self-contained classes. This allows them to be mainstreamed with their non-disabled peers in some curricula and non-curricula activities as well as the school facilities (Al-Mousa, 2010, p. 26)

Full Mainstreaming: This type is accomplished through the establishment of special education support programs in regular schools. These programs are resource room programs, itinerant teacher programs, and teacher-consultant programs. In these programs, students with special educational needs receive public education alongside their normal peers in regular education classrooms most of the school day. These students are pulled out from regular classes to receive special education services only in the subjects that cannot be taught by regular education teachers (Al-Mousa, 2010, p. 26)

However, translating terms such as ‘inclusion’, ‘mainstreaming’, or ‘integration’ into the Arabic language can lead to one common Arabic word ‘Damg’ ‘دمج’. This single Arabic word represents all three concepts mentioned earlier in English, especially among teachers. That, in fact, confirmed what Biermann (2016) found that local translation of global norms such as inclusive education can result in different understanding and meanings in both policies and practices.

### **6.1.3 The Third Subtheme:** Teachers' Views on the Impact of Administrative Systems on Inclusion

The third sub-theme under this chapter relates to teachers’ views on the administrative aspect of the DHH inclusive programs. According to Riehl (2000) if inclusive schools’ leaders want to meet and respond to the diversity of their children in their schools, they should address meaning construction challenges, encourage mainstream school cultures and teaching approaches, and endeavour to situate their schools within community, organisational, and services provider networks. One way to achieve that is by modelling and practising this view in school through the involvement of students and their parents, teachers and specialists, and administrators in all aspects of school policy making and planning (Knight, 1999). However, it is not an easy task to govern inclusive schools considering the different backgrounds for teachers, requirements, and practises between special education and regular education as they have been historically grown into a dual system (Weishaar, Borsa, & Weishaar, 2007). Yet, it remains to be the case proponents of inclusive education argue that for inclusion to be a viable and alternative to the separate education for children with SENs, the administration of inclusive education is one of the most important factors for the success of any inclusive program. The importance of administration aspect in inclusion appears in the ability to make decisions and manage the educational situation at a higher level of awareness of the characteristics of students and their educational needs and the nature of the work of special education teachers and their role in merging process (Praisner, 2003).

During interviews, there was an open question about the administrative aspect of how programs are run. Teachers were asked to express their impressions in detail about this aspect of inclusion. Many participants identified different challenges regarding who should direct an inclusive program; however, the data shows a collective agreement about the confusion in their work environment when they receive instructions from more than one source in the school as shown in the extract below.

“He (the school principal) assigned ‘a program director’ for us. It means two principals in the school. Sometimes I do not blame him for doing that because he has many other responsibilities to take care of in the school, but it feels to me like the program’s director is responsible and keeps me (special ed teachers) away (laugh”. (Yanbu)

It is clear from the use of the ‘*two principals in the school’* expression that there is a kind of conflict in decisions sometimes regarding what is happening in the DHH inclusive program in this school. Even though this participant understands why such a decision was made by the school principal, he could not hide that this kind of administration action makes him, and his fellow special education teachers, just an extra responsibility that the principal wants to get rid of by instructing someone else to take responsibility. Of course, in inclusive schooling, leaders are required to provide a wide range and flexible support services to meet all students’ needs. Therefore, managing such a school system must be very complex and challenging for almost all administrators and can result in some issues similar to what was mentioned above (Black & Simon, 2014).

But to better understand the holistic picture about the administrative aspect of DDH inclusive programs in the context of this study, I will briefly describe the administrative structure of inclusive schools in SA. All the DHH inclusive programs are directed by what is called, according to the educational system, the ‘local program director’. A local program director is a special education teacher (DHH teacher in this case) who works as a teacher, a program director, and a member of the school administration team. In addition, all other team members of the school administration come from a general education background except for the program director explained earlier. According to almost all participants in this research, instructions regarding special education classrooms, teachers’ works, and children who are DHH are up to the program local director in most cases, while the school principal has the final word about the general education classrooms, students, and teachers. This structure differs in its extent from one inclusive school to another, but it is still an unofficial action that is not unapproved by local educational authorities in all forms of cases. Therefore, participants referred to this issue by describing an “*overlap of tasks”* between the school administration and the special education teachers represented by the program director. On other occasions, participants described the administration situation as “*school within the school*”. This situation happens when the inclusive programs work independently. However, the main issue as appeared commonly through the data was the idea of who is primarily responsible for directing the inclusive program in the public school or in some cases, who has the final word regarding teachers’ of the DHH responsibilities and their students.

In the early stages of my analysis, this issue developed as an administrative challenge facing teachers of the DHH in inclusive environments and was identified as ‘the administrative independence of inclusion programs’. However, after several revisions of the themes through the participants’ answers, it became clear to me that even the teachers who support this administrative separation from the school administration have their reasons, or in other words, they were forced to adopt this approach. Among the reasons mentioned by many participants was the lack of understanding of some school administrations of the nature of their work, or in other times their work with children with SEN is exploited by charging them with full tasks regarding inclusion. This situation often happens when general classrooms teachers wait to receive decisions form their special education colleagues which may mean inclusive education as primarily the responsibility of special education educators (Doyle, 2002). Here is an example by a participant about why he sometimes feels disappointed to work in an inclusive environment.

“I think the reason is as I told you before, there is no training or education for the school members. This is so negative and does not serve the inclusion operation because it causes problems. It means sometimes I feel that I hate to teach in this environment to be very honest”. (Tabuk)

In addition to the lack of awareness of the nature of the work of special education teachers and their students mentioned in this extract “*there is no training or education”*, it was also indicated that this form of administration has its consequences on the inclusion procedure. It causes a duplication of the decisions made and limits the effectiveness and participation of the public-school administration in directing the inclusive programs in the way it should be. According to many participants in this study, responsibilities, tasks, and instructions should be taken from one administrative source in the school. That is because the implementation of inclusion is the responsibility of all participants at school, including administrative members and general education teachers, and not only the responsibility of special education teachers, as shown in the quotes shown below.

“It is an administrative defect because in the end, everything should come from the school principal. He is the one who can assign everyone his responsibility. For example, here we have “activity teacher”, resources room teacher, the school’s guard, art teacher, and physical education teachers. Those are all should be fully or partially active in the implementation of inclusion. Some of these members are unfortunately avoiding our students even though they receive the special education financial incentives”. (Makkah)

One of the most important and common problems in the field of special education in SA, which was mentioned by this participant, is the inequality in assuming responsibilities between general education teachers who are assigned to work partly in the inclusive program and the special education teachers, even though both sides benefit from the “*financial incentives”* provided by the government for working with children with SEN. This issue has been repeatedly raised in most of the interviews in this research, which can be attributed to a major defect in the administrative aspect of inclusion in addition to the low level of awareness of the importance of joint work and cooperation for all members of the inclusive school. The above situation described by the participant appeared in contrast to what was found by Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) in their comparative study of international leadership practices of inclusion. It was found that all school leaders in their study appeared as more collaborative in their daily work with other members at schools as well as creating more opportunities for others to increase their collaboration with each other.

However, the findings presented earlier also seemed to confirm what Patterson, Marshall, and Bowling (2000) concluded that schools’ leaders generally are not sufficiently, if not at all, trained to lead the special education programs. Instead, many of them tend to rely on other experienced members in the school, such as special education teachers or specialists, to learn more about how to manage the special education program in their school ([Garrison-Wade, Sobel, & Fulmer, 2007](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MBJSnjE3zrj6my9tM9-6PwltL2UcQISA/edit#heading=h.3whwml4)).

According to some other teachers in my study, in some other inclusive programs, the administrative defect may exacerbate to receiving counter-administrative instructions from the school administration to what is presented by the program’s director, although this administration follows the independent administration style in their school, which makes the working in inclusive environment uncomfortable for many teachers of the DHH as described by participant (Madinah) in this following statement.

*“*Here we have our program director, but also there is an overlap in work. Sometimes the school deputy comes and gives us instructions that are completely in opposition to what we have been told by the program director".

The above quote confirms what was previously mentioned that most of the administrative procedures taken in the DHH inclusive programs are spontaneous and informal by some school administrations. This is evidenced by some practices that indicate the difference in the administrative style of general education schools from those special education ones. A good example to describe the administrative problematics of some inclusive programs is based on the fact that what happens in the general education classrooms must happen with children with SEN in their attached special classrooms within the public school in terms of the method of instruction and the amount of information provided and the way it is presented. One of the participants described the case in the below story.

“Here (inclusive classrooms) we agree with our supervisor on everything about our work or students and what they should or should not do. But the other day someone from a higher position came to me and asked me ‘why you do not follow the given curriculum’ he said. When I explained to him the situation, he got upset and left”. (Riyadh)

According to this story provided by this teacher of the DHH, this issue may go beyond the limits of some inclusive schools until it reaches a collision with some officials from the local educational authority “*someone from a higher position*” who supervises all-inclusive programs in the entire city. Therefore, this conflict caused by the administrative structure described earlier cannot be separated from other aspects of the overall situation of inclusive education in SA. In other words, administration problematic could be also attributed to other factors outside the inclusive schools boundaries.

During the data analysis process, searching for interpretations about the administrative aspect of DDH inclusion has led to some concluding remarks. First, there is no clear guidance or plan for responsibilities for all members in the DHH inclusive programs as it will presented in the next chapter page (183). In this respect, every individual within inclusive schooling needs to be signed with a specific amount of work starting from the school principal to the last member, otherwise, “problems arise when there are discrepant ideas as to what the roles are among school staff” (Idol, 1997, p. 389). Second, I agreed with the participant (Riyadh) that some school administrations have a massive load of work even without the inclusive program which could be one of the main barriers in an inclusive environment. As an example, the number of students in school number 5 visited during data collection reached 1500 with almost overall of 60 teachers, therefore, establishing an inclusive program in such a school is seen as additional work and challenge for almost everyone. This confirms what Alasim (2020) revealed in his recent study that explored the challenges facing DHH inclusion in SA. In addition to the shortage in learning materials, educational services provided in the DHH inclusive programs, and the lack of awareness of disability, the large workload was also one of the most important obstacles that limit the success of inclusion in the viewpoint of many teachers of the DHH.

In my study, some other teachers of the DHH during interviews expressed their preference for administrative independence over the public-school administration and working closely with the special education teacher who is officially directing the program, especially about their work inside their classrooms for some reasons. For instance, working in such an independent, administrative, environment makes the learning process more comfortable and smooth because of the common understanding between all teachers of the DHH, and the homogeneity regarding the educational needs and characteristics of their students. A participant explained his preference of the independence of the inclusive programs in the following statements.

“Of course, working directly with the programs’ director is particularly good for us. He is like a school deputy but for the special education teachers. That gives us more space, and everything is positive in work with more trust in each other and without any stress”. (Taif)

Such the above preference by some participants in this study refers to what they face in their working environment as it was described as an administrative and educational challenge that could be caused by the different nature of general education and special education. Some other reasons were raised during interviews in regard to the difference in teaching load between special (18 hours max per week) and general education teachers (24 hours max per week). That difference may also explain why some special education teachers prefer to deal and work with the inclusive program director directly to avoid any comparisons or disagreements with some other school members, including members of the school administration.

Interestingly, some voices during interviews provided solutions to reduce such problems that often happen between special education and general education teachers in inclusive schools. For example, it was suggested that

“Some special education teachers should be trained and nominated to lead some inclusive schools instead of just having them lead inclusive programs within the schools” (Riyadh).

Perhaps, that could be such an appropriate way for inclusive schools to be run by special education teachers because of their specialisation based on meeting all the different and varied educational and educational needs of students. In addition, it may contribute to the success of inclusive programs and the creation of an inclusive educational environment for all regardless of specialisation and academic background. As asserted by Riehl (2000) and Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis (2008) that the administrative role in inclusive education is critical in terms of supporting all members in the school as well as sustaining educational practices that fit all students.

### **6.1.4 The Fourth Subtheme:** Isolation: The Impact of Practising Inclusion

The fourth sub-theme classified under this chapter focuses on the isolation that happens because of practising inclusion for most children who are DHH spatially and socially in almost all-inclusive programs visited during data collection. To understand what is meant by the concept of ‘isolation’ contained in this sub-theme based on what was reported by many of the participants in this study, I will give a quick look at some of the practices that were mentioned during the interviews that better illustrate the situation. This idea revolved around two practices. First, the spatial isolation of the special education classes inside the school so that they have a section or floor of the building of their own, and in some cases, this section can be accessed through an independent entrance. The second form of isolation is about excluding students who are DHH from any social and sports activities during the school day, or in some cases, allocating special activities for them without the participation of the rest of the students at the school.

Considering the basic values of inclusive education, it is a requirement that all children be present and enrolled not only physically, but also in all aspects of the mainstream school such as policies, beliefs, and practises to ensure their full participation (Monsen, Ewing, & Kwoka, 2014; Polat, 2011). That is because their full participation will, inevitably, develop positively their perceptions towards themselves as valuable members of the community (Janney & Snell, 2006). However, schools are not merely places for traditional schooling; they are also places of normalisation that function via the interrelated practises of adults and children. One important, and often concealed, goal of educational institutions is to generate individuals who adhere to cultural standards (Holt, Lea, & Bowlby, 2012).

Through the early stages of my data analysis, the issue of isolation emerged as a main theme named ‘independent educational environment’, and this appeared in three main aspects, buildings, activities, and leadership. After several revisions to the method of presenting the findings of the analysis, the administration was excluded to represent a sub-theme that reflects one of the most important general impressions about the DHH inclusive programs as it was presented in the previous sub-theme. After that, the other two sub-themes ​​(buildings and activities) were merged into one that reflects the practical aspect of inclusion. Therefore, isolation will be discussed through spatial isolation and social activity exclusion under this sub theme.

Isolation appears, according to many teachers, in the spatial classification or the arrangement of special education classes within the inclusive school. From the point of view of some, what is applied in terms of ‘spatial separation’ of the sites of special education classes from the rest of the classes in the inclusive school is completely contrary to what is aimed at inclusion philosophy. To make more clarification about this situation, the participant (Najran) explained how some practices can make an inclusive environment more isolating for his students in the following quote.

“Our problem is that we included them and isolated them at the same time, and we did not achieve anything. You find them on their own with their teachers. Sometimes the program director calls you and says, ‘hey your student is here. ‘Can you tell him to go to his classroom’! He (the program director) is avoiding him. Even the school principal, if he sees a deaf student, he calls one the special ed teacher and said, ‘hey bro there is a deaf student here”.

It is evident from what was stated in the explanation of the above participant that isolation also occurs because some school members and general classroom teachers avoid dealing with children who are DHH their school, even though some of them are assigned to work with them as part of the inclusive education law imposed by educational authority such as teachers of art and physical education subjects. It was also asserted that some inclusive schools see inclusion as the responsibility of special teachers only as it was explained in the previous subtheme. Thus, the lack of understanding of the responsibilities and the ambiguity of the roles and tasks of individuals in the inclusive programs has negative effects in providing the appropriate educational services for children and directly affects the job satisfaction of most teachers and thus to the futility of any inclusive initiatives (Wood, 1998).

Among the aspects of ‘spatial isolation’ is, according to the opinion of another teacher, is the arrangement of the special education classes in some public schools. He mentioned that special education classrooms in the school are segregated in a special section/floor of the rest of the school. That means all special education classrooms from 1st to 6th grade are together, which he thinks is contrary to the main aims of any inclusive initiative. He expressed his opinion in the statement below.

“I did not like that their classrooms are isolated from the rest of the public classrooms. They are the only ones on the ground floor and the rest are upstairs. Like that, you are achieving nothing. What is the goal of inclusion then classrooms arrangement should be for example first grade public classrooms then next to them DHH first grade classrooms? This will give children who are DHH a chance to interact with their peers”. (Baha)

In addition to emphasising spatial isolation again here by this teacher, an important idea was identified that related to the importance of the interaction of children who are DHH with their peers of the same age group, which is essential in terms of social development. Hence, inclusive education philosophy requires that all children with SEN be placed with their age-appropriate non-disabled peers (Idol, 1997). That includes their physical inclusion, as individuals, and their placement (classrooms) in the school environment. It is claimed that this way of inclusion will open more opportunities for both groups of students (students with disabilities and non-disabled) and increase their awareness of living in a real and diverse society (Keefe & Davis, 1998). This form of practising inclusion supports the suggestion of Hung and Paul (2013, p. 71) study that inclusion of children who are DHH should enhance “contact experiences between D/HH and hearing students and working to build close relationships and positive group perceptions are elements that contribute to improving hearing students’ attitudes and fostering their acceptance of included peers who are D/HH”. Similarly, Doherty (2012) found that an inclusive school environment in Sweden is highly supporting most deaf children to be prepared for the outside world.

However, this was not the case for some other teachers about the spatial and social isolation of their students. Rather, it was expressed by some of them that this situation (special sections/activities for children who are DHH in the school) is best for all students and teachers on both sides due to the different and inconsistent needs of students and the ‘segregated classrooms within the public school’ way of practising inclusion cannot in any way be against the main idea of ‘one school for all’. In other words, children who are DHH still have their classrooms and special education teachers in the same building as their peers, which would provide better education and care for them as explained in this quote.

“I see the classroom arrangement this way is better. It is hard for our students to be close to general education classrooms. It is going to be annoying for both sides. Mostly, deaf students do not feel the sound including sounds they make themselves during the class or even in their free time. Therefore, I never think that the arrangement of the classroom, as they are now, is an isolation”. (Riyadh)

As cleared from the reasons presented in the previous quotation, which are related to some of the characteristics of children who are DHH in “*not sensing the surrounding sounds to them or the loud sounds that they can make”* without realizing that this teacher believed it is better for them and the rest of the students in the school, especially those in general classrooms, to be in a separate. In this way, it is guaranteed not to create a kind of noise and distraction for the educational procedure inside the school. Some other teachers of the DHH reported other reasons represented by the behavioural aspect. For example, for the DHH classrooms to be near their hearing peers may provoke bullying and hostility between students, which leads to events that may be dangerous for some students especially those who suffer from health problems as explained in these following quotes.

**Example 1:**

“I cannot let my students interact with other students at school during mealtime because I am afraid they may get hurt. Because neither the parents nor the school administration will help us do that”. (Jeddah)

**Example 2:**

“They do not interact with other students, but it is the opposite. Some of them (children who are DHH in his class) cause problems with students in public classrooms and as a result, deaf students come together and fight other students”. (Jizan)

In addition to the above reasons that led to isolation in the inclusive programs, the participant (*Jeddah*) mentioned an important point related to the support of the family and school administration for teachers of the DHH in promoting the concept of social participation in inclusive environments. As a result, the absence of that support may make many teachers content with maintaining the safety of their students, regardless of their benefit from inclusion socially. Of course, and without a doubt that social interaction is one major concept of the broad meaning of inclusive education which gives children with SEN the opportunity to learn alongside their peers in a truly inclusive setting (Beckett, 2009). Nevertheless, “once all children get to school, their safety and comfort, and access to buildings and teaching and recreational areas should be guaranteed, if schools are inclusive” (Ackah-Jnr & Danso, 2019, p. 139).

Through the analysis of the interviews, some other aspects of exclusion, other than the spatial division of the special education students' classes, emerged through isolating children who are DHH from their peers in some academic and social activities. For instance, the Saudi inclusive education system requires the full participation of all school students who are in the same age at the same time in two subjects areas, art and physical education. Further, all children with SEN have participated in all other social and informal activities at their school such as "open school day” and “mealtime”. However, many stories from the data reported violation of those inclusive laws as this teacher confirmed in this extract.

“I worked in an inclusive school for six years. In the physical education class, there were two footballs, one for the special education students and the other for general education students. Each group plays on its own and has its section of the courtyard. This is not inclusion, and this is what is going on in inclusive programs. Even in the mealtime, some schools put special education students aside and separate them. So where is the inclusion in this mealtime?”. (Hail)

From this quotation, another form of practice emerges, which is the exclusion of children who are DHH from some school activities stipulated in the inclusive education law in SA. According to the Saudi education system, inclusive schools must practice full inclusion in physical education, art education and this is one of the basic tasks of the general education teachers who are taking part in the inclusive program. But according to what this teacher mentioned, such practices are not only considered in violation of the laws but also reinforce the concept of difference in a negative way that does not serve the inclusion’s ultimate goals. It is very important that inclusive settings should positively enhance all students for more social engagement with each other especially when those with disabilities are reported to be participating less in all aspects of the school (Wendelborg & Tøssebro, 2011). According to the literature review carried out by Koster, Nakken, Pijl, & van Houten (2009) to identify meanings of social participation, social integration, and social inclusion in 62 articles revealed that all three concepts are used, by researchers, interchangeably and only a few studies have identified the differences between them. Therefore, they suggested the use of the term ‘social participation as the most suitable concept to represent all three ones. It was also found that all three investigated concepts have four main aspects in common which are friendships, interaction, perceptions of children with SEN towards mainstreaming, and acceptance by other students in school. Indeed, the issue is not only about the confusion of using those concepts outlined above, but also about how we can reinforce those important values through practices and activities in mainstream schools. This is because mainstreaming or including children with SEN alone does not automatically lead to those social outcomes (Koster, Pijl, Nakken, & Van Houten, 2010). Therefore, mainstreaming schools should play a role to increase, or even, to create opportunities for all students to interact with each other in appropriate ways (Nakken & Pijl, 2002). Having children with SEN participate in the school’s activities along with their peers can effectively improve social interaction and participation for both sides. In addition, along with participating in the schools’ activities, children with SEN should be fully engaged as well as be motivated to do so. This can be achieved by having them included in the decision of choosing which activity they want to participate in and feeling valuable for the whole group of any activity (Falkmer, Granlund, Nilholm, & Falkmer, 2012). However, in real practice, participating for children with SEN with their peers in inclusive settings is a complex issue. As an example, communication between students is the first step towards any social interaction activities, but with some types of disabilities (sensory disabilities), communication is a barrier that prevents all students from taking that important step. In this regard, Minnet et al, (1995) concluded that children who are DHH in inclusive settings tend to socialise with each other only due to their restricted communication options with hearing peers, lack of motivation and hearing experience, and their lack of hearing speech clearly. In other words, children who are DHH in inclusive schools are not motivated to communicate with their hearing peers as they are different in terms of communication mode and prefer to keep their relationships limited to those with similar needs.

The findings of this study regarding the issue of students’ participation appeared in line with what Punch and Hyde (2011) have found in their study of social participation of children with cochlear implants. Teachers who participated in Punch and Hyde’s study addressed their students’ social participation as a continuous challenge. As a result, teachers had to come up with creative ways to encourage students’ social participation by educating hearing students about hearing loss as well as teaching them some social skills. Findings of my study in this regard also confirmed what was articulated by Antia, Stinson, and Gaustad (2002) that for hearing students, sign language is a stumbling block of successful social interaction with children who are DHH in inclusive settings. Thus, interaction skills should be developed for both groups of students by teachers, which is, of course, an additional challenge considering the limited support by system, school and parents as explained by participant (Jeddah) that *“neither the parent nor the school administration will help us do that”*. In addition, it was implied, throughout data, that DHH inclusion in SA is missing some cultural influences about deafness and sign language, which can be another reason for limited social participation. For example, some participants suggested that sign language should be an included subject for hearing students in all-inclusive programs to help them communicate with their DHH peers. It was suggested that *“sign language should be included just like English & Chinese languages to help them communicate*” (Abha). Others recommended that HH students who can use speaking to communicate be placed in regular classrooms as they are almost hearing students, and they can still benefit from the special education services and resources room in the school. Both views, in my opinion, are helpful not only regarding this issue identified under this sub-theme but also for the whole DHH inclusive initiative in SA as asserted by Musengi and Chireshe (2012) who recommended the use of sign language by all members of any inclusive DHH schools by adopting the cultural model of inclusion to help children who are DHH enjoying inclusion academically as well as socially.

## **6.3 Chapter Summary**

This chapter dealt with the first main theme of the findings of my study under the title‘the overall perceptions of HHD inclusion’. The first theme discussed the most important perceptions’ of teachers of the DHH towards the inclusion notion and process. The focus of data analysis and presentation in this chapter was the inclusive education itself in terms of the theoretical and practical aspects, and these impressions were presented through four sub-themes as follows.

The first sub-themeteachers of DHH understanding of the purpose of Inclusion showed how teachers understand inclusion as a global educational philosophy. It was found that there is a great link between the concept of inclusion and the concept of normality in many of the explanations provided during the interviews. In addition, analysing definitions, notions, and descriptions of inclusive education presented by the participants captured a great focus on the social benefits that inclusion should achieve for children with SEN, and there was almost no focus on the academic benefits or the access to educational resources as essential elements of any inclusive education initiative.

The second sub-theme ‘teachers’ understandings of what makes practice inclusive’*,* explained what the participants believed as the best ways of practicing inclusion in general for all children with SEN, and for children who are DHH in particular. The findings under this section showed that most of the participants agreed on only two ways to apply any inclusive operation. Those ways of application are the ‘total’ and ‘partial’ inclusion. The concept of total inclusion refers to one educational place (in this case one classroom) for all students, regardless of differences or disabilities and educational needs. While the partial refers to placing students with SENs in classes attached to public schools. The data in this section showed that teachers of the DHH were influenced by what is officially stated by the SME in this regard. Further, many views on the concepts of applying inclusion showed that participants attributed their knowledge of practising inclusive education to what they learned during university studies.

In the third sub-theme ‘the impact of administrative systems on inclusion’, the administrative aspect of DHH inclusive programs was discussed. The data showed many administrative challenges that special education teachers face on a daily and frequent basis, which make their inclusive working environment unfavourable. The data under this sub theme study showed that most of the DHH inclusion programs are operating administratively independent from the public-school administration. This is done by assigning some special education teachers to take care of the affairs of inclusion programs and the affairs of teachers and students. However, according to the data contained in this aspect, there are many signs of duplication in decision-making between the schools’ administration and the program directors of those inclusive. Many of the participating teachers believe that one of the main reasons for this duplication lies in the belief that what happens in general education classes must be emulated in the special education ones. In addition, teachers felt that most public schools’ administrations do not understand the nature of their work and the characteristics of their students who are DHH. Therefore, some of them may prefer the administrative independence of the inclusive programs to avoid some administrative problems with the school administration or other members such as the general education teachers.

The fourth sub-theme ‘The impact of practising inclusion’ presented the implications of applying inclusive education for children who are DHH. This section has discussed in general terms the isolation of inclusion practices that can further isolate some students in the inclusive environments. The data showed how some of the applied practices have caused a complete isolation of students who DHH from their peers in general education classrooms. The extent of isolation also appeared in what is stipulated according to the inclusive education rules in SA, which was a clear violation of the local educational systems according to many of the participants. Among the manifestations of this isolation mentioned by teachers in this study was the spatial isolation of special education classes within the public schools, in addition to the social isolation in some activities and occasions.

# Chapter Seven: Data analysis and Findings Part Two: Factors Affecting Teachers’ Role in Inclusive Schools

## **7.0 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter is the second findings chapter of three, where the second main theme ‘Teachers’ Perceptions of The Factors Affecting their Role in Inclusive Schools’ will be presented and discussed. The focus here is on the role of Teachers of the DHH as inclusive school members and what factors they believe affect their roles both positively and negatively. The teachers’ role in this case refers to the contribution, participation, and effort they provide to implement and practice inclusion with their students in all circumstances, including their academic learning and social inclusion. In addition, the second theme describes the participants' feelings, stories, and experiences through the discussion of four sub themes as follows and as shown in figure 7-1 below. First, frustration as a factor influencing teachers role in inclusive education. Second, the general curriculum and its influence on teachers’ roles. Third, teachers’ views on the impact of their colleagues’ awareness of disability on their roles. Fourth, teachers’ views of the impact of the level of collaboration and the lack of work Guidelines in Inclusive Schools All these sub themes will be discussed in separate sections even though they are related to the clarity of my presentation and discussion.

**Figure 7- 1 The Second Main Theme and Related Subthemes**

## **7.1 The second theme**: Teachers’ Perceptions of The Factors Affecting their Role in Inclusive Schools

This theme was constructed to highlight teachers' daily experience, feelings, and stories about their role as members of the inclusive educational system in SA. It also serves to identify what they think are the factors that affect them the most, both positively and negatively in carrying out their roles, which include teaching curriculum, supporting and monitoring their students, caring for their students’ needs, and communicating with others in and out the school. In other words, this theme aims to present the DHH teachers' voices and gives them the space to express themselves about the challenges they face in their roles as inclusive teachers of children who are DHH in enacting inclusion.

### **7.1.1 First subtheme**: Frustration as a Factor Influencing Teachers Role in Inclusive Education

The first subtheme ‘frustration as a Factor influencing teachers role in inclusive education’ refers to the examples from teachers’ stories where they felt that inclusive education had become sluggish. By this they meant that inclusion has been going for long time without change or development or when teachers’ visions, suggestions, and ideas for improvements are not heard and taken seriously as many of them explained. Hence, this subtheme gives the general impressions of the feelings of teachers of the DHH who participated in this study regarding the process of inclusion and its impact on their role as well as their effort to manage to work in it.

All teachers in this study were asked questions about their future views of inclusion from their experience. One of these questions were asked during interviews aimed to understand how teachers see inclusion for children who DHH in five or ten years in the future from the day of the interview. In addition, other questions aimed to get teachers views about what they would change to make inclusion better for themselves and their students. As we will see below, a recurring theme in their responses was a high level of disappointment and frustration. Many participants described their disappointment because of that, inclusion has been the same without development of improvement for many years. Some other answers described that inclusion for children who are DHH into public schools was in the right way at the beginning, or active according to some other participants, then it became routinely frustrated as a participant describe inclusion in the following quote.

Drawing on the literature it seems that teachers’ frustration may come, sometimes, from their assumption that practicing in inclusion includes additional workloads, difficulties, and frustration, which leads them to take a negative stance towards inclusion (Fejgin, Talmor, & Erlich, 2005). Some other literature refers to some environmental working factors that contribute to teacher burnout such as lack of support, insufficient preparation and training, and availability of resources (Fejgin et al., 2005). In this study, many of the participants’ responses to this issue of frustration were in line with the environmental reasons. That means teachers linked their frustration with what is currently happening in the inclusive schools they work in and not necessarily to the philosophy of in the first place. Therefore, many of them expressed their hopes for the inclusion to be more developed and change positively to become an attractive environment for working. For example, one participant expresses his feeling by saying that:

“According to what I have seen so far, I hope inclusion gets better. I am honestly afraid about the future, and I will be more honest with you. I have been here for 8 years and until today, the situation is like last year and like the year before and I’m worried that the coming years will be the same”. (Buraidah)

Through this answer and through the long experience of this teacher (8 years working in an inclusive environment), it can be said that frustration about the DHH inclusive programs’ future was clear because one year after another the teacher believes that many inclusive schools in SA becoming unsupportive in terms of inclusion for both special education teachers and their children with SEN. The participant began his answer with the phrase *“I will be honest with you*” and repeated it by saying “*more honest*”, which reflects the frustrating and recurring aspect that he faces day-to-day and year-on-year. He explains his feelings of frustration with the lack of change by saying that “*inclusion is like every year*” that working in the inclusive schools has become less enthusiastic to achieve any productivity. In other words, the teacher’s frustration and the’ lack of enthusiasm for the idea of ​​working in inclusive school can be linked to the fact that he believes that inclusive education has not been improved or changed over time. As a result, for this participant inclusion is something that they have to practice but he has become so frustrated with the lack of support for inclusion that he only practices it with the bare minimum of effort as he is required by the educational law.

For some participants, the level of frustration about inclusion reached the point of despair and the belief that inclusion could not be changed or developed and made it a positive environment for teachers and students alike. To illustrate this view, in the following answers one of the participants explained why inclusion is frustrating for him:

“Inclusion is the same since it began and until now and nothing new about it and it is not going to be better. It is moving in a circle around itself, with no development”. (Hail)

When observing the phrases and words used in this answer by this teacher, he makes several points that we can understand about DHH inclusive programs. First, the use of the phrase *“inclusion moves in a circle”* to express the status of inclusive education for DHH reflects a deep level of frustration not only from the school environment, but also from the educational system as a whole and from those in charge of inclusion at the higher positions in the educational authority. Also, the use of the past, present, and future tenses reflect the level of the long period that this teacher has experienced in a routine inclusion environment, which may be devoid of any positive working and learning experience. However, this level of frustration towards the inclusion of children who are DHH may stem from the participant's own attitude towards the idea of ​​inclusion in the first place. This can be understood by a phrase such as “*inclusion since it began”* if we consider the duration of the application of inclusive education in SA (more than 15 years) and the duration of the experience of this teacher (8 years). In other words, the personal impressions of teachers towards the idea of ​​inclusion before participating in it are a major factor and influencing their work in it later (Talmor, Reiter\*, & Feigin, 2005). For instance, other participants who witnessed the beginning of inclusion in SA indicated that inclusion for children who are DHH started in “*on the right track*” and there was a high level of enthusiasm and educational productivity before it turned into routine, boring and useless environments as mentioned in this following quote.

“When ​​inclusion began to be implemented in 1424 (2004), led by (……), we were on the right track. We were excited and there was enthusiasm by most teachers to work in public schools. I remember that period when we were receiving introductory lectures for the program from the Ministry, and there was a constant follow-up on the progress of the inclusive programs”. (Dawadmi)

When observing the language that this participant used, such as enthusiasm, follow-up and training and lectures, to share his experience of the beginning of inclusion in SA, we find that he referred to an essential element of the success of any inclusive program, which is the positive experiences that have a major role in forming positive and effective attitudes towards inclusion. This confirms what Knight (2002) said that in-service training and development helps many teachers take a positive and effective role and allows them to develop positive knowledge towards their community and the educational environment in which they work. Moreover, teachers’ feelings, attitudes, and confidence are very much improved positively when they receive direct training and development to work in an inclusive environment (Hornby, 1999; Leatherman, 2007; Siegel & Jausovec, 1994).

During the analysis, teachers expressed different views of the current context of inclusion, but they mostly agreed on two main issues. The first issue was what they saw as a state of stagnation and lack of development and follow-up in terms of inclusion “*nothing new, no development, the same, who cares”.*  That includes how inclusion is direct and planned for by the educational system as well as the individuals in charge of supervising it. The second issue described was a negative attitude about not being involved in, or having their opinions taken into account, in discussions about what contributes to the development of inclusion *“they don’t look at us, no one asks us, we are here every day, we know inclusion better than them”*. Therefore, this sub-theme was developed from the answers provided by the participants, which identified or contained verbal signs indicating a kind of frustration and despair at the early stages of my analysis. In the later stages of the analysis, focus was placed on the answers that gave reasons for those feelings. For instance, in this following statement one of the participants referred to the missing developments in the ways of practicing inclusion for children who are DHH during the school day:

“If there is a development, it will develop, if it remains as it is, nothing will happen. One of the most important things to change is to increase the students’ interaction with each other because if we do not, inclusion will achieve nothing”. (Qassim)

Through this answer, it is possible to understand that what is meant is the mechanism of applying inclusion within the school for children who are DHH and the need for greater interaction between students, which confirms what was mentioned in the last subtheme in the sixth chapter page (57) isolation and the impact of practicing inclusion, which was represented in their isolation within the school environment. But there is also a very clear indication from what this teacher said that a lot of other teachers are seeking positive change for inclusion. Not only that, but many of them are willing to offer ideas and suggestions as this participant presented above.

Teachers who hold such frustration as shown in many answers mentioned earlier may come from long years being in a negative working environment (inclusion in this case) experience and frustration. In contrast with this view of long experience in inclusion, Allison (2011) in a phenomenological study to explore the daily experiences of 8 teachers (4 general and 4 special education) in an inclusion setting found that the majority of teachers strongly think that lived experiences helped them develop positive feelings about inclusion over years. However, long experience alone does not guarantee positivity about inclusion, instead, “increasing the level of support (from administrators and special education staff), available in-service training, and improved preservice preparation, research indicates that teachers’ attitudes tend to improve, and teacher efficacy increases'' (Fuchs, 2010, p. 34). This view was illustrated by one of the teachers in the below statement.

“All I knew about inclusion was theoretical, something I read or learned during my bachelor’s degree. After all these years of experience I could understand the positivity of inclusion, however; I know many other teachers who have built negative feelings about it”. (Yumba)

This participant asserted that long experience alone in an inclusive environment could impact teachers in both ways “*I could understand many other teachers*”. He also referred implicitly to the gap between reality and what was being taught about inclusion as “*theoretical”,* which could be a possible reason why some teachers change their opinion after they join mainstream schools.

In addition to the first aspect of frustration presented earlier about inclusion not being developed or supported, many other participants expressed another point of view no less important than the first view. Some other teachers in this study are frustrated because they believe that they are marginalised and far from participating in making a real change or development of the educational process in the inclusion programs. Some of them even went to explain that the teacher is excluded from all decisions in the educational process. In other words, the experience of teachers who have been in inclusion for many years gives them the skills to evaluate and plan for inclusive practices (Hornby, 1999). For example, one of the participants described this situation with the following phrase

“I hope they (educational authority) will look at us” (Asir)

In some way, this answer can very much be interpreted as that this participant is asking the educational authority for more ‘support’ or ‘attention’ about his role in DHH inclusive education programs, which is very important to him. But there are some teachers who were frank and direct about this exclusion for their role in making change and decision in the inclusion programs as shown in the following quote.

“Teachers are the ones who live in the field completely and their opinions are not taken regarding anything. I have been teaching for more than ten years and g no one came to me to ask me about my problems with inclusion or about the weakness/strengths of the program, or what is supposed to be done, at least communicating by papers…”. (Aqiq)

This teacher realises the importance of his position and the long experience he spent in inclusive schools for DHH and by using different phrases such as “*strengths and weaknesses*” and “*what should change*” that showed he has a real desire to cooperate with the educational authority. That desire was cleared from his last sentence that he wishes to give his opinion about the process of inclusion to the decision-makers, even if through the traditional paper way, referring to the use of questionnaires. Therefore, including teachers in any decisions, plans, and changes about inclusive education is paramount. This in fact confirms what was stated by Baumgart and Ferguson (1991) if teachers don’t feel valuable in the decision-making process and not being part of it, they will, without a question, become frustrated. Similar voices about the importance of including teachers in decision-making about inclusion practices have been reported by the participants of a study conducted by Kuhns and Chapman (2006). Participants in this study highlighted that “shared decision-making improves inclusion because everybody has a different opinion, and everybody sees a child differently”, therefore, having collective and shared decisions about inclusion practices will without a doubt provide the best possible services for all children (Kuhns & Chapman, 2006, p. 15).

In some other cases, however, the problem of teacher exclusion and frustration emerged as more complex. For example, some teachers have expressed that even if they give their ideas to decision-makers on some occasions that bring them together or when the opportunity arises, those opinions and ideas are not taken seriously. For some of the participating teachers, this is much more frustrating than excluding them completely. This became clear in many answers, such as the one I will provide below for this teacher who spoke in a kind of angry language during the interview.

“The reality is that this is a big issue for special education teachers here. We are the last ones to be asked about inclusive education. we are the basis for the educational process, and they (authority) don’t ask us about anything even about what we do in inclusion, even if we talk sometimes, it is not taken seriously”. (Abha)

This teacher and many other teachers have a real desire to develop and change the reality of inclusive education, and many of them show their keenness on this despite all their negative feelings about the current situation. This is what makes them always direct their words most of the time during interviews to the educational system responsible for implementing inclusion with children with SEN. In other words, it can be said that Teachers of the DHH do not oppose inclusion as an idea, but they have some reservations about the way in which it is applied and the way in which they are treated as part of this process. This may also be in line with what the study of Leatherman (2007) revealed that some may hold and express a level of frustration about inclusive education even though some of them seemed successful in their classrooms.

One of the issues that some participants mentioned as one of the reasons for their frustration with the practices of applying inclusion was the failure to notice what teachers are doing in their classrooms in inclusive schools. From the point of view of many teachers, the progress of the inclusion is not explicitly and seriously recognized about achieving goals and reaching positive benefits with their DHH students, or even providing consultations or disseminating successful experiences that teachers carry out on their own to achieve the success of the inclusion process. Instead, follow-up and supervision for inclusive programs seems routinely and superficial and as this teacher explains in the following quote.

“There is nothing from the ministry level to ask me about the outcomes and about my work in inclusion. They (supervision) do not focus on inclusion directly. Rather, it seems enough to them if the school has special education classes as if the inclusion aims are achieved by that”. (Dammam)

This quote indicates how frustrated many teachers are with the ongoing inclusion programs in different levels inside and outside of school. In fact, many interpretations of what was mentioned in the previous answer to this teacher can be considered. For example, it can be understood from what he said that there is a real gap between teachers and the educational system, which will certainly cause a lack of moral or cognitive support. It can also be understood that teachers working in inclusive education programs have a higher level of interest in the success of inclusion and obtaining real benefits for their students than the educational system responsible for inclusion itself.

It can be summarised that teachers in this study seemed frustrated about the current way of practicing inclusion in SA. It was clear that most of them are eager to see some serious developments to be more optimistic about inclusion. In their answers, many of them tended to use the word ‘real change’ explicitly and implicitly to refer to the long unchanged situation for many years.

### **7.1.2 The Second Subtheme:** The General Curriculum and its Influence on Teachers’ Roles

The subtheme of general curriculum and its high expectations was identified as the main issue for almost all teachers in this study. In every interview, there was a story about how teaching the same curriculum as in the general schools put them under so much pressure and generated unrealistic comparisons by the educational system. Some of the participants also preferred to talk about this issue before any other issues related to their role in inclusive schools. For example, one of the teachers explicitly said,

“Please make sure this issue [ teaching the same curriculum to all students] is clear in your research, it is very important to us” (Baha).

Curriculum was clearly, during the interviews and the data analysis, a main factor that impacted all Teachers of the DHH especially those in inclusive settings. Therefore, the issue of general curriculum was identified as a main theme at my early stages of analysis as ‘inclusion leads to high expectations’ as described by most teachers. That previous version of the theme meant that general curriculum is asking teachers of the DHH to teach more than what they can and for children themselves to learn more than they can. In other words, it was clear during the interviews that general curriculum was going to be one of the main issues this study with discuss. However, it was hard to decided were and under which aspect curriculum should be constructed. In addition, there were three aspects of the curriculum which formed the subthemes (curriculum, time, and quantity) for that main theme mentioned earlier. However, in later stages of my analysis, and after the agreement with my supervisor to have a chapter in this study focus on teachers, the general curriculum also appeared as a factor that impacted most teachers’ role and work in inclusive programs which is presented as the second subtheme in this chapter.

The practice of applying the general curriculum to all students SA was described in chapter 2 (research context), however, it is helpful to go over it briefly here to understand the origins of this issue. In the academic year of 2004, the Ministry of Education stated a new policy that requires all DHH schools and programs to apply the same curriculum used in public schools (Ministry of Education, 2022). This new regulation diverted from the idea of equal access for all students to the same curriculum (Al-Mousa, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2020). Before that year, children who are DHH were taught a special designed curriculum that is limited in the number of lessons, information, and the skills targeted. As an example of that, a maths teacher in DHH schools/program used to teach 3 units, out of 10 compared to a public-school teacher, for the whole semester. In addition, the old DHH curriculum included some written sign language (sign language font along with Arabic writing) and used relating terms such as (a deaf student, explain using sign language). As a result, the transformation in DHH education curriculum in SA has generated a continuing debate among teachers which continues today. Regarding this movement towards a general curriculum with DHH children, one participant explained that it was not done in the right way as he explained in this statement.

“I remember 16 years ago there was a short and focused curriculum especially for children who are DHH which had sign language included. We could have continued working with that kind of curriculum with some more improvements, not to change everything completely”. (Tabuk).

It is clear from what was stated in the opinion of the previous teacher that he does not oppose the idea of ​​changing the old curricula, but he does have an objection to the method of change. This is evidenced by his use of the word “*with some improvements*” on the old curriculum, which from his point of view was more suitable for students who are DHH. In other words, this participant's opinion can be explained by the fact that the change should have been made to the old curriculum and not to impose the general curriculum entirely and without any modifications to suit the abilities and characteristics of his students. This view was supported by many other participants because the general curriculum was initially built to measure skills of all kinds of different students but not students who are DHH. That means even the minimum goals/ objectives included in each lesson, book, or subject, which a student must successfully achieve, seem not even close to their students who are DHH performance level or abilities. As a result, this has led many teachers to make their own modification on the curriculum upon their experiences of their students’. This informal reduction of the curriculum has caused such a misconception between those teachers and the educational system, which is represented by the public-school administration in most cases. In some cases, teachers received an official written warning from the school administration explaining that they have violated the educational system by doing so. Other teachers explained that they were blamed orally by some people in a higher position at the school because of what they considered as ‘unofficial and improvisatorial’ practices as the following participant explained in this quote.

“With my respect to what the ministry of education has imposed in this curriculum, but many of the skills are based on the speaking ability which my deaf students will never achieve. This is like a continuing problem we face with the administration here. I have been always asked to teach lessons “as they are being taught in general classrooms”. If I try to tell them that I am going to reduce the curriculum based on my students’ ability, it will be interpreted as laziness or neglect. Then the whole situation turns into a professional ethics issue. It is just impossible to compare our students with those in general classrooms”. (Makkah)

This quote illustrates some of the challenges associated with the general curriculum that teachers face while working in inclusive schools, which always puts them under comparison with their peers in general education classes. There are many signs mentioned in the above statement that can be explained as what the teachers perceive as a lack of awareness about the characteristics of children who are DHH (as will be discussed in the next subtheme), but they view the main problem lies in understanding, by others in charge, this challenge generated from the general curriculum as unprofessional action as indicated by the teacher “*unprofessional, laziness*”. Many other teachers confirmed that the source of those problems highlighted above, is often the comparison with what is done in general education classes.

“It is not fair to compare a sixth grader in general education with a one in special education in all aspects of learning” (Khamis).

Concerning the issue of the curriculum expectations and goals, on one hand, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 assured that each IEP for a student with disability should clearly identify the way in how the general curriculum should be adopted and modified to meet the student’ abilities (Yell, Shriner, & Katsiyannis, 2006). Therefore, the curriculum in any inclusive setting should be flexible enough to cover the wide range of all learners. This flexibility can be achievable via three techniques: (a) supplementary goals, (b) reducing or simplifying goals, and (c) providing alternative ones (Janney & Snell, 2006). This is such a collective effort that falls on the IEP team, however, in many cases, special education teachers find themselves the only responsible member who must do so, as many of them have stated in this present study.

Similarly, LoVette (November 1996) pointed out that teachers in inclusive settings may have to make some major changes on curriculum to eliminate any tasks that were originally designed for students in general education. With children who are DHH in particular, any modification or changes on the curriculum should include the presentation of curriculum to be different from the ordinary ways in general education regardless of the educational placement (Moores & Martin, 2006).

On other hand, “the idea of offering less to such pupils as this carries the risk of widening the learning gap between those with and those without learning difficulties, thereby compromising social justice and equity” Azad (2014, p. 481). Additionally, there were many examples from experience, to support the idea that high curriculum expectations can lead students with disabilities’ achievement to further academic success (Fitzpatrick & Theoharis, 2014). In the same vein, Reynolds, Sammons, Stoll, Barber, and Hillman (1996) and Sammons (1995) highlighted not only that high expectation is one of the most crucial factors of school effectiveness, but also help activate teachers’ performance to help their students to achieve higher learning dimensions. Moreover, the way of individualising or compromising curriculum has been criticised on many occasions through the literature. As an example, Burton (1992) argued that any educational program or curriculum that reifies learning in an individual technique especially in a competitive environment is, consequently, working against the interests of numerous students. Similarly, Hart (1992) in his work of examining if ‘differentiation’ really a solution or part of the problem concluded that teachers need to be careful about judging their learners’ abilities under the concept of differentiation without understanding how those judgments might limit their reactions towards the given curriculum. Describing them as ‘less capable’ sometimes is like attributing that only to their individual limits and forgetting what children can achieve when they are given the appropriate opportunity to learn.

Nevertheless, DHH teachers’ concerns about curriculum high expectations in this study seems to be beyond just what suits their students or about ‘differentiation’, but they appear to be about the national curriculum for all students. Simply put, Teachers of the DHH in this study seemed to share similar criticism about the national curriculum just like other teachers in general education (AL Othman, 2014). SA, there has always been a debate about what children should be learning in schools among Saudi teachers. Therefore, some participants consider curriculum goals as extremely high for all students regardless of disabilities or learning difficulties as this quote illustrates.

“I suggest that criteria for evaluating all students should be different regardless. We, as teachers, find many difficulties sometimes with some parts of the curriculum and we impel to skip them either because of their length or difficulty, so how about DHH students”. (Dawadmi)

This teacher explained two main reasons for the informal strategies and practices that many teachers do in general on the curricula, which are the length of the curricula compared to the time given to cover those curricula during an entire semester, and the difficulty of achieving all the skills and objectives associated with those curricula. This teacher's use of the word “*regardless”* may explain that the issue of curricula may be one of the issues that all teachers agree on (general education and special education) in general within the inclusive schools. However, some participants provided more detailed explanations for the reasons for the difficulty or inappropriateness of the general curriculum for their DHH students. For example, some teachers in this study consider that the curriculum is not the main source of the challenge directly, but the reason is mainly related to the effects of disability on the learning and language stages of many children who are DHH. Therefore, there is often a gap between the real abilities of students and what the curricula impose based on the age group. In other words, the curriculum does not consider the early experience of children who are DHH (nursery, preparation programs, or accidental learning) that is usually less compared to hearing students in general classrooms. Therefore, goals always appear to be designed and appropriate for students without any educational needs as participants as explained here by this teacher.

“Honestly, one of the main negativities of DHH inclusion is the application of general curriculum. This was a huge mistake considering Deaf students’ limited linguistic and educational experiences. I mean that a deaf student who just started school does not have the same conception of schooling as the student in general education. In general education a student goes through many stages before he starts the first grade which gives him an idea of how learning and curriculum look like”. (Tabuk)

In both cases shown above, these findings appeared to be in contrast with what teachers of Deaf participated in a study undertaken by Luckner and Muir (2001) in the US. Teachers in Luckner and Muir study stated that their children who are DHH were extraordinarily successful when they were challenged and exposed to high expectations and complex language presented in the general curriculum. Hence, it is particularly important to let them get into things where they might fail or experience difficulties. This surely will make them ready to participate and face the outside world. Also, almost all teachers who took part in study by Hadjikakou, Petridou, and Stylianou (2008) showed similar impressions in how their children who are DHH could successfully cope with requirements of the general curriculum. Musengi and Chireshe (2012) in their work of identifying challenges and opportunities of including deaf students in Zimbabwe shared support the above findings by concluding that “schools should insist on the same high academic standards for deaf students that they expect from hearing pupils. In this way teachers would be forced to devise appropriate ways of engaging and including these learners in their lessons” (p.15).

Yet, this, of course, does not diminish the value and the importance of what Teachers of the DHH in this study in SA brought up about those challenges. Dealing with general curriculum, especially in inclusive settings, is difficult for both children who are DHH and their teachers. As pointed out by Adoyo (2007), the general curriculum is usually broad and demanding which makes it hard sometimes to be modified in a way to suit DHH learners. In addition, the findings of my study support those pointed out by Newton, Hunter-Johnson, Gardiner-Farquharson, and Cambridge (2014) whose participants suggested a revision for curriculum in inclusive settings to meet the diversity of all learners. Similarly, special education teachers in study by Nilsen (2017) reported that using work plans, tasks, goals included in the curriculum with children with SEN was very complicated, which means greater adaptation is needed.

Nevertheless, the gap that appears between students’ who are DHH performance and their peers in general education should not always be attributed to any individual abilities. Instead, we must instantly pay attention to the external factors such as the language delay and the lack of learning opportunities pupils with hearing problems are facing everyday (Qi & Mitchell, 2012). In addition, from the perspective of many teachers in this study, modification in teaching is based on the idea of a ‘differentiation’ approach that helps all students to access the curriculum by a variety of techniques to meet their differential abilities (Azad, 2014). Hence, reduction of the traditional curriculum goals to suit students' who are DHH cognitive and linguistic needs and does mean eliminating any essential components of the general curriculum, instead, it makes learning more focused on what children who are DHH can achieve according to their abilities. As an example, Teachers of the DHH eliminate any goals that require any articulating/speaking skills to be achieved. Data has shown that all Teachers of the DHH in this study shared similar views about the curriculum goals and described them as hard for their students as shown in the below examples as described in the below statement.

“In the Arabic language subject, there is always a story about a normal student who reads ‘out loud’ or sings or speaks to his teacher. These actions do not relate to our children who are DHH and as a teacher you cannot explain that to your students. So, I have to skip those kinds of lessons […] I mean lessons (curriculum) should be short and really valuable for the students”. (Namas)

It is clear from the opinion of this participant that he points out that the general curricula do not contain anything that helps children who are DHH to be engaged and interested in the content. For example, if there were some stories about “a deaf child using sign language instead *of a normal student who reads ‘out loud’ or sings or speaks”* with his teacher, or there was some inclusion of sign language, as it was in the old curricula, it would have been more effective. The problem, according to the previous answer, always lies in the normalisation of the curricula in the content and the provision of inappropriate experiences for children who are DHH.

Moreover, participants in this study referred many times to the amount of time required by the educational system to cover the given contents in a single semester as another issue related to the general curriculum. The academic year according to the SME consists of two main semesters. Each semester, teachers must teach curriculum following the sequence order of the distributed materials by SME for each subject. Monitoring visits from the local educational authority are conducted occasionally to all local schools, and by the end of the year teachers get evaluated. One major aspect of evaluating teachers is covering (teaching) the curriculum in the appropriate time (usually 2 weeks before semester ends). As a result of this racing against time, all teachers, including teachers of the DHH, are under so much pressure throughout the academic year. Some participants explain that they sometimes feel it is more important, from the perspective of the educational system, to meet the time plan and finish the curriculum contents regardless of the outcomes. There was a shared agreement on this view by many participants this example shows

“There is a strong monitoring for the curriculum progress, they never (authority) ask you (teacher) about inclusion. How far we are on the curriculum is the most important thing. Therefore they (authority) monitor us (DHH teachers) just like general education teachers based on curriculum progress, teaching plans, and paper works. I think Teachers of the DHH should control the curriculum” (Jizan).

Considering the nature of special education individual teaching style, the diversity of students, and the concerns discussed in the two sub-themes earlier, covering curriculum contents in the specified time is more likely to add even greater challenge according to many participants in this study. Several studies have addressed the stress that special education educators experience because of the school climate or the load of responsibility they are responsible for. A study by Kokkinos and Davazoglou (2009) revealed that special education teachers, especially those with undergraduate degrees, reported more stress in relation to their professional competency, curriculum for children with SENs, and communication with their students’ parents. This confirms the concept that special education teachers are more likely to burnout because of the nature and the environment of their occupation (Lavian, 2012). In almost every interview, there was evidence underpinned the issue of the length of the curriculum and the given time standard. Most Teachers of the DHH believed that it is not fair to be evaluated in this situation as the general teachers. The main reason, other than those highlighted previously, was that general teachers do not have to spend more time working on IEP plans as well as providing individual teaching for their students. Therefore, teachers of the DHH feel they are already overwhelmed by dealing with the general curriculum in their classrooms, so working with IEPs is more like an extra load that they cannot tolerate. Participant (Qassim) said

“When can I plan for all my 7 students in this situation? It is like another job. I always tell them this, (authority) they must choose between doing IEPs or applying the general curriculum. This got me into trouble many times”.

DHH teachers’ perceptions of the above issues caused by curriculum are comparable to the major findings of the exploration undertaken by Sands, Adams, and Stout (1995) about the special education teachers’ perceptions about general curricula. It was concluded that guidelines for curriculum contents and instruction methods should be constituted by the teachers themselves and the students’ IEPs, otherwise, students with SENs should be eligible for general education classrooms. However, this kind of individual and personal planning for curriculum could highly reduce the accountability of special education. In the same respect, Valeo (2008) examined what sort of support that inclusive teachers need the most from their school principals and found that all teachers expressed that working with children with SEN is extremely time consuming and demanding. Also, findings of this present study in regard to the flexibility and freedom that special education teachers should be given over curriculum are also in line with participants in a study conducted by Erss, Kalmus, and Autio (2016). Teachers in this study, from three different European countries, agreed that there are dominating actions by authority and they, as teachers, have rights to choose what suits their students in line with main guidelines for the national curricula.

### **7.1.3** **The Third Subtheme**: Teachers’ Views on the Impact of their Colleagues’ Awareness of Disability on their Roles

This sub-theme appeared through many of the stories reported by the participants, which indicate the importance of raising awareness and school culture about children who are DHH and their needs. This sub theme shows how difficult teachers believe it to carry out their role when they work with people who do not have what they believe to be sufficient and accurate information about disability, the characteristics of children with SEN, and the ways they are taught and supported. The lack of awareness of disability makes inclusion environments stressful work environments for many educators, where misunderstanding prevails in many situations with people and systems.

Many teachers of children who are DHH confirmed through interviews that the lack of knowledge and understanding of their colleagues greatly affects their work and their students on a frequent and almost daily basis. This lack of awareness manifested itself in many ways. For instance, in DHH inclusive programs, lack of information about the nature of deafness and the children who are DHH characteristics was evident in school system, paperwork, decisions, and even in members’ behaviours (general teachers, administration members, general students). Participants always, during interviews, used terms such as ‘*they don’t understand’, ' they don’t know*’, or sometimes ‘*they cannot communicate’* to describe those actions made by others within the school.

It was evident during the interviews and through the initial stages of data analysis that there were many stories related to the level of awareness among people taking part of DHH inclusive programs in this study. This lack of awareness is complex and multifaceted. For example, many teachers believe that the lack of awareness among the people involved in the inclusion is primarily an administrative defect related to the initial preparation as part of the inclusion process. At other times, other teachers spoke of awareness as a negative factor affecting their direct work with their students. In addition, a third group of the participants preferred to talk about their individual and voluntary initiatives in raising the level of awareness in their work environments, which are always doomed to fade after a while because they are informal and stressful for them on a personal level. In general terms, how much people know about disability is associated with their attitudes, actions, and feelings towards people with disabilities (Rillotta & Nettelbeck, 2007). Educationally, awareness culture in inclusive schools can result in positive outcomes socially and academically (Ruggs & Hebl, 2012). However, most of the Teachers of the DHH in this study seemed unsatisfied with how other colleagues, who are not disability specialists but work in their inclusive schools, deal with them and their students. Some participants attributed this issue to the election system which assigns people to work in such educational settings, while others consider it as a personal value responsibility someone should gain and seek after being chosen to work in inclusion. For example, one of the participants said “*they should not blame the educational system for everything. If you have such children in your school, why do not you learn more about them*” (Makkah). And yet, many participants agreed that the financial incentives given by the government for working with children with SEN is usually the reason why some people from outside the field of special education are interested to work in inclusion as described in the below quote.

“The only thing encouraging people to work with SENs in inclusive programs is the extra money) financial incentive for working with SENs) they receive monthly. Honestly, most of them do not understand what our students need and how to communicate with them. They are not prepared for inclusion. preparing staff is just as important as preparing buildings, classrooms, and facilities”. (Asir)

From this teacher's point of view there is a defect in the criteria *“the only thing*” used to select people to work in inclusion programs. It was also implicitly confirmed that there is an urgent need to prepare people who are selected to work with children with SEN and in inclusive education in advance, especially those who are not originally belong to the special education field. It was also clear that an unprepared environment and members have such a direct impact on the process of inclusion in general and on special education teachers’ work in specific. However, the main concern for most teachers of the DHH in terms of awareness and school culture is when it directly touches or affects their work and relationships with others in the school. For example, some Teachers of the DHH indicated that sometimes they get reminded by their work advantage by other members in their school such as

“Can you keep your students with you? I don’t know how to communicate with them, you are getting paid extra to do that” one general teacher said. We are all the base of all this(inclusion) not just us (DHH teachers). In our school unfortunately no one else but us understand what Deaf kids want if they do not know how to communicate. They (other staff) must know what children who are DHH need”. (Yumba)

By analysing the story presented here by this participant, we can understand that this teacher believes that many general education teachers who work within the inclusion and have direct responsibility towards children who are DHH cannot communicate directly with them. Also, special education teachers often show a deep understanding of the inclusive school as collective effort and everyone is responsible, as mentioned in the previous quote “*we are all the basis*”, while other members at the inclusive school often believe that Teachers of the DHH have more responsibility of inclusion because they *“are getting paid extra to”* to work with children with SEN. The possible reason for those different views of who is responsible of inclusion cloud be due to that Teachers of the DHH have been always working with students with SEN and the nature of their specialization in this field, but it also confirms what was previously mentioned in the first quote that most other members at inclusive programs are unprepared and unaware of how to work with teachers of the DHH and their students.

For many participants, unawareness sometimes reported from the perspective of language and communication with children who are DHH. In other words, the best way to raise the awareness of deafness is to learn the sign language and treat those children who are DHH as valuable members of the school community because when communication is lost with key members of the school, children who are DHH somewhat excluded as illustrated by this quote

*“*The best way to raise awareness is through teaching everyone sign language in the school. I am sure if you ask other than deaf teachers here about DHH kids and their needs they will not have enough to say except they wear hearing aids and they receive extra money by working with them”. (Abha)

This teacher indicates that communication in sign language is one of the most important factors for success and raising the level of awareness among members of the inclusive schools, especially those serving or including children who are deaf. It is clear from this answer that teachers of DHH are the main link between children who are DHH and the rest of the school and without them, those children cannot engage or communicate with others during the school day. This confirmed what was indicated by Holmström and Schönström (2017) that children who are DHH in mainstream schools usually tend to not use sign language if they feel it is not interesting to others, instead, they rely so much on hearing adding technologies or on their teachers as shown above.

On the other hand, lack of awareness of disability raised by some Teachers of the DHH in this study can be linked to other different factors. First, sometimes lack of awareness of disability among other members of the DHH inclusive programs appeared as what Heflin and Bullock (1999) called ‘teacher resistance’. This term indicates when the lack of awareness and training make many general teachers afraid of working in inclusion because they do not know how to meet SENs needs. Correspondingly, Soto, Müller, Hunt, and Goetz (2001) in their investigation of critical issues in the inclusion of students who use augmentative and alternative communication identified more than seven challenges that impacted the success practice of inclusion. Beside the lack of support, training, and opportunities, all participants agreed that inclusion becomes harder when other people are rigorous about their professional performances.

However, at other times lack of unawareness was described, by participants, as an organizational deficiency from the higher level of educational authority. Hence, many teachers explained this situation as if it is the educational system’s responsibility for not preparing people to work with SENs in inclusive programmes. In addition, people (other than special ed teachers) who were chosen/nominated to work in inclusive schools are not required, by the law, to gain prior training to be eligible for this kind of responsibility, nor to take part of an in-service training as this teacher explained.

“We suffer from the misconception about special education by the administration. It is odd to me that that ministry announced this school as inclusive [smile]. Before applying for inclusion, all members who will interact with SENs must be aware of special education. I dare you to go now and ask them what kind of program this is, who it serves? They will not know. At once we (DHH teachers) were shocked when our principal in a meeting said, ``These intellectually disabled students are a blessing for the school”. (Buraidah)

The frustration of the lack of awareness of some important members of some inclusive schools can be sensed by noting the strong language implied by this participant. For example, the use of the expressions *“I dare you*” or “*we were shocked*” indicates that the lack of awareness of disability in those schools may reach very high levels, as some people may use inappropriate and unacceptable terms or language *“blessing or intellectually disabled instead of DHH*”. The real problem according to many participants is that this way of assigning people without preparation or training to direct inclusion will widely open the door for unprofessionalism in all aspects of the whole procedure. Therefore, preparing the ground for successful inclusion is a key component. Further, human resources in any inclusive project must be a priority for all educational systems. In other words, we should not expect people to be professionally ‘inclusive members’ just by placing children with SEN in their school (Lindsay & Edwards, 2013). This understanding of the lack of awareness issue presented above is in line with what Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, Lamaster, and O'Sullivan (2004) found in their research about high school physical teachers' beliefs about inclusion. It was mentioned that most teachers were not ready to practice inclusion and as a result they failed to include their SEN students properly during teaching. In the same respect, participants in another study by Al-Zboon (2020) assured that people's awareness of disability increases when they receive academic and professional support about disability, hence it is extremely effective to include disability awareness concepts in any development/training curriculum.

Meanwhile, lack of awareness of disability in some inclusive programs at some interviews felt like an extension of the existing argument between general education and special education in teaching loads, class size, and working advantages. For example, in SA, the maximum teaching load for a special education teacher is 18 classes a week with no more than 8 students in the classroom. A general teacher gets up to 24 classes with the number of students reaching 50 students at some schools. Financially, all special ed teachers receive an extra 30 % on their monthly salary regardless of the educational setting versus 20 % for a general teacher who directly teaches/interacts with SENs in an incisive program. In other words, there has been for a long time, especially in SA, an argument about the differentiation between special education teachers and other ones in public schools. Inclusive education makes those comparisons between the two groups of teachers even clearer. Therefore, comments from the data always, about this issue and other ones related to the curriculum, represented the same argument in different aspects. Many participants in this study believe that general teachers, principal, and other members in inclusive schools, cannot tolerate any other extra loads of responsibility beside what they already have, therefore, they see special ed teachers as responsible for any tasks in accordance with SEN students as explained by this teacher in this statement.

“I don’t blame them (other members of inclusion) they have lots of things to take care of in the school we have up to 1000 students, they have no time to know anything about my students”. (Madinah)

This teacher, along with others working in the inclusive schools, understands the position of some school members towards general education teachers and administrators, and their inability to spend extra time or engage in training that increases his knowledge of the characteristics of students with SEN. But one of the important things mentioned by this participant, which undoubtedly may negatively affect the success of any inclusion process, is the increase in the number of students in some general education schools, which were determined by the local educational authority to be within the scope of comprehensive schools.

For some of the participants in this study, the low level of awareness of disability in many programs was a positive opportunity for them, as many of them contributed to the establishment an individual voluntary initiative in their schools to educate their colleagues and other students the characteristics of children who are DHH and their language which helped to change many misconceptions. There were many stories reported by some teachers about positive changes that occurred after those initiatives, especially among general education students, which contributed to a greater inclusion between them and their DHH peers. Among the examples mentioned by the participants is that many general education students showed enthusiasm to communicate with deaf students after they learned some signs on the open school day. However, according to some teachers, the problem with such initiatives is that they are seasonal and voluntary and cannot be regulated. Therefore, they must be formal and as part of the training process for people newly enrolled in any inclusive schools. This without a doubt will enhances the level of school awareness of both disability and inclusion in a more professional manner, as shown in the following quote

“We have been volunteering to teach others in our school about deafness and sign language, but it must be continuous. Every year many teachers leave, and new ones come in and they need to know about our students. I believe it will be more effective when there is some sort of official lectures or training every year by the educational authority”. (Najran)

This teacher emphasizes once again the role of the educational system, especially those responsible for the inclusion process, in its responsibility for the low level of awareness of disability among many members in some inclusive programs. Where he pointed out that there is no preparation or training for people who annually engage and take part in inclusive education. It was also highlighted that people accept and benefit from training when it is formally and included in the agenda of the educational system of inclusion. Therefore, the impact of individual initiatives as mentioned earlier to raise awareness in inclusive schools remains limited.

### **7.2.4 The Fourth Subtheme:** Teachers’ Views of The Impact of The Level of Collaboration and the Lack of Work Guidelines in Inclusive Schools

This sub-theme presents the ambiguity in the responsibilities entrusted to teachers on both sides (special and general teachers) in addition to the lack of cooperative spirit that many participants indicated among the members of the inclusive schools. For instance, the lack of clarity of responsibilities between special education teachers and general education teachers leads to unequal responsibilities for the implementation of inclusion, and then to a lack of cooperation in serving students with SENs between the two parties.

Many of the educators of the DHH participating in this study believe that they are doing more than what is required of them. Many of them feel that they do not know if there is a guideline that specifically stipulates the responsibilities of each party in any inclusive program. To reach a greater understanding of this issue referred to by most of the teachers, it is necessary to consider what was discussed in the first findings chapter on ‘the impact of administrative aspects on inclusion’ of most inclusive programs in SA. This is because this sub-theme and through the data is considered related to the general situation in all respects. In other words, this ambiguity in the tasks between special education and general education teachers may be a result of the administrative defect that appeared in almost all-inclusive schools visited during the data collection process. However, the focus under this sub theme is on teachers’ views of the impact of the level of collaboration and the lack of work guidelines in inclusive schools.

This subtheme inevitably overlaps with other themes during the analysis, as there are many aspects that were referred to by teachers on various occasions. In the early stages of reading and analysing the interviews of this study, many words and phrases were repeated, such as “*overlap*”, “*we must, but not others*”, or “*they do not work with our students*”.

Therefore, this subtheme went through different categories such as ‘inclusion as an independent environment’ and then it was identified as the main theme under the category of ‘challenges. After some revisions of themes and the reconstruction of the presentation of my data, this subtheme was merged with another main theme of ‘collaboration’ under the category of ‘visions for better inclusion’.

It must always be stressed that the clarity of tasks or responsibilities is one the main pillars of the success of any collective action especially in the education sector, where the diversity of experiences, educational backgrounds, and target groups. Therefore, that’s why success is all about regulation. Namely, in inclusive education collaboration between general and special educators has been recommended many times in relevant literature because of some reasons. First, there is an increase in the number of children with SENs being served in general education settings. Second, in addition to the importance of addressing the needs of students with disabilities, it is obvious that the demand on all teachers to meet the needs of all students is growing (Van Garderen, Stormont, & Goel, 2012). Third, many of the students (about 14%) in public education classrooms are in need to receive some sort of special education services (Stelitano, Russell, & Bray, 2020). In addition, A successful inclusive school should always have, shared vision for learning and teaching students, a permanent cooperation, regular administrative interactions, and sharing of authority (Wallace, Anderson, & Bartholomay, 2002).

Through the analysis of the data, there were many indications and stories of inequality in the tasks between special education teachers and general education teachers regarding the implementation of inclusion. Many teachers of the deaf feel that they are doing more in-school than their main tasks in special education classes. For example, all teachers must participate in supervising the safety of students and maintaining the school system during the meal period or the period of students' movement between classrooms, regardless of their specialization. Accordingly, all teachers must work with all students in the school. But many times, many deaf teachers find themselves playing the role of general education teachers by supervising their students and the rest of the students in the school, and this does not absolve them from the rest of the tasks assigned to them during the school day. Such a situation of inequality causes for many of them the unfairness of the school administration in the distribution of non-educational school tasks, as this participant explains in this quote.

“When people in charge are not from the field of special education, they always tell us that we are responsible for all students from both sides. I understand that sometimes part of their job is to organize work but, without being biased, I feel it is not fair when the principal tells me to work with general classrooms while nobody from there can work with my students”. (Makkah)

This teacher shows a great understanding of the importance of cooperation and clarity of responsibilities within any inclusive schools using some phrases such as “*I understand*! or *“bias”* but he considers such practices as a dereliction of systems that sometimes lack justice. Many teachers of the DHH in inclusion programs agree that they are assigned sometimes to work in an improvisational way by their school administrations and without relying on official regulations or a working guideline*.* This situation has practically increased the amount of responsibility for many teachers of the DHH because they are sometimes forced to play a more role than is required of them. This happens, according to many stories in data, when some general education teachers abandon their duties towards any children who are DHH, and their teachers have no choice except to stay with those students or keep them in the special education classrooms section. This, as many participants explained, usually happens in the two subjects (physical & art education) when all students should be fully included with their hearing peers under the supervision of general educators as shown below.

“Some physical and art education teachers do not want to be responsible for our students. They always make excuses that ‘we don’t know how to deal with them. The art teacher always brings them (DHH students) to me and says, ‘please keep them with you. I can't deal with them, and I don’t want to punish them either”. (Yumba)

This participant believes that some general education teachers, especially those who have tasks towards students who are DHH, make excuses to abandon their duty towards those children with regard to practicing inclusion. Examples of those excuses that are always repeated during this situation are the inability of some general teachers to communicate in sign language or the lack of homogeneity of students from both sides in those subjects, which may cause a kind of dispersion during the performance of the educational lessons. According to another teacher, he always hears similar excuses “*they will not get along with me students” “they don’t follow instructions”* before he takes his students to the art room or to the playing ground if their next period is one of those two subjects mentioned above. But it can also be understood from what some Teachers of the DHH say about this issue that they are upset of tolerating the mistakes caused by the educational system and the neglect of others at the inclusive schools, which impacts them and their students negatively. Some of them also believe that their specialization in the field of disability has become a means used by some general education teachers to abandon their responsibilities. Hence, in the absence of a clear guidance of the roles and responsibilities of all members in inclusive school, the merger of such overlap practices is expected to occur. Therefore, many previous studies (Lamar-Dukes & Dukes, 2005; Stelitano et al., 2020; Van Garderen et al., 2012; Wallace et al., 2002) have noted the need for clarity of roles for all workers in inclusive programs, as well as encouraging the cooperation of all teachers, employees, and students.

In contrast to the situation described above by some of the participants, a similar study by Wallace et al. (2002) that aimed to describe the best collaboration and communication practices for the successful inclusion in four schools. It was found that participants in this study expressed a high degree of satisfaction and cooperation among them to serve a unified vision of the school, which is to serve all students without exception. Also, all teachers from both sides agreed on the importance of their cooperation and support each other in raising the level of performance by sharing knowledge to serve all students as well as the commitment of all the tasks assigned to them.

On the other hand, some of the participants believe that the effect of this ambiguity in the responsibilities in almost all-inclusive schools is not limited to them only, but also to their students. Some of them see what some school members do in abandoning their responsibilities towards their students is more detrimental to their natural rights to be integrated with their peers in the two subjects stipulated in the inclusive school system and consider this more important than what they themselves face as special teachers in inclusive programs such as the increased burden. In addition, such practices described above in fact contradicts the basic principles on which inclusion is all about, social participation, and communication with children with SEN. Further, “teachers ‘negative feelings about the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting have a negative effect on teacher behaviours, student learning and the overall success of inclusive practices” (Fuchs, 2010, p. 30). Therefore, some teachers in this study expressed this situation by using phrases that state the role of general education teachers in leaving a positive impact on children who are DHH in terms of dealing and acceptance and they see this as one of the most important reasons for successful inclusion mainly as this teacher said in the following illustration.

“For inclusion to be successful, all members who have been assigned to be part of it must carry their responsibilities, especially from the general education sector. They must have a real role/interaction with DHH students. They do not provide any things for my students. I do not care about the financial side of this issue. I care that they should have positive impacts on our DHH students, otherwise, it is injustice to the students themselves either”. (Baha)

It appears from this quote that this teacher prefers the interests of his students over his own and considers this much more important than the additional problems and burdens, in addition to the fact that he does not mind that some people benefit financially from the integration, but they must offer what is expected of them in return. In other words, this teacher and many other teachers believe that the children who are DHH in the inclusive programs should not be the victims of any mistakes in the educational system or educational policies, such as the lack of readiness of the individuals participating or the lack of preparation and training in dealing with students with SEN. Instead, inclusive education “protects students’ human right to be educated with peers, maximize the potential of most students, and is the ultimate goal whenever possible” (Anati & Ain, 2012, p. 76)

Similarly, many of the participants in this study raised similar concerns, in terms of general teachers' responsibilities in inclusive schools, to those in a study conducted by Zagona, Kurth, and MacFarland (2017) to explore the opinions of the teachers about readiness and cooperation in the inclusive schools. Teachers, from both sides, in that study identified similar elements in terms of achieving success of inclusion such as communication, cooperation, and supporting students with SEN to become real members of the school. However, some of the special education teachers pointed to the lack of assistance from other teachers to raise the level of inclusion practices as a challenge. In addition, the many burdens for some teachers limit their progress and collaboration especially with the different needs of their students. This also confirmed what one DHH teacher said during interview of my study that

“Schools are not ready for inclusion. Principal, agent, and general teachers here are busy, so this is why they avoid working with us or with our students”. (Madinah)

In general, the literature concerned with the level of cooperation between special education teachers and general education teachers in inclusion environments shows that the level of cooperation to implement inclusion practices often appears low due to reasons such as the lack of clarity of responsibilities for each member, the lack of knowledge resources, and the weakness of professional training (Ghedin & Aquario, 2020). As a result of such ambiguity and inequality in the responsibilities of teachers in inclusion programs, some of them may adopt some negative feelings towards the idea of ​​inclusion in general, which makes them support in one way or another the idea of special ​​schools for the DHH, where everyone is equal in tasks and teaching loads, and they have the same background about disabilities. The next statement describes how some participants feel about inclusive education in terms of unclear guidelines for responsibilities in his school.

“I will be honest with you; I always think of moving to a deaf special school where all teachers are similar and homogenous. I cannot stand how things run here, there is always a comparison (general & special teachers), and no one understands his responsibility. This one of the main negativities about inclusion”. (Jazan)

It is clear from the previous quotation that the problems related to inequality in tasks are almost daily and recurring, which makes them think *“always”* to move to more organized environments from the point of view of some. On the other hand, the teachers participating in this study show a deep perception of what inclusive programs should look like, especially from an organizational point of view, so this sometimes becomes a reason for them to despair of the success of inclusion when they encounter such practices. In other words, some teachers' attitudes towards inclusion may change as much as they have information and perceptions of the systems and their differences with the reality they live daily in their workplaces (Forlin, Earle, Loreman, & Sharma, 2011). Not only that, but some of the participants in this study expressed the situation in the DHH inclusive programs in terms of the large number of tasks that is physically exhausting as described by this teacher,

“It is so exhausting for us, we must be with them at mealtimes, playing times, and sometimes outside in the school yard, we need more collaboration”. (Hail).

In general, it can be said that most of the inclusive programs for students who are DHH, as shown by the data, lack the organizational aspect regarding the distribution of tasks among the teachers responsible for implementing inclusion. This greatly affects the performance of most teachers, especially special education teachers, and the effective functioning of the inclusion process. According to some participants, this also affects in one way or another on their students and deprives them of opportunities to interact with their peers in the general education classrooms in a way that makes the inclusive environment attractive and successful.

## **7.3 Chapter summary**

This second analysis chapter presented the second main theme of the findings under the title of ‘Teachers’ Perceptions of The Factors Affecting their Role in Inclusive Schools’. The second theme aimed to shed light on the most important issues raised in the data that affect the workflow of teachers of the DHH participating in the inclusive environments in which they work. In addition, as the focus of this theme and it’s all sub-themes was the children who are DHH themselves, this chapter also showed more the teachers voices’, concerns, or suggestions more about their working environment.

The main theme in this chapter was classified into four sub themes as follows. First subtheme ‘Frustration as a Factor Influencing Teachers Role in Inclusive Education’ explained that DHH inclusive programs are monotonous and do not change, which makes them an unattractive environment for many teachers. The data showed that most teachers in this study were frustrated that there had been no changes or improvements to the inclusion process since its introduction. Consequently, many of them feel that the educational system does not give sufficient attention to these programs, whether in terms of supervisory follow-up, support, or educational outcomes. On the other hand, many participating teachers feel excluded by the educational authority regarding their suggestions or opinions for the development of inclusion, which may amount to ignoring these opinions or not taking them seriously. In other words, most teachers in this study did not feel that they are part of inclusive education decision-making.

The second subtheme ‘The General Curriculum and its Influence on Teachers’ Roles’ presented the challenges that teachers face with the general curriculum applied in SA, which is one of the factors that make them under constant pressure compared to their peers from general education by the educational system. Therefore, data under this sub theme showed that most teachers in this study agreed that the general curriculum currently applied with children who are DHH is not compatible with their capabilities, characteristics, or even their language skills. Moreover, the curriculum, in terms of the amount of information and objectives, is very long and cannot be covered according to the timetable required by the SME. In addition, it does not consider individual differences and the individual teaching style that is common with children with SEN. As a result of the foregoing, the general curriculum is considered one of the most important factors that affect the work of any special education teacher in inclusive environments and make it vulnerable to criticism and comparison by the local educational authority within the school and the educational system.

The third subtheme ‘Teachers’ Views on the Impact of their Colleagues’ Awareness of Disability on their Roles’ highlighted the impact of lack of awareness of disability and the characteristics of children with SENs on Teachers of the DHH in the inclusive programs. The data showed that most people in inclusion environments, other than special education teachers, lack the basics of dealing with those children properly, which calls for raising the level of awareness and school culture about disability officially by the educational system. On the other hand, this study also found that the financial incentive provided by the government to work with children with SENs is one of the most important factors that attract people to work in the inclusion sector, but this happens without training, preparation, or even clear criteria.

The fourth subtheme ‘Teachers’ Views of The Impact of The Level of Collaboration and the Lack of Work Guidelines in Inclusive Schools explained the ambiguity of tasks and responsibilities in DHH inclusive programs as well as the level of cooperation between teachers from both sides. It was found that most of the teachers of the DHH in this study were doing more than what is officially required of them to implement inclusion. The reason for this is that some people evade their duties and responsibilities towards those students under the pretext of not being able to deal with them. In addition, the data showed that there is a prevailing view among many members of inclusive schools that the special education teacher is primarily responsible for implementing inclusion because of their experience in special education or the advantages they have such as the financial incentives, small numbers of students, and low teaching load.



# Chapter Eight: Data Analysis and Findings Part Three: The Experience of Children Who are DHH in Inclusive Schools

## **8.1 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter is the third findings chapter, where the third main theme will be presented and discussed. The aim of this chapter was to provide a section in this study that explores the experiences of children who are DHH who receive education in inclusive settings through the eyes of their teachers. That is because this study targeted teachers only; however, children are still an important element of any mainstreaming program. Also, focusing on both teachers and children in one study will make this study hard to manage and will require additional time especially in the context of SA. Hence, it was essential during the interviews to ask the participants some questions about their students’ experience in the inclusive programs they work in. For example, all participants were asked to explain how they make sure their students benefit from the inclusive environment and what actions they take to support them socially and academically.

During my early data analysis, some of the sub themes included in this chapter emerged initially as a challenge or barriers to inclusive education for students who are DHH. After some changes and revisions of my thesis structure and analyse, my supervisor and I agreed on having a chapter that discussed and shed light on the experiences of children who are DHH in inclusive schools as the participants explained them and the factors that they believed affected those children the most. For example, the first two subthemes in this chapter ‘the impact of diagnosis’ and ‘the impact of language delay’ were identified by many participants as challenges to work in the DHH inclusive programs for many teachers of DHH. At the same time, it was explained many times those challenges mentioned earlier also impact their students’ experiences and limit their opportunities to benefit from inclusion. The third subtheme in this chapter ‘the impact of partial inclusion on the experiences of HH children’ was, in the in early analysis, identified as a main theme that named ‘*one way of inclusion’.*  It meant that teachers thought there is a lack of diversity in the ways of practicing inclusion with those children. In other words, many HH children are eligible for ‘full’ inclusion, as called by many of them, according to their communication and academic skills (spoken language). Therefore, explanations of the experiences of HH children during interviews included phrases such “he *can speak/communicate”, or “they can benefit more from inclusion”,* to justify why many of HH students who receive education in the attached classrooms should be more included in the general classroom and to explained that what is being practiced as inclusion is not enough. Further, the third theme showcases some of the unofficial attempts conducted by some participants to help their children who are DHH join the public classrooms. For example, there are some stories when some children who are HH were gradually promoted to a general classroom and finally left the special education classroom.

The third theme in this chapter will be presented in three subthemes: first, Teachers’ views of the impact of diagnosis on students’ experiences in inclusive schools. Second, Teachers’ views of the impact of language delay on DHH children's experiences in inclusive schools. Third Teachers’ Views of the Impact of Partial Inclusion on the Experience of Children Who are HH (See figure 8-1 below).

**Figure 8- 1 The Third Main Theme and Related Subthemes**

## **7.2 The Third Theme:** Teachers’ Perceptions of The Experience of Their Children Who are DHH in Inclusive Schools

In this third theme, the DHH children’s experience in inclusive programs are explored from their teachers’ point of views. This includes their learning experiences and their experiences of social inclusion This chapter serves to highlight DHH students’ daily experience at the inclusive programs.

### **7.2.1 The First Subtheme**: Teachers’ Views of the Impact of Diagnosis on Children’s Experiences in Inclusive School

This first sub theme emerged as a key factor that impacted DHH children’s experiences in inclusive programs participated in this study. In each interview with teachers, there were different questions aiming to explore the participants’ thoughts about their DHH students’ experiences in inclusive settings. For example, teachers were asked what they would do or change to make sure their students benefit from inclusion. Many teachers agreed on changing the way children who are DHH are placed according to one criterion which is the degree of hearing loss. That is because teachers believe that diagnosis is the first and most important step that decides the future of their students’ experiences in schools and they cannot tolerate any mistake or misdiagnosis. For example, a teacher said,

“We have lost many children who can speak and communicate just because of the result of their hearing loss exam. Mistakes in the diagnose do exist here in the school and in the educational system as a whole”. (Asir)

In addition, many participants reported that children who are DHH and their teachers are the only ones who face the consequences of any mistaken decisions by the diagnosis protocol. A good example of those consequences caused by diagnosis is when a child is diagnosed as Deaf because he does not show any verbal communication. However, and from the perspective of many teachers, that missing verbal language caused by deafness could be applied to other disabilities. Therefore, when a child is misdiagnosed and placed in DHH inclusive classrooms, teaching is interrupted as this participant explained.

“I have two kids in my class (HH classroom) who use signs to communicate. It is hard to ignore them during instruction through spoken language as required by the system. So, I have to explain to them sometimes individually with sign language”. (Yumba)

The impact of diagnosis on children's experience of school inclusion sub theme emerged from the frequent emphasis by participants on some phrases that represent the issue from a variety of different perspectives such as, educational placements, learning, or communication. For instance, the word ‘diagnose’, in its Arabic form, was usually included with other ones such as ‘problem’, negativity, or ‘mistake’ as shown in the below examples.

“Diagnostic mistakes are problematic” (Jizan).

“Wrong diagnosis is like a crime” (Najran)

“Diagnoses process is a main negativity of inclusion” (Taif).

Some other teachers tended to describe the situation of diagnoses from the aspect of labelling disability such as ‘not Deaf’, or ‘other disability’. One teacher explained that diagnosing hearing impairment needs a complete review as this extract below shown.

“If I were in charge of the inclusive programs, I would have all children go through reassessment and new diagnosis procedures […] that is because there are many mistakes in those diagnose reports which we can see clearly”. (Jeddah)

This quote implies the urgent need for reassessing ‘all children’ because of the frequent and ‘clear’ mistakes which happen when children are originally diagnosed. The teacher also referred to the need for change in the ways disability is assessed by the educational system “*If I were in charge”.*

In chapter two of my thesis, I explained the main educational placement options for children who are DHH in SA, (a) the Deaf special schools (residential/institution), and (b) the inclusive programs, which is the focus of my study. In inclusive programmes children who are DHH are divided into two different classroom placements according to their hearing test measurement (see table 2-2 in literature review chapter for DHH classification according to the hearing loss), Deaf students (70 dB and above) attached classrooms within a public school, and hard of hearing students (69 dB and below) attached classrooms within the public school. This division means different educational needs and characteristics as well as differentiated instruction and communication methods.

The issue of misdiagnosis deafness is a serious one. Beyond educational borders, Stinson, and Antia (1999) pointed out that many misdiagnosed medical cases in the Deaf population happen because of communication difficulties. That confirms what the Deaf participants reported in the observation conducted by Lezzoni, O'Day, Killeen, and Harker (2004) to understand the experience of health care for Deaf individual that most issues in healthcare are attributed to the way of communication or as described as “the communication consequences” (p.365). In other words, the absence of sign language interpreters who are specialized in the medical fields, or the absence of medical staff who are capable of understanding the language of deaf people, often leads to a misdiagnosis. Similarly, teachers believe that diagnostic mistakes are extremely serious because they impact the way that they teach and negatively impact their students educationally. For example, the consequences of any misdiagnosis, especially for younger DHH children, lasts a lifetime and limit their educational opportunities. For instance, a participant explained how misdiagnosis for HH children could impact their way of communication and learning as well as the consequences might happen because of an action in this following statement.

“It is not fair to force a child who can hear to learn sign language and learn with Deaf students. He will, if it continues, neglect his residual hearing. I have seen these many times over the years”. (Yumba)

By analysing this statement above, several important points can be deduced about the diagnostic mistakes pointed out by the participant. The phrase *“many times”* shows that such cases are not individual and accidental, rather they are systemic. Also, the beginning with the word “*not fair*” refers to such actions that may deprive some children from the appropriate educational opportunities and their educational rights to learn in less restrictive environments. For example, when a HH student was wrongly placed in the deaf classes, he must communicate and learn through sign language, even if he can communicate verbally. As a result, if that child does not know sign language, the educational environment will become more restrictive. The below story describes the situation more.

“I have a HH student in the sixth grade who is placed in the Deaf classroom but does know sign language as the rest in his class. I have seen him many times try to interact and play with students (hearing) from public classrooms. When I spoke with his father and explained to him these classes are not suitable for his son he said “neither the public classrooms” where each class has more than 40 children. He also added that as the curriculum is the same, the father prefers his son to stay in the Deaf classrooms. (Dawadmi)

In addition to what was previously mentioned about the impact of the diagnosis on the choice of educational place for DHH children, the story also emphasises that some children naturally tend to environments in which they can communicate and form social relationships that suit their communication or auditory skills. More than that, the story also referred to the role of parents in choosing the educational placement for their children. In this aspect, Singer, Cacciato, Kamenakis, and Shapiro (2020) stresses that most parents who have children who are DHH feel overwhelmed and confused regarding educational or communicative decisions for their children, especially in the early years of their education.

According to Branson and Miller (1993) one of the main reasons for the failure of mainstreaming children who are DHH is to rely on the medical model for diagnosing deafness, where deafness is always described as a disease, especially from the point of view of pathologist, in an explicit disregard of any cultural or linguistic considerations for the deaf. In addition, even on the psychological tests that used to decide the educational placements for DHH children, usually those children are misdiagnosed or mislabelled intellectually because of the linguistic barriers as those tests need spoken language skills (Miller, Corbett, & Moores, 2007).

In SA, children who are DHH are often diagnosed medically and educationally. The medical test is usually done after birth up until the school age through screening that is provided by the health officials to specify the appropriate hearing aids if a hearing loss was detected (Al-Rowaily, AlFayez, AlJomiey, AlBadr, & Abolfotouh, 2012; Osterling, 2008). The educational diagnosis procedure is an assessment carried out by SME, which includes screening, hearing measurement (hearing loss degree), and IQ testing, to decide the appropriate placement for DHH children.

According to many teachers in this study, misdiagnosis usually happens within procedures carried out by the local education authority in the city. Teachers suggested that local education authority procedures usually rely only on the results of measuring the hearing loss to decide on the educational placement for those children, rather than measuring the other abilities or skills such as communication, cognitive, or the psychological aspects. The following participants gave more insight concerning the diagnostic issues with some suggestions to improve this important procedure.

“One thing we commonly see here is when children are diagnosed according to one criterion, that is the degree of their hearing loss. It should not be like this. What should be done is to examine everything, including linguistic and psychological areas. This could lead to a better diagnosis. They know (system) there is some much overlap between our students and autistic ones especially in terms of language”. (Aqiq)

The above teacher suggests that the process of diagnosis is too narrow in focusing only on hearing loss, relying on a single standard “*degree of their hearing loss*” to determine the educational needs and placements for those children. It was clear from the use of the phrases “*including linguistic or in terms of language”* that instruments used in diagnosis don’t consider the similarity of symptoms for many disabilities, especially those that have linguistic or communicative signs such as deafness and autism. This teacher stresses once again what he sees as the importance of the linguistic and psychological aspect of children when conducting these diagnostic tests, which may affect the results and decisions. This teacher's view is reflected in a previous study conducted in the Saudi context on the diagnosis of disability by Abdul Wahab (2015), to investigate the quality of diagnostic programs for disabled people. The study concluded four main findings, (1) deficiencies in the diagnostic processes and most stages of the diagnosis were not completed, (2) deficiencies of tests instruments used in terms of the nature of the test and the method of application, (3) lack of competences and expertise for the specialist and (4) inappropriate environment for successful diagnosis process.

Some of the stories received from the participants during the interviews also confirmed the validity of what the previous participant stated that sometimes diagnostic mistakes may include autistic children and their classification as Deaf or hard of hearing based on the linguistic aspect. In other words, diagnostic mistakes do not affect hearing-impaired children and place them in deaf classes only, as mentioned at the beginning of this sub-theme, but may occur with all children with SEN.

“We also have many diagnostic problems. I mean, we have some kids here who have signs of other disabilities like autism but not hearing one. We are tired of dealing with this issue. The real problem is the first step of diagnosis; when kids do not interact verbally on the test, specialists assume that they are deaf or hard of hearing. He might have something else”. (Hail)

What is clear from this story is that the diagnostic procedure, according to the participant’s opinion, appears as a routine and superficial action that does not include or consider any second thoughts *“might have something else*”. It was also asserted that the level of communication and verbal interaction during diagnostic tests is not conclusive evidence of a hearing impairment “*not interacting verbally”*. The story also confirms what was previously mentioned that teachers believe that diagnostic mistakes are not rare cases, but rather frequent *“tired of dealing with this”*.

In regard to diagnosing DHH individual generally, Glickman (2007) assured that considering the language delay that many DHH patients have; therefore, clinics or diagnose centres should be extra careful to not draw conclusions based on patients’ communication alone; otherwise, the possibility of misjudgement will be very high. Also, as children with hearing loss should be tested for learning disabilities, some combinations of tests considered lacking in adequate assessment and correction methods may be useful in educational and vocational counselling as well as psychiatric counselling. Therefore, neuropsychiatric examinations for those children should be only conducted professionally by people who have enough experience about deafness, sign language, and Deaf culture to reduce the diagnostic mistake as possible (Osterling, 2008).

On the other hand, a teacher clarifies that some of the HH children have clear indications and apparent language abilities that may not need a diagnosis to know that they are HH, still they are placed in the deaf classrooms, within the public school, based on the diagnosis report. In other words, some inclusive school’s administration cannot distinguish the difference between deafness and hard of hearing but rely on official reports received from the educational authority in the city without consulting special education teachers as listed in the following quote.

“Imagine you place a deaf student in the general classroom, he will be lost. I have seen things like that. Here (Deaf inclusive classroom), we have a student who speaks very properly!!! That means he was mistakenly placed here. Diagnostic mistakes exist. I am sure this child’s diagnosis is wrong; he can hear me and carry the conversation with me; he is not deaf at all. The problem is that no one wants to admit this mistake or talks about it”. (Asir)

One of the important indications included in this quote is that the system often does not admit the existence of those misdiagnosed actions even though many teachers reported that they always inform school administrations at least once. That was clear from the language used in the above description such as “*mistakes exist*” or “*no one wants to admit*”. It was also explained that clear signs of a student's abilities to speak and hear or “*carry the conversation*”, are ignored or not questioned by school officials. The opinion of the above participant supports what he emphasized by Remine, Care, and Grbic (2009) that one of the most important roles of teachers of the DHH in mainstreaming programs is to provide support and advice related to their students and discuss them with the school administration. That role includes reviewing the “audiological, educational, cognitive, linguistic and social characteristics” (p.120).

What confirms the importance of involving teachers of the DHH in reviewing the records of their students, especially in the inclusive schools, is what some participants in this study mentioned of discovering cases of wrong assessment or misdiagnosis of some children, which sometimes result in radical changes such as the educational placement. For example, another story was mentioned about a student who was mistakenly diagnosed as deaf. A participant explained that it took him and other teachers of the DHH in their inclusive school more than two years to get approval for a reassessment.

“I think placing children who are DHH by hearing measurements is not accurate. I had a student here in the sixth grade with almost normal speaking and hearing abilities and was, according to the official report, identified as deaf. We (DHH teachers) have known this child since he was in the fourth grader. Therefore, we had to be Insisting about his measurement to be done again, so we spoke with people in charge in the school to contact the authority. After many attempts, they did it again, and we were right. Fortunately, the student was moved to the general classroom”. (Riyadh)

This story emphasizes some points that were previously mentioned by other participants who highlighted this issue. For instance, the weakness of diagnostic tools and the reliance in some cases on a single criterion to determine the appropriate educational placement for children who are DHH “*hearing measurements is not accurate”*. Further, it was also clear that there is no official way for reviewing students' cases or records, but rather they are individual initiatives by some teachers “*we had to be Insisting”*. As mentioned previously in some sub-themes, most of these individual initiatives do not continue or may cause problems for some teachers with the local educational authority. Therefore, it may be understood from the above that there must be periodic reviews of student records by a team of which involves DHH teachers.

Through the data, several reasons were implicitly presented through the participants’ comments about the diagnosis issue. Interestingly, one of the participants noted that he has a student who was placed in the HH program because it might be the nearest program (graphically) from where he lives, even though the program is officially for Deaf students and cannot serve other students with a different disability.

“I would love to show you one of my students. He does not wear any hearing aids, and no matter how low you speak, he can still hear you. It looks like he is a slow learner but not HH for sure. I do not know how they decided to place him here; maybe this school is the nearest school for him as a SEN child!! all kids here should be HH.” (Dammam)

This teacher spoke with much confidence “*to show you one of my students*” indicating that the abilities of one of his students do not indicate a hearing disability. That was clear, to the teacher, through the ability of that child to communicate and speak properly. The teacher implicitly indicates that there are other environmental factors that may lead to placing students in an educationally unsuitable placement. For example, the long distance between the student’s place of residence and the appropriate educational school or (the nearest) as it was described. This may be explained by the fact that there are sometimes concessions by some families or the educational system about the most appropriate placement for the child due to circumstances other than misdiagnosis of a disability. However, it is not possible to exclude the possibility of diagnostic mistake also in this case, as there is always a difficulty, that is outside the control of specialists or the tools used, to assess sensory disabilities (Carvill, 2001; Rosenhall, Nordin, Sandström, Ahlsen, & Gillberg, 1999). For instance, in a study that reviewed the diagnosis records of 1150 of hearing-impaired children in the USA by Jure, Rapin, and Tuchman (1991) found that 4 % of them met the criteria to be identified as autistic.

To summarize this issue discussed under this subtheme, it was clear that how the hearing impairment is being assessed needs a complete review in terms of the instruments, staff, and process. According to many participants’ opinions, there is a deficit in many diagnostic reports produced by the educational authority which decide the students’ placement, needs, and educational future according to some teachers

“This is not fair. It should not be only the hearing measurement that makes us decide the students’ future” (Baha).

In addition, it appears that diagnosis is carried out once or twice before the age of starting school to determine the appropriate educational placement for the HDD student. Therefore, it is imperative to make a periodic diagnosis before each academic year by a specialized team that includes teachers of the DHH and sign language interpreters to ensure better communication during the diagnosis.

On the other hand, it was reported that such diagnostic mistakes may force teachers of the DHH to perform additional work outside the boundaries, which causes some teachers to clash with the authority and educational decision-makers, which might lead to some legal issues. For instance, in Saudi Deaf schools (special schools) that provide a diagnostic service, some psychologists and social workers cannot communicate with Deaf children through sign language while conducting tests for students. As a result, some teachers of the DHH, in their spare time, are assigned to help during the assessment process by translating through sign language interpreting.

It was asserted many times that there is a weakness in the way in which students are eligible for inclusive programs. One of the critical issues was highlighted is when a child is placed in DHH classes according to his diagnosis report, while he is not DHH, causes them a lot of trouble and increases the disruption of the learning process and most teachers of the DHH are not trained or prepared to deal with other disabilities appropriately in most cases.

## **7.2.2 The Second Subtheme**: Teachers’ Views of the Impact of Language Delay on Children's Experiences in Inclusive Schools

This sub-theme reflects the second element impacting students' experiences at the DHH inclusive programs. Before going further, it is important to understand what language delays mean in this case. Delays in the language development happens when children don’t show an appropriate age language in terms of the number of words, correct linguistic construction, or and the application of those skills due to the lack of language experiences or their late acquisition (Dostal, Gabriel, & Weir, 2017; Moores & Martin, 2006). Hence, most of the interviews referred to the language delay as one of the most significant obstacles that prevent students from benefiting from the inclusive environment as they should be. Moreover, many participants also confirmed that the impact of the language delay reaches all educational, social, and psychological aspects of their students. For example, the language delay was discussed as the main cause for their students’ lower performance in the curricula, while some discussed it as a reason for isolation and lack of interaction with the school community.

“My students don’t feel confident to interact with their hearing peers. They tend to be on their own during mealtime because no one understands them but me” (Yumba).

“It is hard to keep in track with the curricula because of the language gap for my students” (Abha).

From the early stages of data analysis, the language delay of children who are DHH appeared as one of the most important factors impacting many children who are DHH at inclusive programs. Therefore, this subtheme went through many stages of analysis and overlapped with other themes. Hence, I will explain how this sum themes were developed during analysis. It was first classified as a main theme under the second research question (challenges of DHH inclusion). Then it was merged under another theme concerned with the general curriculum in inclusion. However, revisions and reviews of all themes and transcripts revealed that the impact of language delay was beyond just learning. It impacts children’s who are DHH experiences in all aspects of the school such as communicating and playing. Therefore, this sub theme emerged form used many linguistic signs that formed the codes to build this sub-theme later, to describe that impact socially and academically, such as ‘the mother or natural language, neither sign language nor speech, linguistic, vocabulary, interaction, or early language intervention.

Language delay has always been identified as a cumulative effect that embodies many difficulties for children who are DHH in many aspects of their lives (Dostal, Gabriel, & Weir, 2017; Moores & Martin, 2006). In chapter three of my thesis, I highlighted the hearing impairment’s impact on language acquisition for young DHH children. Hence, before going any further in this section, I would like to briefly described the reasons behind this delay again here for more clarity.

DHH language delay is generally attributed to two main reasons. First, the majority of children who are DHH are born in hearing families, which means almost no exposure to a fluent language (spoken nor signed) at an early age. Even if some parents have signing skills or start to learn some to raise their DHH child, those skills are still not fluent (Schick, De Villiers, De Villiers, & Hoffmeister, 2007). Second, when children who are DHH reach school age, they have been already at, or near to, the end of the appropriate age (critical period 2-5/7 years) of language acquisition, which means acquiring the language becomes a bit slower (Brennan, 2003; Easterbrooks & Baker, 2002; Moores, 2001). Consequently, learning over the following years for those children became much harder (Dockrell & Lindsay, 1998). In other words, many children who are DHH are left behind educationally, even those who receive full access to curriculum later through sign language interpretation when they start school (Schick, Williams, & Kupermintz, 2006). That is because “children who are DHH who enter school without fluency to express and comprehend complex grammatical structures typical of their peers are unlikely ever to catch up. That subsequently limits their access to the general academic curriculum with long-term and often lifelong impacts” (Luft, 2017, p. 33).

In this study, language delay was repeatedly identified as a factor influencing children’s school experiences in terms of learning and social interaction. In addition, during the analysis, participants provided some specific language struggles that appeared around the national curriculum requirements in the classroom. Others tended to describe it from the social aspect of communication and interaction within the rest of the school.

For instance, some teachers explained the difficulty of the instruction process with their students, who they considered to be without an authentic and natural language. Many times, it was explained that most Children who are DHH had not accomplished the age-appropriate literacy skills presented in the general curriculum, even in the high-grade levels, as shown in the following statement.

“If you look at our students’ performance records in sixth grade, they cannot read and write properly. I do not know how they were labelled or classified as hard of hearing (eligible for HH inclusive education). They have no way of communication, either by speaking or signing. Even if they try to communicate with me, I cannot sometimes understand them clearly”. (Madinah)

This participant refers to the low level of reading and writing skills for his students at the higher levels of the primary stage, which explains that the effect of language delay extends if there is no early intervention. Furthermore, there is another indication of how difficult teachers believe it is for such children to learn without a solid or natural language that teachers can develop or enrich during the six years of learning in the primary stage *“either by speaking or signing”*. Also, it was highlighted that the communication between teachers and students seemed interrupted during learning because of that language delay *“I cannot understand them clearly”*.

The difficulty of accessing the general curriculum for most children who are DHH because of the language delay is not surprising as it has been addressed many times in the literature. For example, a study to investigate the provision of children with cochlear implants in some mainstream schools in Manchester, UK by Bennett and Lynas (2001) concluded with two main points. First, mainstreaming, or full inclusion is not enough for those children to access the general curriculum which means the need for a comprehensive support program. Second, linguistic intervention must be also provided through the support system to help children maximize their linguistic skills.

For some other teachers of the DHH in my study, they believe that the language delay of their students affects their ability to assimilate any new concepts presented in the curriculum. This is often attributed to their students' severe lack of linguistic experience and educational experience in the preschool age through the family and the surrounding environment. For example, most hearing children go through gradual stages of language acquisition from parents and siblings continuously and with continuous feedback (Gertz & Boudreault, 2016). In contrast, most children who are DHH are not exposed to sufficient language experiences at preschool age, which affects learning new language experiences later in school age (Dostal, Gabriel, & Weir, 2017) as this teacher shows in the following illustration.

“Usually, I have to explain some new abstract concepts with each lesson, like ‘physical changes’ to my students whose word bank is limited. Not only it is very challenging for them and hard to comprehend or articulate, but they also don’t have any previous experience to build on or start from”. (Namas)

It was implied in this quote that as most of the students depend on their visual sense to receive information and acquire educational and linguistic experiences. In most cases, these concepts are presented in the curricula to simulate the hearing students “*articulate*”. In other words, hearing children learn new ideas first through hearing, then articulation until they get a simplified understanding. Then this understanding is developed until reaching the abstract meaning in the following years. However, as for children who are DHH, many do not go through this sequence of acquiring language experiences. The above situation confirmed what was found by Doherty (2012) in a study that compared the experience of some children who are DHH in some inclusive schools in Northern Ireland and Sweden. Northern Irish children’s who are DHH answers revealed “unsupportive experiences at home due to unenthusiastic parents or a less than effective peripatetic service. Their parents had not known how to cope with deafness, so communication or interaction with family members was very limited” (p. 797).

During the data analysis in this study, it was clear that most of the teachers often associated their explanation of the language delay for their students with the importance of having an early intervention program to support their language and communication skills in any inclusive school. Many of them provided detailed views on why and how this language intervention and support should be done. For example, it was stated many times that children who are DHH must be linguistically supported early and before the age of entering school, especially for those who will join the DHH inclusive programs. At other occasions, consequences of the absence of language support were described to draw the necessity of this issue.

“The inclusion environment is not an obstacle to enriching the language output of our students. The problem is that there is no way to support children linguistically. Also, there is no full-time person or specialist to provide that support in the inclusive program. So, we need a decision in which there is a full-time teacher or trainer to enrich the language output of our students before the first grade”. (Najran)

One of the most interesting and important points mentioned is that the need for some children who are DHH to communicate with their teachers and peers lead some to create their own way/system that cannot be relied upon or generalized in education or communication with others, as this participant explains in the following quote.

“We have many students who have a cochlear implant, and sadly it seems they don’t receive the appropriate language intervention after surgery. Many of them reached 3rd grade without understanding speech even though they hear. I have seen many of them who started to develop their unique sign language, which is wrong”. (Jeddah)

This teacher used *“cochlear implant students”* who were enrolled in the inclusive program as an example to illustrate the importance of language support even when the sense of hearing has been changed. That could mean even in such cases, those students still cannot develop their spoken language by relying on their corrected hearing alone. That also can be explained by the fact that even in the best cases, the sense of hearing resulting from a medical intervention or treatment cannot be compared with the normal hearing ability. In addition, the appropriate age of learning language was referred to as “*reached 3rd grade without”* as another matter of the need of language support. This quotation could also indicate the lack of language rehabilitation for many cochlear implant children, which would exacerbate the problem for many DHH inclusive programs, as it is the only educational option for them according to the Saudi education system. Therefore, there must be continuous intervention and language rehabilitation programs in any inclusive school that serves children who are DHH.

In this respect, Dostal et al. (2017) asserted that when some children who are DHH develop a unique way of communication on their own, such as gestures or signs, that cannot work as a natural language. In addition, a child who is DHH cannot develop a cognitive language to learn through such a system. The reason for this may be that the special language or gestures that children develop themselves cannot be understood by other people, or in other words, it cannot be agreed upon between a group of individuals if we take into account that language is defined as an agreed set of symbols among a group of people (Gertz & Boudreault, 2016).

Therefore, it may be necessary for most teachers of the DHH in inclusion programs to rely on visual thinking techniques to represent information from the content of the subjects as described in this following quote.

“Teaching children who are DHH cannot be done without pictures or visual aids, especially for me as science teachers. But the problem is that the environment here is not visually supportive and the technology here (in the school) is old*”* (Hail)

That is because “comprehensive access to academic content through a complete linguistic system is able to engage in meaningful communication with peers and instructors allowing them to mediate the process of conceptual development with others, rather than doing so alone” (Standley, 2005, p. 2182). Also, the teachers views described in the statements presented so far are consistent with what was revealed by Dammeyer (2014) that regardless of the child was deaf, hard of hearing, or cochlear implant, the same impact on language in general and literacy, in particular, was similar for all children who are DHH in elementary school.

Some teachers in this study were not satisfied with presenting the problem only or presenting their opinions, but some of them had personal initiatives and attempts with the school administrations in which they work to provide linguistic support to their students or to intervene in cooperation with the language training specialist in the school. Through this, many of them appear once again, as appeared in some of the previous sub-themes, a high level of interest and a strong desire to change the reality of DHH inclusion for the better, even if it is through individual efforts and within their limited work environment. This participant explained that there are some attempts with the school administration to design a language intervention program in the following story.

“Because of that almost all DHH kids start school without any language basics. Therefore, we have suggested to the school administration here many times that all new children who are DHH should be in a preparation linguistic session before they start at the first grade. Unfortunately, no one supported this idea especially from the higher level”. (Taif)

This story could explain several things related to the educational system of inclusive education and the severe shortage of support services needed by teachers of the DHH and their students. However, it clearly confirms what was mentioned in the first sub-theme in the previous chapter “frustration” due to the exclusion of the role of teachers in developing inclusion and taking their opinions and visions as valuable sources for assessing the inclusion process. This is evidenced by the teachers' use of the phrase “*many times*” to indicate the level of unsuccessful attempts to support students linguistically formally and professionally by the educational system.

According to Doherty (2012) when inclusive schools are linguistically supportive for DHHs, the level of awareness about deafness and the sense of equality can reach a higher level that help most of them to succeed academically and socially. Further, Hopwood and Gallaway (1999) argued that children who are DHH in mainstreaming environments are likely to be even more left behind their peers than they were already without individual linguistic intervention and support.

The importance of language support was also clarified through some comparisons between the students’ performance in children who are DHH in inclusive environments and the private schools by some participants in this study. Some teachers believe that the rich language environment in private schools for the Deaf (the extensive use of sign language by teachers, students, and staff), is the main reason for students’ sense of belonging and participation, and consequently their higher academic performance compared to students in inclusive programs. Also, the language delay of children who are DHH in private schools does not constitute a challenge for many teachers, especially in teaching the general curriculum, as they can reduce or shorten the curriculum to suit their students and by translating important concepts from the written text into sign language. In some cases, the experiences of older deaf students can be used in delivering new concepts to younger ones through sign language or what is called ‘peer teaching’, as this teacher explains in the following answer.

“Unlike here, when I was working at the special DHH school, the DHH kids’ language (sign language) there is much better because they all learn from each other. We had no problem dealing with the general curriculum because we know what our students can or cannot do. There was so much understanding”. (Jazan)

This teacher implicitly referred “*so much understanding*” to the extent to which the linguistic delay of most children who are DHH affects the evaluation of the performance of inclusion teachers from the point of view of the educational system, as they must deal with the general curricula, that are directed mainly to the hearing students, in the same way as the evaluation of public classrooms teachers. The reason for this may be because most of the DHH inclusive programs, especially in the city of this research, provide service to HH students which means that they rely entirely on spoken language and do not allow the use of sign language.

It is not surprising that many teachers of the DHH often report the language delay in association with curriculum because it is tough to keep up with what is required to achieve by the educational system with such a challenge, especially in inclusive schools. Indeed, in DHH inclusive programs, monitoring curriculum progress by local education authorities is much more restrictive than in DHH special schools. In addition, curriculum standards, contents, and materials (subjects’ books) are centralized by the ministry of education. All national schools must follow what is provided in the same guidelines regardless. As a result, for almost all participants in this study, the national curriculum fails to give any socio-cultural way of learning, especially for DHH pupils (Bjørnsrud & Nilsen, 2011).

Some participants also highlighted the importance of adding and technology in helping children who are DHH accessing and developing their language skills. In other words, visual learning would help children who are DHH engage with written texts and give them more access to the curriculum. A teacher had explicitly mentioned that in this following quote.

“I teach 2nd graders, and their language is still weak to the extent that they cannot understand most of what is being taught or provided. Therefore, there has to be a way to increase their language such as an intervention or aiding technology especially in inclusive schools”. (Tabuk)

From this quote, the importance of language support was assured again especially for those in an inclusive environment, but more importantly it showed that teachers of the DHH are aware of the appropriate time and time for children to acquire any language (critical period that was described at the beginning) by the phrases “*2nd grade, still weak”*. That may be interpreted as it is crucial to expose and support children who are DHH to the appropriate language (sign or spoken language) early and visually. This view appeared similar to what Bauman and Murray (2010) have articulated as the futuristic visual learning of DHH individuals. This idea is derived from the belief that sign language can convey complex conceptions like those in medical and science fields. Still, it can also help improve literacy for DHH individuals without written form. In other words, “evolving definitions of literacy are happening in tandem with emerging video technologies that allow greater ease of producing academic texts” using sign language (Bauman & Murray, 2010, p. 249). Moreover, early language intervention must be a priority in deaf education and under the responsibility of a team that consists of teachers of the DHH and language specialists in the school (Standley, 2005).

However, this sounds impossible unless a higher level of educational authority carries it out because of many reasons. First “special education teachers can no longer afford to work solely on remediating skill deficits while important instructional content is lost or passed over” (Abell, Bauder, & Simmons, 2005, p. 84). Further, visual learning and language support through sign language seems easier for those children communicating through sign language but not for those who are labelled as HH in inclusive schools (Lynas, 1999). Also, Powers (2001) highlighted that some children who are DHH may feel that early intervention programs or language support sessions are an extra thing that can be abandoned and unimportant, and therefore many of them do not show enough interest and enthusiasm that helps them succeed in such programs.

To summarize, because of the language delay, the educational experiences, and outcomes of most children who are DHH in inclusive school settings vary significantly from those in public schools and disabled peers. They do not benefit from the climate of inclusion or access to the general curriculum in the same manner as other learners do. In fact, teachers of the DHH and their students are facing obstacles to the general education atmosphere and traditional discourse habits that cannot be changed by assistive technology or staff. Those DHH inclusive programs have access to information, but they are unable to resolve linguistic and socio-cultural deficits arising from hearing loss (Luft, 2017).

### **7.2.3 The Third Subtheme:** Teachers’ Views of the Impact of Partial Inclusion on the Experience of Children Who are HH

This sub-theme represents the third factor that appeared, during the data analysis, directly related to DHH students’ experience in inclusive programs. However, this sub-theme emerged especially concerning the experience of HH students, who represent the largest number of the total students in all-inclusive programs in the study area. A possible reason for this special sub theme is that many inclusive programs in the city of this study are classified as HH inclusive programs. The total number of HH students’ programs participated was five compared to only one program for deaf students. In other words, many of the deaf students in the city of this study are still receiving education in private deaf schools at the primary stage.

This sub-theme specifically revolves around how inclusion is practiced with HH students, who are considered by many of the teachers participating in this study to be completely different from the deaf in characteristics, communication and individual abilities. HH students are often referred to during interviews as being closer to their hearing peers. That means many of them are more likely to receive education in general education classrooms than what is currently practiced in inclusion programs. To do this appropriately and successfully, many teachers believe in the importance of applying ‘total inclusion' with the HH children under the supervision of special education teachers and providing support services in terms of language, communication and auditory training.

Through the literature on the education of the hard of hearing, there is significant controversy about this group of children, which may often be independent and rejected by the Deaf community and the hearing community alike. In other words, the HH individuals see themselves as belonging to the hearing population more; however, the problem is that they do not usually possess a fluent spoken language that enables them to integrate fully into the community. At the same time, they do not prefer to use sign language or classify themselves as deaf people. Therefore, many of them feel confused to have a clear identity (Deaf or hearing) in many cases, which is considered one of the most critical challenges (Michael, Cinamon, & Most, 2015).

From an educational point of view, there has been an increase in the number of Children who are DHH who receive education in inclusive environments. Still, they often face two main types of problems. The first is that education in these schools is provided verbally through speech, which is considered difficult to access and understand information or communicate with teachers and other students. Second, most teachers in general education classrooms do not have sufficient experience and training to deal with hearing problems in a way that ensures the provision of appropriate educational service for those students (Luckner, 1991).

Most teachers in this study agreed that their HH students should not be included in the same way as their deaf peers (classes attached to public schools with limited social and educational interaction). Instead, they need to be included more in the general education classrooms, as this teacher explains.

“From my point of view, HH students are entirely different from their deaf peers, so they should not be included in the same ways (self-contained classrooms); instead, they should be included with their hearing peers. I have seen many successful examples of this. Some of them need supportive services such as auditory training and language intervention to be fully included in public classrooms”. (Tabuk)

It is noticeable from the participant’s use of the words (*entirely different*) that he supports the view that separates the hard of hearing from the deaf in terms of labelling, communication, and thus in the instructional methods. That can also be explained by the fact that the educational system treats all students with hearing problems in the same way regarding inclusion, which is not suitable according to many DHH inclusive teachers. This view was confirmed by Stinson and Lang (1994), who pointed out that many studies suggest HH children who have some relative hearing and speaking abilities and rely on the oral way of communication may gain more educational benefits when placed in public classrooms. However, educating children who are HH in general classrooms is challenging for most teachers and supportive services providers in inclusive schools. One of the most common challenges “lies in the fact that they do not hear normally, and yet they are not deaf. A matter which further complicates the education of these children is the vast range of hearing abilities within the hard-of-hearing population itself” (Martin, Bernstein, Daly, & Cody, 1988, p. 83).

Many of the teachers participating in this study indicated that the inclusion of HH students in general education classrooms must be based on standards and with the participation of all supportive services in the school to help them integrate and succeed appropriately. For example, some teachers referred to the main criteria they believe must be met by the HH student to enrol in education classes. First, that the degree of hearing loss should be at a moderate level where hearing aids can be used, secondly, an appropriate level of communication through speaking language. One teacher referred to these criteria in the following quote.

“I think only kids whose hearing loss is above 60 or 70 Db should be placed in special classes in any mainstream school. Many of our HH students can rely on speaking; they need to be placed in the general classrooms with some support from the resources room and articulating training” (Asir).

It is noted that this teacher relied mainly on the degree of the hearing loss, which is based on the medical classification of hearing impairment. According to this medical classification, a person who has a hearing loss of 59Db or less on the hearing measurement scale (see the medical category of hearing impairment in the chapter of literature review) is classified as hard of hearing. However, it is clear from what he added that the degree of hearing loss is not enough for any HH student to be qualified to receive education in public classes, but that support services and continuous intervention must be available to support that kind of student in such educational environments. Similarly, a study by Michael and Zidan (2018) aimed to assess the self-advocacy for HH children in an inclusive setting in Israel implied that intervention for HH children in oral learning environments should “focus on intensifying their self-esteem as well as their syntactic and pragmatic abilities” (p. 125).

In many cases, teachers’ attitudes towards including HH students appeared similar to what was discussed in chapter 7, which they expressed as ‘full’ or ‘relative’ inclusion in the general education classrooms. During the interviews, there were many questions about the best ways to include children with SEN in general and students in particular. The answers to those questions can be summarized, as most teachers in this study believed the ‘partial inclusion’ is suitable with children who are deaf. At the same time, HH students should be included entirely or relatively in general classrooms on many occasions as this participant said.

“What we apply now in SA for DHH is what is known as partial inclusion. There is no full inclusion educationally for our students except for some informal activities in school”. (Abha)

Participants who referred to this type of inclusion as ‘total inclusion’ with a consideration of the student’s hearing and language abilities, the extent to which he benefits from them in receiving education, and the continuous use of hearing aids during the school day as well as the provision of support services. To ensure the success of this type of inclusion with the HH children, Reed, Antia, and Kreimeyer (2008) found that family support for children who are DHH to receive education into public classrooms with their hearing peers is one of the most influential factors for their success. In the same vein, in a study by Luckner and Muir (2001) to explore factors related to successful full inclusion for Children who are DHH in some schools in Northern Colorado, US, four elements were identified to play the most critical role. (a) The role of the family in supporting the student in these educational environments. (b) The student’s characteristics include self-determination and social, cognitive, and linguistic skills. (c) Communication and cooperation between special education teachers and general education teachers. (c) The level of support services and early intervention at the school.

In this study, most teachers of the DHH have pointed out similar elements to those found by Luckner and Muir of successful full inclusion for HH students into the general classrooms under this subtheme. For example, most teachers pointed to the importance of language intervention in helping their students engage more in the public classrooms on more than one occasion. At the same time, some of them indicated the absence of a positive role for the family in supporting the school’s decisions regarding full inclusion for their children. For example, this participant emphasized the importance of having language intervention services as part of the full inclusion of HH students in the following answer.

“Usually, HH students have fewer words than their hearing peers; therefore, more inclusion in general classrooms can help them develop their speaking skills and communicate more. It could also be as part of language intervention for them”. (Madinah)

Many interpretations and indications can be deduced from the above answer about what this teacher meant by *“language intervention”* for HH students. For instance, the use of the phrase *“could also be as part of language intervention*” indicates that the teacher refers to an intervention program in which students have greater involvement with their peers in general education to develop their spoken language skills in the absence of full inclusion practices by the educational system. In other words, a language intervention program can be the only way to achieve the full inclusion of HH students into public classrooms.

One of the essential elements that some teachers have pointed out to the success of children who are HH in public classrooms is the role of family support. However, it was clear from the data that the role of the family was minimal about inclusion and services for their children. There were not enough indications to explain the importance of this critical aspect; instead, some stories just clarified the negative role, according to participants, of some families who refuse for their children to engage and learn more with their hearing peers. One of the teachers mentioned that some HH students could learn better in public classrooms than in the special education section and thought that was unfair and wasted great educational opportunities. Therefore, some teachers take improvised measures and decisions with the school administration to encourage HH students to be alongside their hearing peers. Still, such decisions are often met with rejection from the family for reasons about the high number of students in public classes or fear of failure, as reported by this participant in the following story.

“I have a HH student here who was very good at speaking and communicating through spoken language. So, I had to inform the school administration about that, and he should be promoted to general classrooms based on his abilities. Unfortunately, his parents were not supportive of the school decision and refused to promote him because of the high number of students in general classrooms. Also, this kid was terrified to join those large classrooms”. (Buraidah)

It can be clearly understood that such decisions are made at the individual discretion of teachers looking for better opportunities for their students to benefit significantly from the inclusive environment. Further, the above story about HH students’ inclusion within the public classrooms implied that the participants believed that including children who are HH fully needs to come from the education system itself and according to professional standards. That will help to limit any improvised decisions or wasting opportunities for students. Therefore, this teacher seemed to understand the family’s refusal and believed that the family had convincing justifications for not accepting the school administration’s decision.

In a study conducted by Danermark, Ström-Sjölund, and Borg (1996) in Sweden to explore HH students' experiences in mainstream programmes, two main issues were found. First, many students reported their experiences with some additional health problems, a sense of loneliness, a reasonable level of anxiety and fear of the future, and poor social relationships. Second, on the other hand, many of them expressed that education in integrated schools requires a high level of commitment in an academically stressful manner. These findings may explain the fear of some hard-of-hearing students and their families about the idea of ​​full inclusion into general education classes.

The data for this study showed that participants were highly interested in the level of their students’ inclusion with their peers in public school on more than one occasion. For example, in Chapter Five, the level of social interaction was mentioned and how the inclusion environment has sometimes become more isolated than in special education schools. It was also pointed out that inclusive education is done in only two subjects under more than one sub-theme in the sixth chapter. In this chapter, the participants again emphasize the importance of social and academic inclusive practices among all students, especially HH students, in any inclusive school. The teachers in this study discussed the issue superficially. Still, many of them provided some suggestions, and precise details that they believe will help raise interaction between students. DHH teachers’ ideas came in two main aspects: the involvement of special education teachers in an auxiliary role for general education teachers and the extension of interaction between all students to cover more subject areas than the only two subjects (physical & art education) required by the education system. One teacher explained why this should be done with HH students in this quote.

“From my experience, HH students are nearly close to their hearing peers, and many of them have an acceptable ability to communicate with speech and residual hearing ability. They can learn in public classrooms with the help of their special education teachers. In other words, they should be fully included”. (Jazan)

This teacher refers to the ‘teacher assistant’ strategy by using the phrase “*with the help of their teachers*”, where both teachers (general education teacher and the special education teacher) work together in the same classroom. However, even though the idea of a teacher assistant is a great strategy to increase inclusive education practices,” barriers can exist, which may lead to exclusion rather than inclusion” (Moran & Abbott, 2002, pp. 169-170).

One of the strategies and methods that have been repeated during interviews and will increase the level of social and academic interaction of the HH students is to increase the number of subjects they share with their hearing peers. As mentioned previously, the education system for inclusive schools in SA integrates children SEN with their peers entirely in only two subjects. According to many participants, that way of practicing inclusion does not achieve the possible academic and social benefits for their students, especially HHs. Therefore, as this quote shows, many of them recommended the importance of including them in more subjects, especially those with a communicative, linguistic, and academic nature, such as Arabic language and Islamic studies subjects.

“Inclusion for HH children as is now not enough. I am sure they could benefit more from inclusive schools in different ways or strategies. For example, we can place them in more subjects other than physical and art education, such as the Arabic language, Islamic studies, or even mathematics. It does not have to be the whole day but more than what is being practiced right now” (Hail).

This participant emphasized once again that inclusion in its current state does not achieve even the minimum “*not enough*” academic and social inclusion goals for HH students. It was also apparent through the use of the phrase “*It does not have to be the whole day*” that this teacher is not asking for what was previously referred to as ‘full inclusion’ but to increase interaction through more study materials with students staying in their assigned classes within the school. This view confirms the systematic review carried out by Alshutwi, Ahmad, and Lee (2020) to investigate the impact of inclusion setting on academic performance, social interaction, and DHH students’ self-esteem. It was concluded that inclusive placements help improve most DHH students’ performance academically and socially and their self-esteem. In addition, most of them will develop their language skills when they take part in a “good inclusion setting” (p.261).

In all cases, it can be said that most of the teachers in this study have a genuine desire to change the inclusion strategies in a way that achieves social and academic benefits for their students. It was also clear from the suggestions from many that they had a strong desire to participate in developing current inclusion practices.

## **8.3 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the third main theme which revolves around the most important impressions, perceptions, and viewpoints of the participants on the performance of their students who are DHH in inclusion programs. This chapter mainly aimed to explore the experiences of children who are DHH who receive education in inclusion schools through the opinions of their teachers. The chapter also tried to shed light on the most important factors that limit children from benefiting from the inclusive environments in the possible way. The theme was presented through three sub-themes where the focus of each one was the children who are DHH themselves.

First, diagnosis and the educational placement sub theme emerged based on many opinions that confirm the existence, form their views, of clear and explicit mistakes in the diagnosis reports for many DHH students. According to those reports, children are placed in an inappropriate environment    and follow different methods of communication that do not meet their needs. It was found that many children in the inclusive programs are diagnosed with deafness or hard of hearing, but they still have signs of other disabilities. According to the participants, these mistakes happen, by the educational system, due to the assumption that when verbal communication during these diagnostic tests is missing, the child has hearing problems. Also, the data in this sub theme showed many stories of individual efforts made by teachers to correct or reconsider some diagnostic reports for their students, as a result of which the student’s educational placement was corrected. It has been shown through the data that diagnosis is one of the most important challenges faced by teachers of the DHH and their students in the inclusive schools took part in this study, which needs a full review in terms of training the people responsible for diagnosis and the instruments used.

Secondly, teachers believe language delay is one of the most important effects that result from hearing impairment, which affects their linguistic, social and psychological development. Therefore, many of the participants in this study emphasized that the severe linguistic deficiency of their students is one of the most important factors that slow their progress in inclusive environments. It also affects the educational process for them because many of them are considered behind their peers and on what is provided in the curriculum. This study found that there is an urgent need for a language intervention program for most children who are DHH in inclusion programs that would support students' performance learning, communicating, and engaging socially with their peers within the school and in society.

Thirdly, the impact of partial inclusion on the experience of children who are HH. This sub theme appeared specifically about the methods that the participants deem appropriate to hearing-impaired children. This study has shown the importance of raising the level of inclusion of hearing-impaired students with their peers in public classes and not being satisfied with the current methods imposed by the educational system. For example, many participants stressed that there are many children who are qualified to engage with their peers in more than one subject based on their linguistic and verbal abilities, especially those that contain more communication skills, such as Arabic and Islamic subjects. The reason behind this opinion is that the materials in which children who are DHH are fully included today do not help them to develop language skills appropriately, but rather are satisfied with practicing some sports and artistic activities alongside their peers from general education classes.

# Chapter Nine: Summary of Key Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusion

## **9.0 Introduction**

In this final chapter of my thesis, the aim is to draw a holistic picture of my study and its key findings in light of the research questions. The chapter will start with a general discussion and a summary of the main findings guided by the three concepts included in the research questions proposed in this study: perceptions of DHH inclusion, challenges, and improvement suggestions. Also, the chapter presents several recommendations for practices that diverged from the opinions and visions of the participants, as well as the interpretations of the findings of this study. The rest of the chapter serves to outline the contribution of this study and the limitations and suggestions of future research. Then the chapter ends with a reflexive account of the researcher and the conclusion of the thesis.

The following section is a general discussion and a summary of the key findings in relation to the research questions.

## **9.1 Key Findings Summary Related to The First Research Question**

**What are teachers’ of the DHH perceptions and conceptions towards the inclusion of students who are DHH in SA?**

This first research question aims to understand the perceptions of the teachers participating in the current study about inclusion in general and the meanings implied during their conversations during interviews. Teachers' perceptions of inclusion play an important role, so when teachers take resistance or negative attitudes towards it, this is one of the difficulties that make it successful (Woodcock & Woolfson, 2019). However, many teachers in this study did not take a negative position on inclusion as an idea or as a social concept. On the contrary, many of the answers showed strong support for the social aspects of inclusion. Hence, many of the opinions centred either on how inclusion should be practiced or on the level of services provided to children who are DHH in inclusive schools. There were also many suggestions indicating the desire of many of the participants to change inclusion for the better. In order to reach a concise summary of teachers' perceptions about inclusion for children who are DHH, which reflect the answers to the first research question; I will classify the findings into three groups for each research question. The first is teachers' perceptions of a philosophy of inclusion; the second is perceptions of the practical aspects of inclusion, and the third is their perceptions of the environmental aspects of inclusion.

Theoretically, in this study, it can be said that the concept of inclusion is often viewed from a social angle. That is, teachers understood inclusion as to make their students socially acceptable and as ‘normal as their peers. In contrast, when talking about how they understood inclusion as a philosophy of education, teachers did not give a lot of attention to the academic aspect of inclusion that ensures the access to educational resources, or equal educational opportunities for all students. From the analysis of the data, it emerged that there are two points of view that can explain this kind of understanding of the inclusion in the context of the study. First, it is indicated by some of the participants that their ideas about inclusion are the result of what they learned during their university studies. Or in other words, the subjects provided in the programs for preparing special education teachers give more impetus to the importance of social inclusion and how it can contribute to reducing the gap between children with SENs and their nondisabled peers. The other point of view revolves around how inclusion and the use of terms by educational authorities, especially in official documents or events, is discussed in SA. For example, one of the participants mentioned that the main sources of information about inclusion comes from the SME. This is a reference to the influence on the concepts and terminology of most teachers, influenced by what is proposed by or raised at the beginning of the application of inclusion in SA. On the other hand, there was a strong association in many of the participants' definitions of inclusion with the medical model of disability, which appears to be dominant in SA. This is evidenced by the use of many terms that reinforce the concept of normality and social acceptance as outcomes that any inclusion project must achieve. Accordingly, teachers see inclusion as essentially contributing to increasing social acceptance of children with SENs in the first place. It can be said that the dominance of the medical model in SA may be due to the fact that disability, according to Saudi regulations, must first be documented and approved by medical authorities so that disabled people can benefit from other educational and social services as was clarified in the second chapter of this research thesis page (34).

Practically speaking, teachers perceive that inclusion can be applied in two ways: total and partial. In the first type, all children are in one classroom with ongoing support for their educational needs from the special education teachers and resource room teacher. According to the teachers, a partial form of inclusion is the only form of inclusive placement for children SENs in SA. Indeed, there has not been any official attempt to promote ‘full’ inclusion for students who are DHH. In addition, teachers agreed that full inclusion is almost impossible, especially with children who are Deaf because of their linguistic characteristics that they see as so different from their hearing peers. Hence, teachers believe that partial inclusion is best suited for such children or children who have severe disabilities. However, many participants see that there are many opportunities for children who are HH to enrol in general education classes, as explained in chapter eight under the sub-theme, the impact of partial inclusion on the experiences of those children. It is believed that the general education classroom environment will be supportive of the language development of those children who rely on their hearing residuals and aids to communicate and learn. What reinforces this view is some of the successful stories mentioned in which some children who are HH were promoted to general education classes.

From another perspective, many teachers agreed that the partial inclusion currently applied in SA is tainted by many administrative problems. For example, the presence of the inclusive program director who has the authority to take radical administrative decisions in the presence of the school principal, leads to overlap in work and causes conflicts with colleagues from general education side. Also, the form of having two administrative sources in the same inclusive school leads to a duplication of administrative decisions, especially those related to the work of special education teachers.

## **9.3 Key Findings Summary Related to The Second Research Question**

**What are the difficulties and challenges teachers of the DHH encounter in inclusive schools in SA?**

This question aimed to reach a detailed view of the nature of the difficulties and challenges faced by teachers of children who DHH in inclusive environments. A reason behind exploring those challenges is because the inclusion for those children has been always hard and complex and linked to many linguistic and cultural characteristics of them, as was indicated in the second chapter of the literature review page (65), where many of them may find themselves unable to communicate or adapt with the rest of their listening peers in those schools (Scott, Dostal & Ewen-Smith, 2019). Data showed many challenges and in different aspects. For clarification, those challenges were classified into three categories. Challenges generated from the educational system, challenges generated from the working environment, and challenges generated from the nature of disability. Many of the teachers' answers have revealed many difficulties that are due to the lack of clarity of work regulations in inclusive schools in SA. For example, many teachers believe that they are primarily responsible for implementing inclusion from the point of view of the educational system. This appears through the evaluation and monitoring processes, which are tainted by a lot of misunderstanding of the nature of teaching children who are DHH and their educational needs. On the other hand, some teachers believed that the educational system does not treat all members in the inclusive school equally in terms of inclusive practices, tasks, or responsibilities. On other words, inclusion is just the responsibility of special education teachers. Such an action increases their workloads even beyond the official limits required by the educational policy. As a result, from the point of view of some, this causes more isolation for their students inside the school, as they are always kept with their teachers, on the pretext that they are more worthy in terms of communicating with them and knowing their characteristics and needs. Another reason that reinforces such challenges is the educational system's differentiation between special education teachers and general education in terms of material incentives, teaching loads, and number students in the classroom as highlighted in chapter two. Therefore, many teachers believe that these advantages are often the main reason for the occurrence of some problems with school administrations and other members who have tasks towards children who are DHH within the school. In other words, these advantages may explain, from the point of view of some non-special education teachers, that these advantages are the price for teachers of children who are DHH to play more roles than others with regard to inclusion.

Environmental challenges took many forms, such as spatial segregation and the level of interaction with others in the school, in addition to the lack of tools, educational aids or services. Teachers of children who are DHH work in separate environments in nearly all of the schools visited. This may be in the form of a separate section from the main school building, or it may be within the building, but in a separate section or floor. In some cases, this section is completely independent from the rest of the facilities. Some teachers believe that this spatial separation is fundamentally inconsistent with the idea of ​​a school for all or the concept of an inclusive school. Moreover, such practices reinforce in some teachers and children the concept of difference negatively. For example, some teachers mentioned that spatial separation has a negative effect in raising the level of negative behaviours (fighting) or aggressive behaviour of some child offenders. As a result, inclusive educators must spend more time monitoring these behaviours, so they do not worsen or affect those with health problems. Even the voices in favour of that spatial separation or the administrative independence of the special education classes in the school did not seem to support the practice itself. Rather, it appeared as a concession to work in an environment free of stress and charged atmospheres that result in burn out or problems with the school administration.

Challenges which teachers believed were generated from the nature of disability (DHH) refer to those situations when communication is lost between children who are DHH with the rest of the school. In such cases, many participants reported a high level of exhaustion because they are always required to be the link between the students and the school community. Many of them explained this as a shortcoming in the preparation and training of school members and the lack of general awareness among many of them of the sign language and characteristics of their students. In other words, teachers of inclusion in DHH inclusive programs are not only teachers who perform teaching tasks inside the school, but they are also interpreters (sign language in D inclusive programs) and are responsible for everything related to their students, even in some social and psychological respects. As discussed in the fourth chapter under the characteristics of children who are DHH and in the seventh chapter under the sub-theme of language delay, inclusion teachers face many difficulties related to the general curriculum and its requirements and the academic delay that most of their students show. For instance, many teachers expressed that most students reach school age without linguistic or cognitive basics that help them to learn like their peers of the same age. As a result, teachers are not able to abide by what is required by the educational system in terms of achieving the objectives and skills imposed in those curricula. Instead, objectives and skills in the curriculum should fit the all the students' academic levels. Teachers do this mostly spuriously or in agreement with the program director at the school, but it remains against the educational regulations. Many teachers revealed those actions mentioned earlier often affects their annual evaluation by the local educational authority or their relations with local monitors for inclusive programs and especially those responsible for the education of children who are in the DHH sector.

## **9.4 Key Findings Summary Related to The Third Research Question**

**What are the teachers of the DHH visions, ideas, or suggestions to improve current inclusive practices in SA?**

The purpose of this question was to arrive at detailed opinions, backed by teachers' experiences, about ways and methods that could make inclusion a better learning process for their students. The findings of this study showed many ideas and suggestions in this regard. In order for the summary to be clear, these proposals were categorised into three main aspects. The first aspect is concerned with educational services and by that, I mean those services that students who are DHH, need to learn better. For example, many teachers point to the futility of teaching children who are DHH in the usual way, such as that found in the classrooms of their listening peers. Rather, the teaching materials, especially the curriculum, must be available in visual and electronic ways in order to be appropriate. According to some teachers, some inclusive schools lack basic and necessary services and facilities for all students in general, but they are more for their students, such as (science laboratories or the psychologist in the school). There were also many views from the participants to support the presence of speech and language specialists in each school to support the access of children who are DHH to the curriculum. In addition, this helps to reduce the burden on teachers who have to do so in the classroom and to abandon or delay covering the curriculum in the specified time. Some teachers also suggested reconsidering the mechanisms and tools by which children are diagnosed and the educational place for them to be decided. This contributes to making the decisions resulting from the diagnostics more accurate and focused on the capabilities of the student himself, rather than focusing on labelling or classifying children (Hodge, 2005).

The second aspect is the improvements to increase the inclusive practices. What is meant by this group here are the suggestions that centred on the methods and practices of inclusion in the public schools. Many of the results showed a high level of dissatisfaction about the ways in which the educational system in SA implements and practiced ​​inclusion. Those findings appeared in the form of comparisons between inclusion in the past and the present. What is meant by this group are the suggestions that centred on the way inclusion is applied in many schools. Many of the findings showed a high level of dissatisfaction with the teachers' religion from the ways in which the educational system in SA implements the idea of ​​inclusion. These results appeared in the form of comparisons between past and present inclusion. The teachers, especially the experienced ones, see that the ministry was more effective at the beginning of the application of the merger, but after years, the merger appears as a learning or pictorial routine, according to some opinion. The reason for this perception among teachers is due to the low level of services and the lack of training opportunities for workers in those schools, especially those who have recently joined the informal education sector. Therefore, many of them suggested that there be continuous training on an annual basis, focusing specifically on inclusion practices, and involving all members of the school. Many participants also believe that the continuous training will directly contribute to raising the level of awareness of the needs of their students who are DHH. On the other hand, many participants urged to raise the level of participation among students, both academically and socially. Many of them believe that their current practices cause negative social and psychological consequences for their students. An example of this is what was mentioned in the fourth sub-theme in the first results chapter, that the inclusion became more isolated for children who are DHH more than in private schools. This is shown by the presence of separate educational and recreational activities according to the category or classification (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013) or by being accompanied by their teachers or peers from the same special education classes, even at mealtimes, all times. Academically, some teachers suggested raising the level of common study subjects among children and not being satisfied with only two subjects (physical and artistic education). This can be done by involving children in linguistically rich subjects such as Islamic studies or Arabic language materials, especially for those who are hard of hearing and depend on oral access as shown in the third subtheme in the previous chapter page (225).

In the third aspect, I present the ideas proposed by participants to improve the environment of inclusive schools. What I mean by the school environment is both the place, people, and the system. Spatially some teachers believe that there is a flaw in the process of selecting schools that are geographically included. Therefore, many suggestions indicated that there must be criteria and an evaluation process for selecting schools in terms of equipment, engineering construction, and the life span of the building, and not only geographical location. In addition, some teachers see the importance of cancelling the spatial separation of their students’ classes from the rest of the school and placing them in the places of the classes of their age group peers, because this will contribute to reducing the concept of difference in its negative form between children. But most of the answers related to the school environment were about people and the level of school education about disability, deafness, and hearing impairment in particular. For example, some teachers suggested the existence of cultural activities for students in general education classes that are concerned with clarifying Deaf people's language and characteristics. That there should also be greater participation by all teachers and administrative members in those activities, which would raise the level of school culture on the inclusion and its goals.

The next section proposes some recommendations for DHH inclusive practices in SA.

## **9.5 Recommendations for Practices**

This section suggests some recommendations for the Saudi educational system in regard to inclusion. All recommendations draw on the findings of this study, the opinions of its participants, and are also influenced by my experience in the field.

### **9.5.1 Redefining Inclusive Education in SA**

The agreement on one definition of inclusive education globally is not possible as there is a constant change in how terms related to it are used continuously around the world (Odom & Diamond,1998). However, according to the meanings and definitions of inclusive education that this study found, it appears that there is an urgent need to update these terms in the Saudi environment. One of the justifications for this proposal is what was previously mentioned in more than one section of this study (translation of data for example in the Methodology chapter page 122) that there is no accurate translation of terms related to inclusive education in the Arabic language. Rather, a unified Arabic term is used that reflects in its meaning all other terms. Also, in the Saudi educational context, there is talk about comprehensive education, usually within the scope of talking about special education and disability, without referring to the basic meanings on which it was built, such as human rights or the right to equality, and therefore it does not include others who do not have special educational needs. Therefore, this study recommends that inclusive education be reintroduced and redefined by the concerned authorities, with the creation of Arabic terms that accurately explain the difference between inclusive education, integration, and mainstreaming. In addition, the idea of ​​inclusive education into the Saudi environment must be re-presented in a more comprehensive manner that includes the concepts of the human rights aspect and equality, and to benefit from the current trend of the Saudi government towards supporting individual rights and personal freedoms.

### **9.5.2 Code of Practices in Inclusive Schools**

Inclusion must be seen as a process that requires radical changes in educational systems, curricula, and the way services are provided to children (Kinsella, 2020). In this way, inclusion becomes such a huge number of operations and practices that cannot succeed unless there is complete clarity in all the procedures and responsibilities of the members and the role of each responsible party, such as the school, the local educational authority, or even the ministry of education. Findings of this study showed that there is a great deal of ambiguity in the limits of responsibilities in most inclusive schools. That usually results in the creation of daily problems and difficulties, whether for teachers or students, which negatively affect the process of inclusion. Therefore, this study suggests that a project should be carried on writing a code of practices for working in an inclusive environment in the Saudi context. In addition, all teachers should be part of this project and their concerns and experience should be taken seriously. It is suggested that any guideline for working in inclusion should highlight three areas as follow:

First, it states the rights of students from both sides clearly as inclusive members, which must be based on the principle of equal access to educational resources and educational services, regardless of differences or needs. That may need a redefinition of inclusive education as it is mostly linked to the special education concept and the medical models of disability in SA as shown in the first analysis chapter page (133). Second, the code of practices in inclusive schools must clearly define the limits of the responsibilities and roles of each member towards the beneficiary students according to his specialisation (special education teacher, general education teacher, administrative members). That code of practices also should be in light with what stated in the Saudi educational system, which distinguished between special and general education in students numbers in the classrooms and working loads. Third, evaluation and assessment of inclusive members’ (teachers) performance should happen by a school committee that represents everyone in the school and not assigning the evaluation to school administrations only. This study also recommends that practices guide for working in inclusion to be included in prior training programs for those wishing to work in any inclusive schools.

### **9.5.3 Language Intervention**

In The US, not all children who are DHH communicate or receive their education through sign language. Rather, most of them are directed to use speech and hearing aids. Not only that, but most of them spend about 80% of their school day inclusive (Singer et al., 2020). Similarly, in this study, five of the DHH inclusive programs visited during data collection are assigned for serving HH while only one program to serve Deaf ones. Nevertheless, as it was presented in the third findings chapter under the sub-theme, the impact of the language delay on the experiences of children who are DHH in inclusion. It was clear that most of those children need a language intervention regardless of the nature of the hearing impairment or the educational placement. As it is known under the principles of inclusive education, access to the curriculum is one of the rights that the school must guarantee to all students, and language, whether spoken or signed, is the most important way that helps children to unlock that curriculum (Johnson, 1989).

Therefore, this current study confirms what many of the participating teachers have indicated regarding the existence of early intervention programs to support children who are DHH in inclusion programs. In order for the intervention be effective, it must be at an early age or in the stage before the first year of primary school. This helps to develop students' language skills at an early age and before dealing with the general curriculum. The study also suggests supporting older students in the advanced primary stages by having school programs in which the resource room in the school is used and by designing language-training objectives in the individual educational plan for each student. The Ministry of Education in SA can also adopt a national program to support all children who are DHH language development in all schools in the country. That can be done by creating study materials that focus on developing the linguistic and communicative skills (speech or sign) for them.

### **9.5.4 Teachers’ Role in The Improvement of Inclusion**

Inclusion changes or development is a never-ending process, and just as teachers are the most important element in its implementation, they should have an important role in any development or change plans. In other words, inclusion teachers can be a very helpful source of information, which can be used by educational authorities (McLeskey, & Waldron, 2002).

In this study, many teachers explained their frustration with the lack of a real role for them in developing the inclusion process in SA as was described in the first subtheme in chapter seven page (169) Instead, they see that the educational system ignores many observations and opinions that could contribute to the development of the educational process for children who are DHH in general, and their inclusion in public education schools in particular. There were many indications during the personal interviews that inclusion has not been developed since it was implemented by the educational authority, in addition to the lack of periodic evaluation tools for inclusion, such as research or questionnaires that teachers participate in to express their views and suggestions about inclusion.

Therefore, this study suggests that a tool should be designed in which the process of inclusion of the DHH should be evaluated by teachers on an annual or periodic basis. This tool can be an electronic database divided into several aspects such as the educational curriculum, members of inclusion, educational services, and the school environment. Researchers should also be encouraged more to study the detailed aspects of the inclusion process and target teachers more to reach a deeper view that helps in creating new decisions that contribute to providing a more effective inclusion environment for all children with SEN.

### **9.5.5 Modifying General Curriculum for Children Who Are DHH**

The current study revealed many challenges associated with teaching the general curricula to deaf and hard-of-hearing students in environments. These challenges have frequently centred on the way the curriculum is presented to students in terms of presentation, amount of information, and target skills. In other words, these curricula do not take into account the DHH students' linguistic and academic characteristics. Therefore, the responsibility for modifying the curricula remains one of the tasks that many teachers perform themselves, which may sometimes be in violation of the local educational supervision system. On the other hand, changing the curricula is not an easy task, requiring a great deal of time and effort from teachers, which may make those attempts end before they even begin. Therefore, based on many of the opinions received by the participants in this study, any modification of the general curricula and on the ways of presenting them should be more formal and based on research evidence in order to be effective and ensure access to the general curriculum for their children who are DHH in the way that suits them. Also, the educational system in SA should amend its supervisory policy on the application of general education curricula at the children who are DHH inclusive programs and focus on what can be taught and not focus on methods of communication (sign language or speech) during teaching or the amount of information imposed by the general curriculum (Moores, Jatho, & Creech 2001). It is also suggested that the educational system should take the advantage of technology and e-learning in modifying curricula and encouraging visual adaptation of curricula in order to be more attractive to children who are DHH (McBride & Goedecke, 2012).

## **9.6 Limitations of The Study**

It is usually said in much of the literature that there is a common disadvantage always associated with qualitative research in terms of its inability to generalise or apply its findings to other cases or contexts in the same way. The reason, for example, is that qualitative studies often rely on a small number of participants who are determined purposefully for the purpose of those studies. Therefore, the term limitations may be understood as a negativity or a point of criticism of qualitative studies compared to quantitative studies (Ochieng ,2009). This might be true if we just see generalisation of the qualitative findings from statically views, hence qualitative researchers should consider other ways of generalizability, other than quantitative ones to claim the values of their study (Smith, 2018). However, writing my study limitations here is just to inform the reader of any important actions, aspects, or events that accompanied or followed the conduction process.

For example, during the years that followed the collection of data for this study, there were many changes to the Saudi education sector and to educational and legal services for disabled people. Moreover, to talk in particular about the people who are DHH, their education opportunities at the university level have become much better, as more scholarships have been approved for them. Many special education teacher-training programs that are included in some Saudi universities have been closed, as they have turned to master’s programs and teaching licences more. Therefore, the results of this study reflect the situation before that with regard to this.

On the part of the participants in this study, this study targeted male teachers for some cultural, religious and legal considerations of the data collection environment, which were presented in the participants section of the Methodology chapter. Today, there is a greater tendency towards blended education between males and females, especially in the primary stages from the first to the third level, which makes this study limited in its focus on the case of gender-separated education.

In terms of literature in DHH education and inclusion in SA, there were a limited number of studies available in this aspect when starting this study, but it is noticeable in the last two years that there has been an increase in that number by some Saudi researchers in the same field. However, more research is still needed in this especially in the English language and that slight increase in DHH education research does not eliminate the justification presented in the first chapter for implementing this study. But rather this study also becomes a confirmation of some of those studies that have been found in regard to DHH inclusion.

## **9.7 Direction for Further Research**

Inclusion for children who are DHH is a large area with multifaceted issues. This study attempted to explore inclusion and its administrative and educational structures through teachers only as one of the most important elements concerned with the implementation aspect. Based on what this study presented of some findings and visions about this area of inclusive education from the context of SA, suggesting any ideas for future research remains related to that context and may not fit with other contexts. In addition to that, the proposal for future research concerning the DHH inclusion in SA should also take into consideration the rapid changes in the country in general (example vision 2030), and in the education sector in particular. For example, in the education sector, in the last 3 years, there has been a radical change in the education sector at all levels (general and higher) in terms of the administrative and functional structure of teachers and the curricula provided. Therefore, the suggestions will be influenced by the findings of this study and those changes mentioned above as possible.

First, more research should focus on the impact of the application of the general curricula (without adaptation or change in presentation methods, goals and skills for children who are DHH) on the progress of the inclusive education process in the public schools. The main reason behind the importance of this is that there is a great controversy in the Saudi context about the inappropriateness of those curricula for children who are DHH, especially for linguistic and cultural considerations. Therefore, this study specifically suggests carrying out more research on reading and writing (literacy) curricula and the difficulties that teachers of the DHH and their students face when dealing with these materials.

Second, some research should explore the support and supportive services needed for successful DHH inclusion for the teachers and children alike. For example, many of the opinions in this study talked about the importance of having a language intervention program within the DHH inclusive programs to help students face language challenges related to the curricula or communication at the school. More research in this aspect may reach some other essential types of support in a way that is more detailed. In addition, some research should explore in particular the types of support needed for teachers of the DHH in general education schools, whether in terms of educational aids, needs, or functional and training support.

Third, another important direction for research should be directed to investigate the preparation programs for teachers and the extent to which they contain appropriate training materials related to inclusion in SA. Over the past two years, there have been many changes to the requirements of the profession of teaching. For example, now, all educators in SA must take some tests to be officially licensed and qualified to work with the Saudi educational system. Those tests are based on what is offered in those educational and training programs in the Saudi universities. In addition, teaching licences must be updated every 3-5 years by studying additional courses. Therefore, exploring the quality of the courses offered in these training programs will help reassess the materials provided in relation to inclusive education, disability, and special education and make sure they are updated occasionally.

## **9.8 Reflexive Account**

As I have described my positionality in the methodology chapter and explained how my working experience in the field of DHH education influenced the way I conducted this study, and the way findings are interpreted. In this section, I will try to reflect on how these personal and professional values influenced every stage of my work and summarise the overall journey as a beginner researcher.

Reflexivity is known to have the ability to look back and evaluate what you have done in order to reach the valuable meanings and ideas of your work, which can be applied in the future. Therefore, reflexivity is considered an advanced stage of mental organisation and discipline (Pillow, 2003).

This study explored inclusive education through the perceptions’ of teachers of the children who are DHH who have a role in the inclusion process at some primary schools in SA. Before I started studying at the University of Sheffield, my personal perception of inclusion and special education was very limited compared to what I learned during my doctoral journey. The main reason is due to the rich research environment that was available to me while reviewing the previous literature related to my topic I mentioned earlier. For example, inclusion has become in my perception as a value rather than an educational practice that gives people the right to equality in education and access to educational resources. Moreover, for many years, I have had a personal belief that inclusive education may not be the most appropriate solution for many children who are DHH educational and socially, and that it may conflict in one way or another with the linguistic and cultural characteristics emphasised by the social model towards deafness and hard of hearing. However, after conducting this study, it became clear to me that inclusion as an educational philosophy based on rights and equality should never conflict with a model that a person adopts towards disability, even if there is a belief that inclusion emerged as a result of the medical model. Therefore, I strongly believe that the DHH inclusion will be effective when all the ingredients and needs necessary for success are available.

Secondly, I realised through the stage of data collection and the multiple visits to the DHH inclusive programs in the area of ​​this study that their education in SA has not changed much even after I have been away for several years. This increased my curiosity and insistence on understanding what is happening by asking many questions, whether during the interviews or during their analysis to reach everything that can be understood by the participants about DHH inclusion. That helped me to take into account many of the changes that occurred in the Saudi educational system during my stay away, such as the curricula, e-learning, and the new educational rules. Third, the stage of data analysis and writing the results as one of the most critical stages for any novice researcher was the most difficult and most influential in my research and personal skills during my research journey. Therefore, when comparing the first drafts of the chapters of results that were written in this regard with what was reached after long reviews and benefiting from the suggestions of supervisors, I realise that I have learned a lot. This stage started with a lot of invisibility and a lot of frustrations. I was convinced that the best way to know the right way to analyse data, especially qualitative data, is to experiment and participate with academic supervisors, and then iterate and build on those drafts in other ways. By this I mean that it may seem easy to follow examples of similar previous studies in this field in terms of extracting themes and data. But it was always apparent that there must be a qualitative characteristic for each study that distinguishes it from others, which is what I aspired to reach later. For example, many studies related to teachers' perceptions of inclusion talk about teachers' knowledge of inclusion in general

However, to analyse those teachers’ views considering the models of disability, as an example, helped me greatly to develop a new understanding of the concept of inclusion as well as the disability in general. I also learned through the sharing of work and receiving comments from my supervisors to be taken into account by the reader when I am writing. In my early stages as a researcher, my writing style was based on the assumption that the readers may have some information about the field in which I am researching (inclusion in this case or the DHH education). After many attempts, I learned that previous knowledge of the reader should not be assumed or to write with a specific reader in mind, such as an academic supervisor who shares similar experience in the same field. Fourth, the PhD study at the University of Sheffield was also rich in learning many other personal skills, other than the academic ones. What has been offered through the DPP program for doctoral students within the School of Education, or the training sessions offered by the university, are considered as other advantages that a researcher obtains besides to support his research skill. Among these skills that I learned was the way of searching and accessing many search engines in addition to systemically classifying and coordinating those references through the programs and tools provided by the university.  In addition, there were many workshops and training sessions that were important to develop skills even on a personal level, such as time management, which is an essential for me personally, and not only during the PhD study.

Hence, I believe that this journey is worth all the effort, time, and the struggles if I consider what I have gained and learned during all those years.

## **9.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a general summary of the findings of my study in light of the three research questions that focused on exploring the perceptions’ of teachers of children who DHH in the inclusive programs and understanding the challenges and difficulties they face during their work, as well as highlighting their opinions and suggestions for developing those inclusive practices. The chapter also suggested six recommendations for those interested in inclusion in SA in terms of redefining inclusion in its broad form and designing a development plan in which teachers would be an essential part of it and should essentially include curricula, policies, and professionals. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the limitations of this qualitative study and how its findings can be used in the future or generalised in an appropriate manner for qualitative studies. At the end, the chapter also presented a summary of my experience and impressions during the implementation of this research project and what was learned and gained as a beginner researcher.

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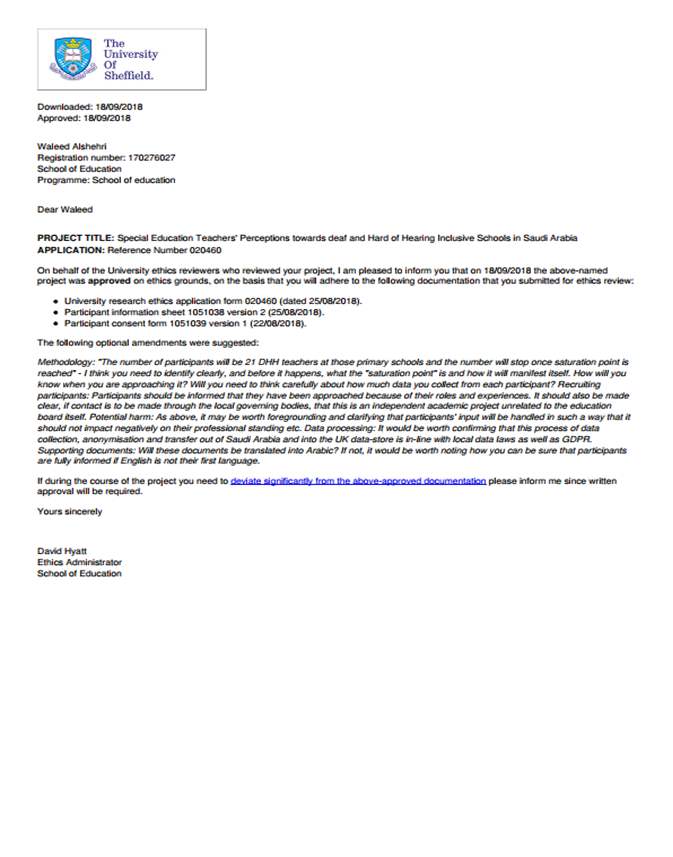
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# Appendix

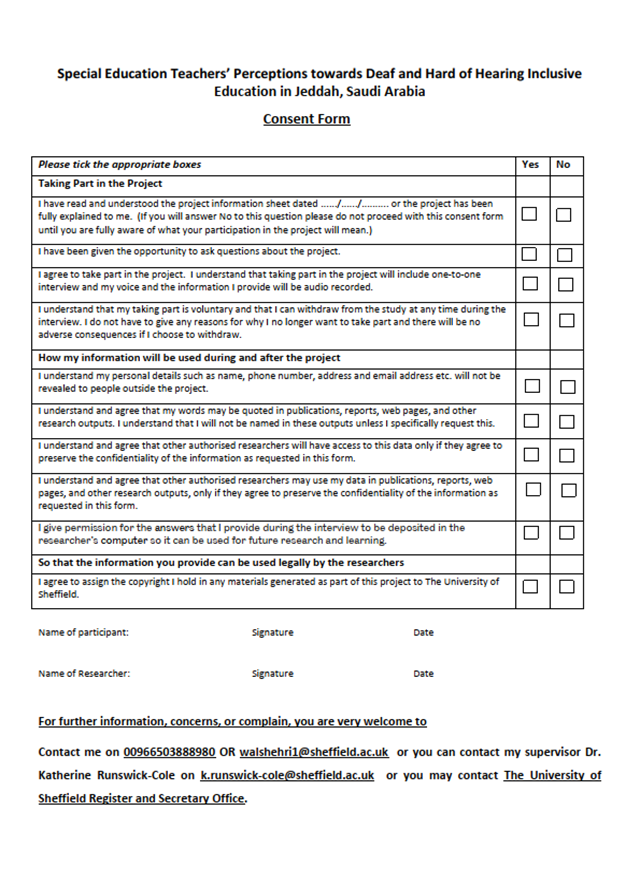
## ***Appendix1:*** *Map of Saudi Arabia*



## ***Appendix 2:*** *Ethical Approval Letter*



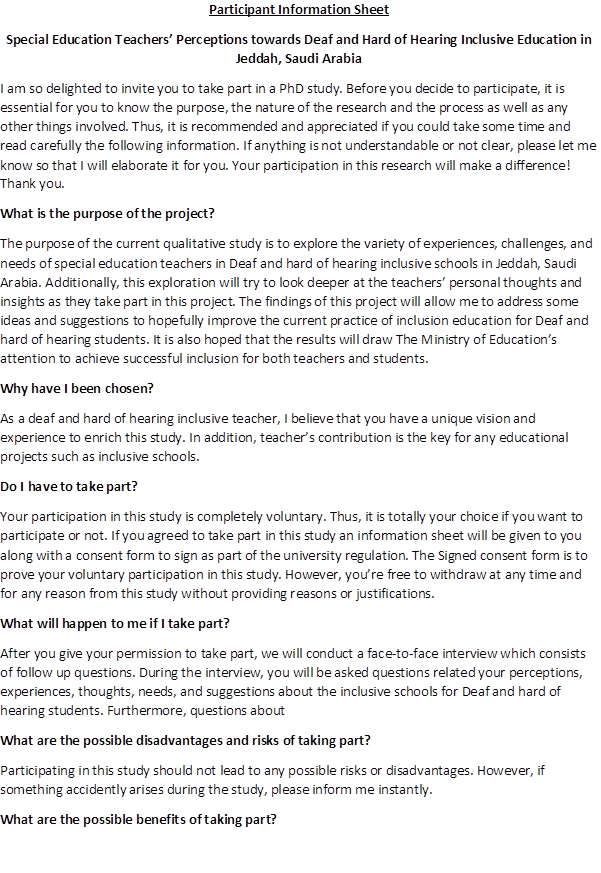
## ***Appendix 3:*** *Consent Form (English version)*

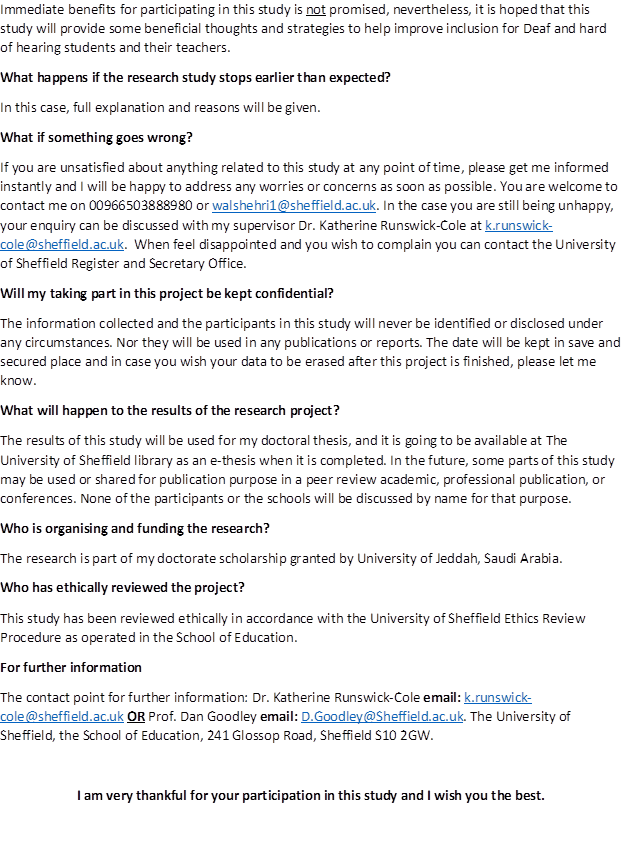


## ***Appendix 4:*** *Consent form (Arabic version)*



## ***Appendix 5:*** *Participants Information Sheet (English version)*



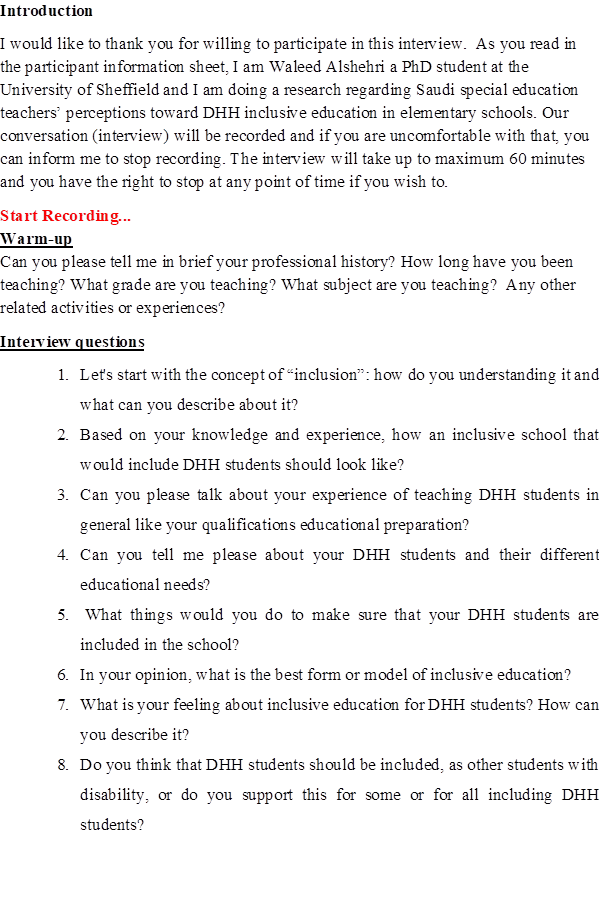


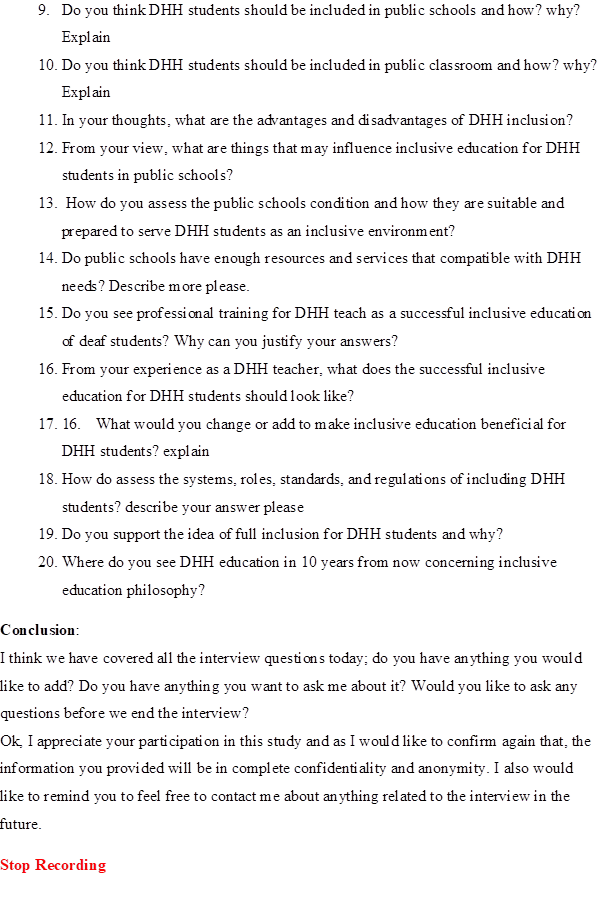
## ***Appendix 6:*** *Participants Information Sheet (Arabic version)*





## ***Appendix 7:*** *Interview guide & Questions (English version)*





## ***Appendix 8:*** *Interview guide & Questions (Arabic version)*





## ***Appendix 9:*** *Local educational authority Approval*

