

# **Attitudes of Preschool Teachers towards the Introduction of Inclusive Education (IE) in Malaysian Government Preschools**

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to those who taught me the most; my parents Haji Ramli and Hajah Zahani and my mother in law Hajah Saamah, my husband and my five children and all my siblings and families. Special thoughts to my late mentor Dr Abdul Aziz Jantan, my late uncle Pok Ripin and late grandmother Hajah Wan Ngah whom I lost during this PhD journey.

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## **Abstract**

The Ministry of Education in Malaysia intends to introduce Inclusive Education (IE) at the preschool level. The introduction of IE will place high demands on preschool teachers and to include all children with special education needs (SEN) will require a significant shift in practice. Thus, this study explored the attitudes of preschool teachers towards IE and identified factors which may have influenced these attitudes.

This thesis presents the findings of mixed-method research study investigating preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysia. A theoretical framework based on the combination of ecological system theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and the three-component model of attitude (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Triandis, 1971) was utilised to explore teachers' attitude. 421 preschool teachers in one Malaysian state completed a survey and 18 took part in a semi-structured interview.

The findings indicated that the preschool teachers in this study feel that they are generally prepared for implementing IE. However, the qualitative data revealed many barriers to the implementation of IE that influenced teachers' attitudes. Factors such as skills and training, resources and facilities as well as knowledge and awareness about IE and children with special educational needs (SEN) are highlighted in this study.

This study highlights the importance of knowledge and understanding of IE, teachers' skills and abilities and the values and commitment needed from every agency. Recommendations address improvements to in-service teacher professional development and pre-service teacher education courses as well as the upgrading of school facilities. Most importantly, this research suggests that there is a need to raise awareness and increase knowledge about IE and SEN through strengthened collaboration between parents, specialists, schools and society.

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## List of Abbreviations

IE	Inclusive Education
MEB	Malaysian Education Blueprint
MOE	Ministry of Education
SEN	Special Educational Needs
EFA	Education for all
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
CPRD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
SE	Special Education
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
WSSN	Weer Samen Naar
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
HDI	Human Development Index
SENA	Special Educational Needs Assistance
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
NAEYC	National Association for the education for young children
NPDC	National Professional Development Centre
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
MOH	Ministry of Health
MWFCD	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
MRRD	Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
DNUI	Department of National Unity and Integration
SEIP	Special Education Integrated Programme
JAIN	State Religious Department
ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia
ITE	Institute of Teacher Education
UPSR	Primary School Achievement Test
PT3	Form Three Assessment
SPM	Malaysia Education Certificate
OKU	Disabled person
UNICEF	United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund
IEP	Individual Education Planning
NASOM	National Autism Society of Malaysia
LINUS	Literacy and Numeracy Screening

ORM	Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming
DEO	District Education Office
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
EPU	Education Planning Unit
EPRD	Education Planning and Research Department
EBD	Emotional Behavioural Difficulties
LD	Learning Difficulties

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This thesis presents a study of preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of Inclusive Education (IE) in Malaysian government preschools. Through Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025, the Ministry of Education (MOE) aspires to increase participation of children with special educational needs (SEN) in the mainstream classrooms. The introduction of IE places high demands on preschool teachers; to include all children with SEN requires a significant shift in practice. This chapter introduces the background, the rationale and the objectives of the thesis, including the approach of the study. It will also outline the structure of the thesis by giving overviews of each chapter.

### **1.2 Background**

Education for all (EFA) has become a global agenda since it was initiated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Jomtien (1990). A decade later, at The World Education Forum in Dakar (2000), the Framework for Action mandated UNESCO to co-ordinate and accelerate the movement of EFA. Over 69 million including children with SEN were out of school and had experienced stigma from birth and were more prone to exclusion, concealment, abandonment and abuse (UNESCO 2007, 2011). The Dakar Framework of Action called for more inclusive approaches to address the need to include children with SEN in the mainstream educational system.

In 1994, the World Conference in Special Needs Education also known as the Salamanca Statement, comprising 92 governments including Malaysia and 25 international organisations called on IE to become the norm (Booth et al., 2001). The conference adopted a Framework for Action which provided guidelines for ordinary schools to accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional or other conditions. Malaysia is also committed to this movement to safeguard the rights of children with SEN in the Malaysian educational system.

A significant step towards recognizing people with disabilities was made through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD). The CPRD points out the importance of early intervention as well as IE systems from an early age. The policy also argues that Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is a powerful means of nurturing

diverse abilities and promoting IE. Based on the CPRD under article 24, IE is directed to develop the fullest potential by providing children with SEN with the access of an inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education. In other words, IE is the tool of providing equal opportunity of getting the access to education thus children with SEN will not be segregated but included in mainstream classrooms.

### **1.3 Rationale**

Reflecting on my school years (1980s-1990s), I did not directly encounter children with SEN. They could only be seen at different school buildings or in other locations. During that time, naughty children were considered as rebellious children and the quiet ones were seen as reserved. The values of disability were about the functionality of a child. For example, the children with SEN who were diagnosed and categorised according to different types of SEN were taught based on their level of achievement in separate classes or schools. However, as time has passed, the segregation has been perceived as violating the rights of the child with SEN. Education Acts in various countries and legal documents such as Education for All (UNESCO, 1990) and CPRD (United Nations, 2006) have been mandated to ensure the rights of the children with SEN. Thus through IE, the segregation in education could be minimised even though in real world, segregation and marginalisation of vulnerable groups of children still exists (UNESCO, 2005).

In relation to my teaching experience, I was a secondary school teacher for 10 years teaching English Language. I encountered a small number of students who could not read and write at 16 and 17 years of age. I attended to them using one to one approaches and my purpose was to help them as much as I could. After pursuing a Master degree in preschool education, I was given the opportunity to become a preschool teacher in a government preschool for two years. During my first year of teaching, I encountered and taught another child with learning difficulty (LD) and Attention Deficits Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in my second year. Following these experiences, I joined the Institute of Teacher Education (ITE) as a teacher educator for six years. The ITE offered courses for Special Education (SE) such as visual impairment, hearing impairment, LD, Preschool education, Music education, and English Language as a second language for primary education. I was the person who responsible for giving training and supervising practicum for pre-service and in-service preschool teachers, I realised there were some gaps between theory and practice regarding IE in Malaysia. As the MOE began expanding IE at the preschool level, I also beginning to recognise the tensions and dilemmas which the pre-service and in-service preschool teachers were experiencing. For instance, the

term IE seemed alarming to some of the preschool teachers which increased my interest in studying teachers' attitudes towards SEN policy and practice.

Consequently, this study relates to the preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools. The policy changes in the Malaysian educational context specifically the MEB 2013-2025 are crucial for understanding the importance of this study. Through the MEB 2013-2025, the MOE aspires to increase participation of children with SEN in mainstream classrooms. However, the introduction of IE will likely pose challenges to mainstream preschool teachers because it demands preschool teachers' knowledge of IE and children with SEN as well as pedagogical knowledge in inclusive settings. From my experience I have identified three potential challenges:

### **1.3.1 Knowledge about IE and training in managing IE**

Most mainstream preschool teachers have not been exposed to specific training in teaching children with SEN. Although they do receive information about SEN during their initial pre-service training, it is not really sufficient and not in depth. Usually specific training is given to those who are going to be SE teachers in areas such as visual impairment, hearing impairment and learning difficulties. They do not have the opportunity to experience teaching children with SEN during their practicum because normally they will teach in the mainstream preschool classrooms. Furthermore, they also do not receive any training in special needs pedagogy or managing classrooms in an inclusive environment. These issues may indirectly influence the preschool teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of IE in Malaysia.

### **1.3.2 Lack of collaboration and co-ordination in the implementation of IE**

In relation to the policy changes in the MEB 2013-2025, reforms to teacher education are not in pace, thus making teacher preparation for IE specifically at the preschool level not in parallel with the current policy. Moreover, preschool teachers and SE teachers see their roles as unconnected. There is no co-ordination and collaboration in terms of expertise, support, facilities and resources.

### **1.3.3 Lack of research on attitudes of preschool teachers towards IE**

Generally, IE in Malaysia is slow in progression and IE has not yet been implemented at the preschool level, therefore, it is important to understand the teachers' perspectives in these circumstances. This research will provide insight into the reasons for different perceptions of IE and analyse the factors which affect the implementation of IE in the Malaysian preschool education system. Indeed, these factors might also act to countercheck best practices in implementing IE.

## 1.4 Objectives

This study aims to identify preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools. In addition, this study will explore the factors which contribute to the preschool teachers' attitudes and their preparedness to implement IE. There is little research investigating preschool teachers' perspectives on IE in Malaysia. Therefore this study will give voices to preschool teachers; they will be able to express their views, understanding and attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysia. I strongly believe that these teachers need to be heard, supported and empowered in order for them to implement IE successfully.

The main objectives of this study are to determine the:

1. attitudes of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools.
2. factors contributing to the preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools.
3. extent to which factors influence the preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools.

Therefore the research questions are the following:

1. What are the attitudes of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools?
2. What are the factors contributing to the preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools?
3. To what extent do these factors affect the preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools?

## 1.5 Research Approach

Since the purpose of this study is to investigate the attitude of preschool teachers towards IE in government preschools in Malaysia, I will employ quantitative and qualitative research methods. According to Creswell (2012), quantitative research allows the researcher to develop knowledge utilising strategies of inquiry such as experiment and surveys and collects data that yields statistical data. Furthermore, quantitative research allows the researcher to ask specific questions, collect numeric data, analyse them using statistics and conduct inquiry in unbiased and objective manner. On the other hand, qualitative research relies on the views of participants by asking broad and specific questions. Data collected consist largely of text or



words from participants which can be analysed thematically in a subjective manner (Creswell, 2012). Thus, qualitative data is useful because respondents can freely express their thoughts perceptions and experiences in more details.

Li et al. (2000) argue that, mixed method designs have been increasingly used in the area of preschool inclusion studies. The advantage of this approach is, the researcher may survey a large number of respondents to get a general picture before interviewing with a subgroup of respondents to obtain a rich and robust information. Creswell (2012) pointed out that both close-ended quantitative data and open-ended qualitative data prove advantageous to understand and address a research problem. The study's research design consists of two phases, the first phase is collecting quantitative data through questionnaire to get the general attitude of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE. The second phase is collecting qualitative data through semi-structured interviews to explain and elaborate on the quantitative data results. This design also allows the researcher scope for consensus through verification across phases of the study. The details of the research approach will be further elaborated in Chapter Four (Methodology).

## **1.6 Overview of the thesis**

This thesis comprises of nine chapters. Chapter Two to Four orientate the reader the background of the study, Chapter Five, Six and Seven present the findings for the research study and Chapter Eight contains the discussion of the findings. Finally Chapter Nine is the concluding chapter.

Chapter Two immerses the reader in the context of Malaysia, raising understanding of preschool teachers' attitudes towards IE. The descriptions of the context of the study which in this case is the Malaysian education system, will be overviewed. The development of SE and IE will be described as well as the development of preschool education in Malaysia. The government policy on SE and IE will be identified as well as the concept of IE in Malaysia will also be introduced. Finally, the issues relating the implementation of IE in Malaysian government preschools will be discussed. The summary of the chapter will be provided by underlining the key points within the Malaysian context.

Chapter Three focuses on the definitions of IE and its importance in the preschool context. Definitions of attitudes and their roles and relations to IE will also be discussed. The factors which influenced the teachers' attitudes will be reviewed based on several studies both internationally and locally. These factors will be discussed in relation to the layers of Bronfenbrenner (1979) ecological system theory namely; microsystem, mesosystem,

exosystem and macrosystem. The most crucial part of this chapter will be the combination of the three-component model of attitude (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993) and the ecological system theory. The developed theoretical framework will be presented by discussing the three-component of attitude namely; cognitive, behavioural and affective relationship and bidirectional interactions within the system of a teacher. Finally, a summary for the chapter will be explained by highlighting key points from literature reviews.

Chapter Four introduces the main research questions and also describes the methodological approach of the research. The justification of the research design as well as the population and samples of the study is included. The description of research instruments is provided along with the presentation of data analysis for each of the research question. Finally, research quality which includes validation of research tool, data protection, ethical considerations and confidentiality will also be discussed.

Chapter Five presents the quantitative analysis. Descriptive statistics based on the three-component of attitude will be performed to reveal the general attitude of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE. Next, the results of paired sampled t-tests, independent sample t-tests, multivariate analysis of variance, two-way between group analysis and correlational analysis will be reported.

Chapter Six presents the qualitative analysis. This chapter will present the findings from the open-ended questions analysis. Four open-ended questions were analysed. Nvivo was used to help to organise and sort the data sets and extract salient thematic patterns taken from the respondents who participated in the survey.

Chapter Seven presents the findings obtained from the semi-structured interview questions. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data. The themes emerged are gathered based on the three-component of attitude as well as the four layers in the ecological system theory namely microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem and will be presented accordingly.

Chapter Eight brings together the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The research questions were transformed into statements whereby the significant results and themes emerged will be discussed along with the support from the previous literature reviews and the findings of this study. Three main research questions are used to structure this chapter. The related findings were then used to discuss the limitations and the contributions of the research.

Chapter Nine is the concluding chapter which discusses significance and implications of the study will be highlighted. The implications will be discussed by moving out from the local or

community level, to the national level and then the international level. Finally, the recommendations for future research will be discussed by considering the areas of teacher education, policies, methodological approaches as well as different stakeholders' perspectives.

## **Chapter Two: Malaysian Context**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the Malaysian educational system and the policies and approaches that the MOE have adopted. This chapter is divided into six main sections. The first section 2.2, a snapshot of Malaysia, will generally describe Malaysian education system and MEB (2013-2025). The second section 2.3, an overview of ECCE will explore preschool provisions and preschool teacher education in Malaysia. The third section 2.4 SE provisions will discover about the development of SE, legislations and policies, types of SEN and Special Education Integrated Program (SEIP). The fourth section 2.5, the implementation of IE in Malaysia, will describe how IE is implemented in Malaysia. The fifth section 2.6, Issues and challenges of IE in Malaysia will explore some of the issues and challenges of IE in Malaysia. Finally, the sixth section 2.7, the summary will then revisit all the important key ideas which are discussed in each section of this chapter.

### **2.2 A Snapshot of Malaysia**

Malaysia is in South-east Asia and consists of 13 states and three federal territories. Two main regions are separated by the South China Sea namely; Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia (Malaysian Borneo). The capital city is Kuala Lumpur which is also the largest city in Malaysia. The population is 31.7 million and it is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country with Malays (50.1%), Chinese (22.6%), Indigenous (11.8%), Indian (6.7%) and others (11.8%) (Department of Statistics, 2016). This has resulted in diversity in culture, languages, cuisines, way of life, beliefs and moral values as well as the celebration of many different types of festival.

In 1957, Malaysia gained its independence from the British and since then in terms of the economy, Malaysia is categorised as one of the upper middle income countries (World Bank, 2017). Malaysia is ranked as a high Human Development Index (HDI) country (United Nation Development Programme, 2016). Bahasa Malaysia is its national language while English language is the second language along with many other languages being spoken such as Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, Hainan, Foochow), Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Punjabi. In East Malaysia, there are several indigenous languages but the most widely spoken are Iban and Kadazan. Islam is the official religion however, at the same time allowing the practice of other religions such as Buddhist, Christian and Hindu.

### **2.2.1 Basic education structure in Malaysia**

The education system in Malaysia is highly centralised through the establishment of government and private schools. National schools (established and maintained by the MOE) uses a National Curriculum and Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction. National-type schools were set up to cater the multi-ethnicity of Malaysia's population namely National-type Chinese School and National-type Tamil School, the former uses Mandarin as the medium of instructions whereas the latter uses Tamil, both schools however, use the same National Curriculum. In terms of pedagogy, the elements of knowledge and competency, lesson planning, delivery, management as well as assessment are adopted (MOE 2014).

The formal education lasts approximately 11 years. Pupils begin at 6+ years of age and attend six years of primary education. Secondary education is split into two levels, Lower and Upper. Lower Secondary schools; Form 1-3 (13-15 years old) focus on general education. Upper Secondary school education: Form 4-5 (16-17 years old) streams students according to subject area, non-science and technology, science, religious, technical, vocational and skills streams (Education in Malaysia, 2014). Upon completion, students are given options to further their studies at pre-university level by entering Form six, matriculation colleges, polytechnics or vocational and technical institutions either under the MOE or private institutions. For the purpose of this study, Malaysian government preschool is the central focus.

The Literacy and Numeracy Screening (LINUS) programme is aimed at ensuring that all Malaysian children acquire basic literacy and numeracy after three years in primary education. The instruments are prepared by the Malaysian Examination Syndicate distributed to schools by the districts education offices (DEO). For basic literacy skills, 12 constructs will be measured which include vowel and consonants, open and close syllables, diphthong, combined vowels and consonants, prefix and suffix and simple and stimulus sentences. For numeracy skills, 12 constructs will be measured such as numbers, values, seriations, Malaysian currency, time, length, weight and volume. The rationale for LINUS is to focus on early intervention in the early primary years (Level One) before entering Year Four. This programme is different from SE as it is a remedial programme to identify children who are weak in literacy and numeracy skills. Those who fail the screening test will be enrolled in remedial classes with 10 periods per week for literacy remedial and seven periods per week for numeracy remedial. Children who do not pass the construct 1 and 2 are classified as LINUS Tegar (hard core) and required to attend remedial classes.

### **2.2.2 MEB 2013-2025**

Based on the new MEB which was launched in 2013, the comprehensive review on education in Malaysia has drawn five outcomes that the Malaysian educational system aspires to achieve, namely; access, quality, equity, unity and efficiency. Most importantly every child in Malaysia deserves an equal access to education that enables him or her to achieve full potential. Preschool education has been given a focus within these aspirations which highlights the increasing number of preschool teachers, preschool classrooms and preschool children attending the government preschools.

The Blueprint outlines 11 shifts, to be achieved within a 13 year period, that are required to transform the national education system to be at par with that of developed nations. The transformation will be carried out in three 'waves'; the first wave (2013-2015) calls for the implementation of more support for teachers and a focus on core students skills; the second wave (2016-2019) calls for building upon progress and the third wave (2020-2025) envisages schools having autonomy in their administrations. The MOE will implement a series of initiatives to achieve the objectives which are moving more children with SEN towards the IE programme and raising the overall quality of provision.

As stated in the first shift of the Blueprint, it will be necessary to raise the quality of preschools and push to 100% enrolment by 2020 and to increase investment in physical and teaching resources for children with SEN. These aspirations gives an impact not only in the progression of IE in Malaysia but also in the implementations of IE as well as the increasing awareness of IE and children with SEN.

On average, 10% of the population in developing countries have SEN, however, only 1% of the population of Malaysia has been identified as having SEN (MOE, 2013). In reality, the percentage could be higher. According to MEB (2013), there are issues regarding the accessibility, quality and lack of data for children with SEN who have been registered with the Department of Social Welfare (DSW); stigmatisation from society towards children with SEN could possibly explain these unregistered cases. In addition, the process of early identification, assessment and diagnosis could often exceed six months due to limited specialists, underutilisation of screening tools and a lack of standardised approaches for detection (MEB, 2013). Therefore, the MOE intends to forge strong collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to fast track early identification and diagnosis and plans to improve IE programmes at the ECCE level.

Segregating children with SEN in discrete educational programmes is considered as a barrier to creating opportunities for them. Likewise, the Global Campaign for Education (UNESCO,

2014) has estimated that the average cost of putting children with SEN in segregated placements is 7-9 times higher than educating them in regular classrooms. By encouraging more participation of the children with SEN in mainstream classrooms would increase access and equity of education for all children in Malaysia. Thus, to be inclusive, education must offer differentiation, accommodation and modifications within the general curriculum.

### **2.3 An Overview of ECCE in Malaysia**

ECCE in Malaysia is very progressive mainly because the government has focused and place great effort in ensuring education and care for all children (MEB, 2013). This can be manifested through effort from the local communities, religious bodies, private entities and also charitable organisations as well as the increased funding on ECCE by the government. The MOE has taken initiatives to ensure the quality provision of ECCE particularly through the signing of Convention on the Rights of the Children (CRC), the enactment of Child Act and the inclusion preschool education (4-6 years old) as part of the formal education system through the Education Act 1996 (Boon, 2015).

ECCE in Malaysia is divided into two age groups. For the children between 0-4 years old, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) is the main co-ordinator for national programmes regarding the growth and development of the children through its Department of Social Welfare. One of the major roles of MWFCD is to register all childcare centres (TASKA) that offers care and education for children between 0-4 years old. Similarly, the Prime Minister Department launched PERMATA programme in 2007 which offers integrated quality care and early education services based on the needs of the local community in rural and sub urban areas to children below 4 years old. As for the children between 4-6 years old, MOE, Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (MRRD) and Department of National Unity and Integration (DNUI) are responsible in providing preschool education (TADIKA) for all the children.

#### **2.3.1 Preschool provisions in Malaysia**

Preschool education in Malaysia began in the 1950s and 1960s set up by Christian missionaries, individuals and private sectors. They organised preschool education at a time when it was considered as exclusive and unaffordable. In 1969, Asia Foundation contributed finances to the Malaysian Workers Association to introduce a preschool project. This programme was further expanded by MRRD through Department of Community Development. In 1970, MRRD established preschools which are locally known as KEMAS preschools. KEMAS is generally targeted for the low income families and located in rural and

suburban areas and set up based on request by the local community (Boon, 2015). In 1976, the DNUI set up preschools called PERPADUAN preschools in the urban areas (under Friendly Neighbourhood Scheme- Rukun Tetangga). These preschools focus on unity where the children are from various racial background and parents form the board of governance. Following that, the MOE set up an annex preschool in 1992 which was further expanded to 9195 classes in 2016 (MOE, 2016). The data is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Number of MOE preschools, classes, teachers and enrolment in 2014-2016, Educational Planning and Research Division, 2016

	2014	2015	2016
<b>Preschools</b>	5,943	6,056	6,075
<b>Classes</b>	8,939	9,113	9,195
<b>Teachers</b>	8,586	9,039	9,087
<b>Enrolment</b>	194,225	198,574	200,522

In 2000, preschool for children with SEN under the Special Education Integrated Programme (SEIP) was established by the MOE and as of 2016, there are 168 SEIP preschool classes (MOE, 2016). The data shown in Table 2 indicates the government's effort to increase access to preschool children with SEN.

**Table 2.** Number of SEIP classes, enrolment and teachers in 2014-2016 (Educational Planning and Research Division, 2016)

	2014	2015	2016
	Preschool	Preschool	Preschool
<b>Class</b>	142	165	168
<b>Enrolment</b>	517	656	678
<b>Teacher</b>	191	163	168

Table 3 shows that there are also other organisations which provide preschool education such as the State Religious Department (JAIN) and Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) which cater for Muslim community. Private preschools are operated by private sectors and use a range of medium of instruction including Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, Tamil and English. There are no fees for preschool by the MOE but very minimum charges for KEMAS, PERPADUAN, JAIN and ABIM preschools. For private preschools the fee ranges from RM100-RM1000 which is equivalent to £60-£600 monthly. All of the preschools in Malaysia are required to utilise National Standard Preschool Curriculum, however, private preschools can offer additional programmes upon approval from the MOE.



**Table 3.** Number of preschools, classes, teachers and enrolment in private and other government agencies in 2016 (Educational Planning and Research Division, 2016)

Agency	Preschools	Classes	Teachers	Enrolment
<b>ABIM</b>	222	547	634	8,720
<b>JAIN</b>	736	1,584	2,123	32,604
<b>PERPADUAN</b>	1,781	1,781	3,481	37,446
<b>KEMAS</b>	8,604	11,183	11,016	219,429
<b>Private</b>	7,238	27,141	27,180	236,234
<b>TOTAL</b>	18,581	42,236	44,434	534,433

### 2.3.2 Preschool teacher education in Malaysia

There are two different types of teacher training for government preschool teachers in Malaysia. First, all teachers employed in the preschools run by the MOE are trained and certified with at least a diploma in teaching, trained by MOE through the Institute of Teacher Education (ITEs) all over Malaysia. Second, there are teachers who are trained by public universities such as University of Malaya, National University of Malaysia, University of Science Malaysia, Sultan Idris Education University and Open University of Malaysia. Some of the teachers in government preschools have a degree and a master's degree in early childhood education. Meanwhile, preschool teachers in KEMAS preschools received a six-month training and PERPADUAN preschool teachers underwent a three-week training by their own ministries (MRRD and DNUI).

In order to improve the quality of preschool teachers, 20,150 teachers from PERPADUAN, KEMAS and private preschools attended a three-week course provided by ITE all over Malaysia and other private accredited training institutions during the school holidays sponsored by the government (from 2010-2012). PERPADUAN and KEMAS also encourage their teachers who are fully sponsored, to continue their studies at diploma level at ITEs or Sultan Idris Education University. ITEs in particular, offer courses such as Diploma in Teaching for Preschool (three years in full-time), Post-degree course (a year for conversion), Degree in Early Childhood Education (4 years) and In-service training (14 weeks or one year part-time). At the same time, public universities also produce graduates and post-graduates with first degree's, master's degrees or PhD's in preschool education or early childhood education. MOE also awards scholarships or study leave for eligible teachers to pursue their studies (ECCE Policy Review, 2008).

In addition, there is a non-profit organisation, the Malaysian Association of Kindergartens (PTM) that conducts courses for private preschool teachers. PTM conducts in-service courses on 'Skill Training for Preschool Teachers' during school holidays. Those who have completed the course are awarded an attendance certificate. In order to enhance the teachers' knowledge and create better career pathways to the teachers in private preschools, ECCE Training Centre Cluster was set up to train 218,500 teachers by 2020. This three-week course is opened to in-service registered private preschool teachers and run by private institution such as SEGi University.

Preschool teacher education in Malaysia has indeed progressive and in high demand. Many preschool teachers have undergone teacher training from various providers such as ITE, local universities, private institutions and NGOs. Indeed, the MOE has recognised ECCE as a pivotal key in nation building by increasing the number of preschool classes to ensure all children in Malaysia received a meaningful preschool education experience.

## **2.4 SE Provisions in Malaysia**

As education in Malaysia is highly centralised, the MOE mainly holds the responsibilities in the planning and development of education in Malaysia. Generally, there are three major agencies involved in providing SE with different responsibilities namely; the MOE (which caters for formal education from preschool, primary and secondary level and tertiary education), the Ministry of Health (MOH) (caters for streaming and diagnostic processes and early interventions) and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) (caters for informal education and early interventions). These ministries are playing their roles in providing access to education by allowing children with SEN to mainstream schools with inclusive settings.

### **2.4.1 The development of SE in Malaysia**

The interest towards SE has started since 1920s when volunteers were involved in the opening of schools specifically for the hearing and visual impaired students. In 1948, the Princess Elizabeth Special School specifically for visual impaired children was established in Johor Baharu (one of the states in Malaysia). Following that, in 1954, the Federal Deaf School was established in Pulau Pinang (one of the states in Malaysia).

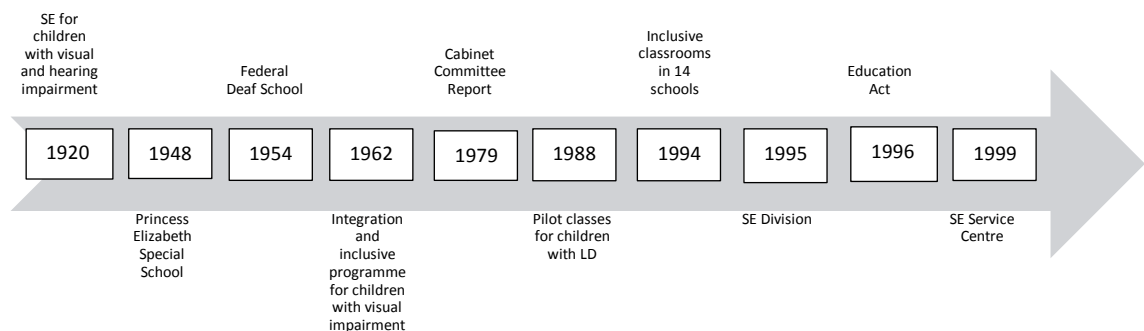
After independence SE has been expanded to regular schools through SEIP. In 1962, an integration programme and inclusive programme was established specifically for visually impaired children. Cabinet Committee Report 1979 that studied the implementations of Education Policy through the Recommendation 169 was the beginning of a clearer focus and emphasis on the development of SE in Malaysia. In 1988, pilot classes for children with

learning difficulties were established at the primary school level. In 1994, under the pilot project inclusive classrooms were established in 14 schools all over Malaysia which catered for children with learning difficulties.

In 1995, Special Education Division was formed by the MOE that has responsibility in the SE planning. The emphasis on SE became evident when in 1996, MOE announced Education Act where for the first time in Malaysian history, SE was included (Lee and Low, 2014). Prior to the formation of the Special Education Division, Education Rules (SE) was introduced to move the implementation of Education Act 1996 where three types of special schools programmes were to be carried out. Firstly, SE school for visual and hearing impaired students (currently 28 primary schools and 5 secondary schools in the system). Secondly, Special Education Integration Programme (SEIP) (currently the SEIP are implemented in 1315 primary schools and 738 secondary schools) where it is a combined programme in regular schools for students with visual impairment, hearing impairment and learning disabilities (down syndrome, mild autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, mild retardation and specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia). Finally, IE Programmes where students with SEN are to attend mainstream classrooms with usually one to five students in mainstream classes (MEB, 2013).

The Special Education Services Centre was established in 1999 to provide one-stop specialist services such as audiological services, sign language classes, therapy activities, counselling, toy library and resource material for parents and children with SEN. These development is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** SE development in Malaysia



The SEIP is managed by the State Department of Education while the Special Education Department is in charge of issues pertaining to policies and content. The curriculum used in SE schools and the SEIP are the National Curriculum and the Alternative Curriculum. Alternative curriculum is developed specifically for children with SEN. The curriculum contain five subjects

which include Management (self-management, behavioural management and manipulative skills), Basic 3R (Reading, Writing and Mathematics in Bahasa Malaysia and English Language), Arts and Creativity (Visual arts and Music education), Islamic or Moral Education and Physical education. Children with SEN participate in extra-curricular activities with typically developing children during sports activities and school clubs. Teachers may adapt their teaching pedagogy to cater the needs of these children.

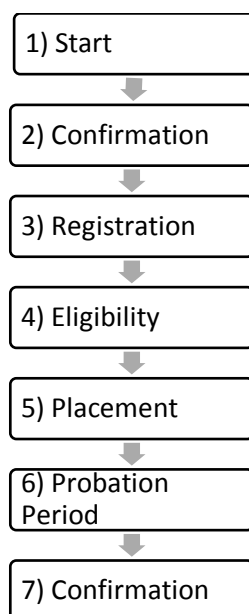
The Primary School Achievement Test (UPSR) is a national examination which is compulsory for Year Six children who followed National Curriculum. The minimum requirement to reach the National Standard is grade C in Malay Language (Comprehension), Malay Language (Writing), English Language, Mathematics and Science. Followed by Form Three Assessment (PT3) for Form Three students and Malaysia Education Certificate (SPM) for Form Five students with exception for those who are following the Alternative Curriculum specifically children with learning difficulties. Eligible children with SEN are allowed to take these public examinations as they will be supported for mainstream curriculum and will be placed in inclusive programme.

The requirement of entry into SE School Programme are; no less than five years (for Preschool); 6+ to 14+ years old (for Primary school); 13+ to 19+ (for Secondary school); certified by medical doctors; and able to manage themselves (self-care) without the assistance of others. The length of primary schooling for children with SEN is six years and academic-based. Whereas, for secondary schooling the length is six years and offers two options either academic-based or vocational-based. However, this duration can be extended for a maximum of two years at any level (primary or secondary) depending on the needs of the child.

There are several steps must be taken in order to register for SE programme: 1) Start (Parents and teachers suspect the child of having a learning disability; 2) Confirmation (Certification by medical professionals and to receive early intervention from the Ministry of Health); 3) Registration (Register with the State Education Department in order to receive suitable education) also (Register with the Department of Social Welfare to receive suitable services); 4) Eligibility (Those who have been certified as being ready for school will be managed by the State Education Department level for the purpose of obtaining placement, those who are determined as being unready for school or who have severe disabilities or who does not fulfil the requirement will be referred to the Department of Social Welfare to receive rehabilitation through Community Based Rehabilitation); 5) Placement (The children will be given the opportunity for placement in either to the nearest SE schools or SEIP); 6) Probation Period (The children who have been placed in the MOE SE programme will be given three months for probation period) and 7) Confirmation (The children who are successful following the SE programme will be confirmed in the programme and those who fail will be referred back to the

Social Welfare Department to receive suitable rehabilitation through Community Based Rehabilitation) (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** The process of registration for SE programme (MOE, 2013)



However, many parents find these bureaucratic processes quite overwhelming as they demand their time, cost and paper work. Bacon and Causton-Theoharis (2013) argued that many parents who have children with SEN find themselves in precarious situations as they enter the world of SE. In other words, facing the bureaucracy in SE system requires commitment, co-operation and time which can seem burdensome to some parents.

#### **2.4.2 Legislation and policies**

Malaysia has pledged to the international policies such as The Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990), Salamanca Statement (1994), Dakar Framework for Action (2000), Bivako Millennium Framework for Action (2002), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nation, 2006) and Incheon Strategy (2012): Make the Right Real for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. All of these international commitments are translated into five dimensions of SEN in Malaysia that include Early identification, intervention and healthcare support; Curriculum flexibility, relevance and quality; Teacher and other specialists; Infrastructure and finances and Public awareness and involvement (MEB, 2013).

Nationally, the Education act (revised) 2002 has given the opportunity for all children including children with SEN to be educated and where parents who fail to register their children they now face prosecution. Similarly, Article 28 of Malaysia's Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 affirms that children with SEN are to be given the necessary support to facilitate their full and equal

participation in education. Recently, in 2013, the amendment of the regulations has been made to be inclusive of all children with SEN. Thus, IE enables children with SEN to access a quality education, helping them to fulfil their potential and contribute towards their community. Barriers such as discriminatory attitudes and unwelcoming communities should be eradicated in order to build an inclusive society and achieve education for all.

Based on the MEB (2013), children with SEN will get an opportunity to gain access to suitable and relevant education to their ability so that they will be able to have a good quality of life. Children with SEN will have an opportunity to be inclusively placed in the mainstream classroom in line with the principle of Education for All. The MOE has outlined eight strategies to enhance education for those with SEN; 1) access, 2) opportunity in skills and vocational, 3) equal opportunity for potential children with SEN in the mainstream classroom, 4) early intervention at the preschool level or Special Education Services Centre, 5) support services and equipment, 6) suitable teaching and learning materials, 7) trained teachers in SE and 8) Individual Education Plan.

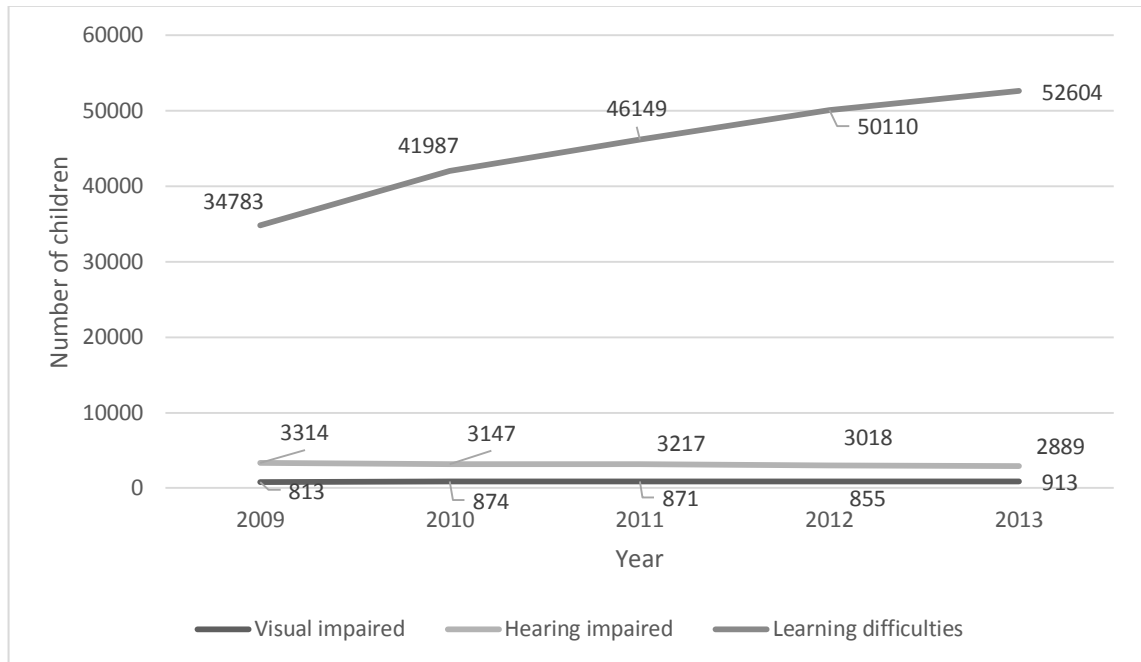
### 2.4.3 Types of SEN

Based on the statistics from the Department of Social Welfare (where registration is voluntary), 85% of 29,289 children with disabilities registered as OKU (Disabled person) in 2012; are primary and secondary school aged. UNICEF commends the MOE for amending the regulation to be inclusive of all children with all disabilities. The amended Regulations (2013) provides for SEN for children with disabilities in Malaysia is defined as a pupil certified by a medical practitioner, an optometrist, an audiologist or a psychologist to have: 1) Visual disability; 2) Hearing disability; 3) Speech disability; 4) Physical disability; 5) Learning difficulties (or); 6) Any combination of the disabilities or difficulties above (see Table 4 and Figure 3).

**Table 4.** Number of new registration of person with disability by category in 2015  
(Department of Social Welfare, 2015)

Visual impairment	Hearing impairment	Physical disability	Learning difficulties	Speech disability	Mental disability	Multiple disabilities
374	546	2558	5	10	2	1221
<b>Age group below 6 years old :TOTAL = 10,039</b>						

**Figure 3.** The number of children with SEN according to different types of SEN (MOE, 2014)



In Malaysia, the majority of children with hearing impairment are segregated from mainstream learning for primary education as they normally receive their primary education in SE schools. Similarly, the children with visual impairment are usually segregated from mainstream learning during their first three years of primary education. Inclusion is practised for the next three to five years of primary education. Some are included for all subjects except Physical Education and Art while others are included for certain subjects only. Meanwhile, children who are diagnosed with learning difficulties are educated in SEIP. The decision to include the children with learning difficulties in the mainstream classes depends completely on the school administration based on advice by the school's SE teachers (MOE, 2008). The categories of children with SEN are demonstrated in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Categories of children with SEN, (MOE 2013)

No	Category	Characteristics
1	Visual impairment means that he or she cannot see or having limited eyesight from both eyes with spectacles or contact lenses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited eyesight means the eyesight is worse than 6/8 but better than 3/60 with visual aid or 20° from fixation</li> <li>• Blind means the eyesight is less than 3/60 or less than 10° from fixation</li> <li>• Blind from one of the eyes means one side is perfectly functioned and the other side is less than 3/60 or less than 20° from fixation</li> </ul>
2	Hearing impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mild 25-40dB</li> <li>• Moderate 41-60dB</li> <li>• Severe 61-90dB</li> <li>• Profound 91dB above</li> </ul>
3	Speech disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaving syllables or change the sounds of a word (lisp)</li> <li>• Stammer</li> <li>• Voice (nasal, high/low pitch, monotonous, soft, hoarse)</li> <li>• Aphasia</li> </ul>
4	Physical disability means loss of limbs or hemiplegia, paraplegia, tetraplegia, weak muscles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limb defects (congenital/acquired)</li> <li>• Spinal cord injury</li> <li>• Stroke</li> <li>• Traumatic brain injury (after six months)</li> <li>• Achondroplasia <math>\leq 142</math> for male and <math>\leq 138</math> for female</li> <li>• Cerebral palsy</li> </ul>
5	Learning difficulty means neurology problem which is related to how the brain receives, processes, analyses and stores the information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dyslexia</li> <li>• Autisme</li> <li>• Down syndrome</li> <li>• Mental retardation</li> </ul>
6	Multiple disabilities are the combination of visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech disability, physical disability or/and learning difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual impairment</li> <li>• hearing impairment</li> <li>• speech disability</li> <li>• physical disability</li> <li>• learning difficulties</li> </ul>



#### **2.4.4 SEIP in Malaysia**

SEIP is a SE programme dedicated specifically for children with SEN in SE classes through integration in government schools (MOE, 2015). The objectives of SEIP are to provide suitable and relevant education for the children with SEN. They are firstly diagnosed and then confirmed by medical practitioners, opticians, audiologists or psychologists before the placement and registration as Orang Kurang Upaya (Disabled). Children with SEN must undergo diagnostic tests to determine the child's placement to an appropriate group or classroom. Currently, SEIP is carried out in selected primary and secondary schools, however, not at the preschool level.

Once the child is confirmed a placement in the SEIP, the child's parents must sign a prepared document stating that they had agreed on the term and conditions of the SEIP. Under the SEIP, an Individual Education Planning (IEP) will be developed to cater the needs of children with SEN. According to the SEIP, the multidisciplinary group such as Special Education Service Centre (3PK), audiologists, psychologists and therapists from MOH will co-operate in assisting teachers in developing suitable IEP. The IEP consists of the teaching and learning process that the teacher must plan based on the need and the learning level of the child. For example, in developing the child's social skills, activities such as interacting with others during assembly, while in the canteen and involvement in other school activities are encouraged for such development (social skills).

A resource room is specifically prepared for teaching and enrichment activities for the children with SEN. The room is also used by teachers to prepare their teaching materials and keep all teaching equipment. Buddy systems are practised at the early stages of social skills. SEIP classes are on the ground floor of the school building for the safety purposes. Each class is provided with kinesthetic corner, fine motor skills corner, aquarium and other appropriate learning corners.

The minimum study duration for children with SEN in SEIP in both primary and secondary schools is six years with two years extension. Teaching and learning duration for SEIP preschools for 4+ years of age children is not more than 210 minutes (three and a half hours) and for 5+ years of age children is not less than 240 minutes (four hours) per day. As for the primary education the total teaching and learning hours is 1380 minutes per week for Level One and 1440 minutes per week for Level Two. Meanwhile, for secondary education the total teaching and learning hours is 1520 minutes per week. All SEIP preschools use Preschool National Standard Curriculum (Learning difficulties), whereas, children with SEN in inclusive programme as well as children with visual and hearing impairment use Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) and Secondary School Standard Curriculum (KSSM).

Interestingly, all Level One (Year 1-3) children with SEN must undergo SE LINUS screening test in June every year.

Special Education Service Centre (3PK) is a local service centre which provides support services and consultation to assist children with SEN in having a better quality of life. Currently there are 13 3PK centres all over Malaysia. The centres provides: 1) rehabilitation for hearing, speech, psychology; 2) screening and diagnostic tests; 3) early intervention programme; 4) collaboration between government agencies and non-governmental bodies and; 5) consultation, support service and advice related to SE.

In conclusion, SEIP is the main contribution for the enrolment of the children with SEN all over Malaysia. Indirectly, SEIP recognises the existence of children with SEN by increasing the knowledge and exposure amongst parents, teachers and communities.

## **2.5 The Implementation of IE in Malaysia**

IE in Malaysia can be considered to be functional integration rather than total inclusion (UNESCO, 2009). This can be reflected through various options and opportunities for the children with SEN that are provided in order to be able to have better access to education. Besides schools under MOE, there are also community centres run by the Department of Social Welfare and other privately owns centres run by various non-governmental organisations (NGOs). For example, KIWANIS Down Syndromes Foundation where its main focus is to educate children with Down Syndromes up to six years old and the National Autism Society of Malaysia (NASOM) a society formed by a group of parents and professionals to deliver lifespan services to the community of persons suffering from autism. Thus IE is implemented with the involvement of government and private sectors from the school level to the community to give support services inside and outside of the classroom either academic or and non- academic to enable children with SEN to be included in mainstream classrooms.

This concept corresponds to the statement in the Education Rules (Special Education) 2013 which stated that children with SEN should participate together with other children in the same classroom whether they are in government schools or government aided schools. Thus the aim of the IE programme is to increase the participation and give opportunities for children with SEN to learn together with typically developing children in the mainstream classrooms. IE also aims to raise awareness in society about the potential of children with SEN and believes that their disabilities could be minimised if they are given equal opportunity.

There are two approaches of IE implemented in Malaysia; *full Inclusive* where children with SEN learn full time together with typically developing children. Children with SEN study all

subjects based on the National Curriculum which is adapted with the help or without the help of the support services. Meanwhile, *half Inclusive* is where children with SEN learn together with the typically developing children for certain subjects or co-curricular activities based on their capabilities. Children with SEN in the half inclusive participate for academic subjects based on the National Curriculum (which is adapted with the help or without the help of the support services). On the other hand, the co-curricular activities are based on the children with SEN's potentials, talents and capabilities.

The children with SEN need to undergo the MOE assessment in order to be accepted in the IE programme. For example Diagnostic test 1 (Ujian Pengesanan) for children with learning difficulties which include five elements; 1) Signs of hearing problem; 2) Signs of visual problem; 3) The level of mastering the basic skills of individual development; 4) The level of mastering the spelling, reading and writing and; 5) The level of mastering numbers (MOE, 2011). This test will normally held in January to determine the placement for SEIP or IE classrooms. The children who passed this test will start their teaching and learning process in February until end of the year. However, those who failed will be placed in SEIP from February until end of the year and sit again for the Diagnostic test 2 to be considered in IE classrooms. Based on Diagnostic test 2, those children who are not qualified will continue their education in SEIP. Additionally, their chronological age should follow the typically developing children age or one year addition of age. In order to ensure their placement in the IE programme, the class size should be less than 35 children, not more than five children with SEN in the mainstream classroom, the location of the classroom should be on the ground level and the placement of the children with SEN should be granted permission by their parents.

Children with SEN in the IE programme should be using the National Curriculum through the modification of teaching method, materials and delivery. For example, teachers should assess suitable teaching and learning activities with interests and talents of the children with SEN in mind. Modifications also can be conducted through teaching approaches such as introducing authentic materials or the use of e-learning or other current appropriate computer technology. Parents should also share with teachers the talents and interests of these children when they are at home, so that teachers can further extend and use these in the classroom.

Medical reports, profiles, test analysis and progress records should be utilised by teachers in planning the teaching and learning activities. Therefore, mainstream teachers and SE teachers should collaborate in order to plan suitable teaching and learning activities. For schools with SEIP (see 2.4.4), SE teachers need to play their role in assisting mainstream teachers by doing team teaching. However, for the school without SEIP, teachers should seek assistance

from the nearest SEIP teachers, officers from District Education Department, State Education Department or SE Division.

As stated in Circular No.23/1998, children with SEN who followed the IE programme should equally be assessed in the same ways typically developing children (see 2.4). The children with SEN need to be registered as SEN candidates for the national examination in order to get some privileges, facilities and support services particularly during examination. For example, they will be allocated for extra time, they also will be appointed for reader for dyslexic candidates and they will be provided for support equipment such as computer, printer and magnifying glasses. Thus, mainstream teachers should be given training in terms of managing examinations to support children with SEN during assessments.

## **2.6 Issues and Challenges of IE in Malaysia**

It has been a constant challenge to create inclusive society and effective IE because there are many factors that form barriers toward the implementation of IE. The issues such as the misconception of IE, lack of training, stigmatisation and discrimination, lack of communication and collaboration, lack of support and lack of governance in IE policy are often highlighted in many studies (Wah, 2010; Ali et al., 2006; Jelas and Ali, 2014; Toran et al., 2010).

Furthermore, responding to various needs of children with SEN needs a comprehensive plan. In addressing the success of IE, one cannot deny the support, understanding and roles as well as partnership amongst the parents, teachers and schools in order to provide better support for the children with SEN. Realising the issues, SE Division (2014) has identified some challenges which need to be addressed in implementing IE, for example; self-advocacy, friendly facilities and equipment, support service, policy enhancement, early identification and intervention, smart partnership, quality and professionalism and co-operation.

### **2.6.1 Misconception of IE**

MEB 2013-2025 (see 2.2.2) is set to meet the challenges by implementing initiatives in all three waves; Wave 1 (2013-2015): strengthening existing foundations, Wave 2 (2016-2020): scaling up initiatives and Wave 3 (2021-2025): evaluating and consolidating initiatives. In the first wave of the Education Blueprint roadmap on “Improving quality and inclusion”; high functioning children with SEN are those who can cope with the mainstream curriculum and assessments will be encouraged to attend IE programme. Moderate-functioning children with SEN are those children who are considered as not able to cope with the national standard curriculum (they use alternative curriculum) but in terms of behaviour they are still manageable. For example, children with learning difficulties will need to attend SEIP. Low –functioning children with SEN

are those who cannot cope with mainstream curriculum. They will be encouraged to attend special schools where they can expect to learn a simplified curriculum focused on basic skills, life skills and social skills. Clearly, this shows that the categorisation and measurement and most importantly the concept of IE in Malaysia is still vague and confusing even at the level of policy making.

Awang Mat (2001) indicates that the progress of IE for children with learning difficulties has not yet fully developed as most children are still being placed in special classes in mainstream schools. According to Wah (2010), this happens because the current Malaysian education system does not support the needs of children with SEN due to the unfavourable conditions of the mainstream classrooms which do not support their learning process. For instance, physical lay-out of the classroom and number of children in the mainstream classrooms. Based on the IE Guidelines by SE Division (2013), the decision made by the school as to whether children with learning difficulties will receive full inclusion or half inclusion depends on two criteria; 1) able to cope with regular classroom learning without much help and 2) do not have behavioural conditions that cause disruption to regular classroom learning.

Consequently, the practice of IE in Malaysia is limited to the selection of children with SEN in the SE classroom to the mainstream classroom. It seems that the focus of IE is to assist children with SEN in fitting in the mainstream classroom rather than the school accommodating the children with SEN. In reality, successful IE depends on the ability of the children with SEN to accommodate and assimilate in the mainstream classrooms. Children with SEN need to prepare themselves in order to be accepted in the mainstream classroom. This situation is evident in the Preliminary Report on MEB (2012) whereby 89% children with SEN who enrolled in MOE schools were placed in SEIP (integrated), 5% of them attended SE schools and only 6% children with SEN were in IE programme.

Currently, schools do not have the ability to assess or baseline their IE programmes and therefore do not know how to improve. This is because the implementation of IE particularly at the preschool level is still not widely practised. Although the MOE has developed a tailored curriculum for visually and hearing impaired children, there is less support for children with learning difficulties. Ali et al. (2006) confirmed that there is a lack of a formal support system in the implementation of IE in Malaysia. Financial limitations could be one of the main barriers, for example The National Autism Society of Malaysia (NASOM) which has been providing trained teacher assistants in government schools in Kuala Lumpur to support the children in the IE programme since 2005 claimed that there was no financial provision by the MOE for this programme. Thus NASOM was not able to replicate the same model in other schools.

### **2.6.2 Exam-oriented system**

Undeniably the Malaysia education system emphasises academic achievement and the mastery of basic literacy and numeracy skills. The LINUS programme (Literacy and Numeracy Screening) is supposed to be a measurement for identifying children who are not achieving the expected national standard which is grade C in all subjects. The results from the LINUS are intended to indicate those who would benefit from receiving extra or remedial activities. However, LINUS could be seen as a tool for detecting the children as having SEN.

The children with SEN who seem to have good potential in academic areas are expected to sit the same national examination as they are given certain privileges in terms of the facilities during the examinations (MOE, 2013). Thus, the teaching and learning process become challenging not only to the children but also to the teachers. The teachers are expected to finish the syllabus and at the same time they are expected to follow the National Standard Curriculum and attain the same academic achievement as the typically developing children. As a result, teachers have no time to accommodate individual learning needs of all children (Jelas and Ali, 2014). Instead, children with SEN may get better support in terms of other opportunities, skills and resources if they are placed in SE classrooms such as annual assistance of RM 150.00 which is equivalent to £65.00 (MOE, 2014).

Indirectly, the LINUS Screening Test seems to be another tools which can be used to segregate or place a child in SEIP classes. There have been reports that schools may place poorly performing children (who may or may not have not having learning difficulties) in SE classes to avoid any impact on the schools overall academic performance in public examinations (Bar Council of Malaysia, 2009 cited in Chong (2016). This could be because some would see children with SEN; in particular children with learning difficulties as influencing the overall national examination results which might affect the national school performance or rank of the school. This is in line with the study by Hodkinson and Devarakonda (2009) who stated that one of the major challenges is the teachers' preparedness particularly for those who are working in schools which have adopted a policy of admission based on academic attainment. In this context, maintaining the cluster school status is crucial in order to receive RM 100,000.00 which is equivalent to £60,000.00 per year or the amount approved by the government and gain school autonomy (MOE, 2016).

### **2.6.3 Lack of training**

In Malaysia, SE teachers are trained by Institute of Teacher Education (ITEs) such as Specialist Teaching Training Institute (STTI) and public universities such as National University of Malaysia. These teachers are trained specifically to support different types of SEN such as

hearing impairment, visual impairment and learning difficulties which shows that SE in Malaysia seemed to be focused on disability rather than ability. Teachers who are trained to teach hearing impaired children have skills in sign language; meanwhile teachers who are trained to teach visual impaired children are trained to use all the visual impaired devices such as low vision magnifiers and braille equipment (Ahmad, 2011). Also there are teachers who are trained to support children with learning difficulties such as dyslexia, Down Syndromes and mild autism. These different types of training also sometimes create mismatched teaching options as not all teachers will be offered a placement based on their training. For example, there are teachers who have to teach children with learning difficulties even though they are trained to teach hearing impaired children. There are also cases where teachers who are teaching in SEIP are not properly trained to teach children with SEN. In reality, Malaysia faces an acute shortage of qualified teachers and SEN specialists (MEB, 2013).

To date, IE in Malaysia exclusively focused on primary and secondary schools but not on preschools. Razali et al., (2013) confirmed that IE in Malaysia has increased, however, IE at preschools level are rather limited and still new (Wang, 2008). This could partly be due to the lack of exposure and training in SE (Ali et al., 2006; Toran et al., 2010). Thus research is urgently needed for the implementation of IE at the preschool level.

#### **2.6.4 Stigmatisation and discrimination**

In order to be eligible and qualified to receive many educational benefits provided by the government, children need to be diagnosed and confirmed by the medical practitioners. Once diagnosis is confirmed, they need to register with the Department of Social Welfare to get an identification card which is used to claim benefits. However, society's perception, knowledge and awareness about SEN or disabilities could affect the children with SEN. For example there are cases reported in which several hearing impaired children would take off their hearing aids in public to avoid judgemental society (UNESCO, 2009).

#### **2.6.5 Lack of communication and collaboration**

Another issue regarding IE in Malaysia is the lack of communication and collaboration between mainstream and SE teachers. Ali et al., (2006) and Toran et al., (2010) reported that lack of communication and collaboration between mainstream and SE teachers arise in the process of implementing IE in schools. According to Sukumaran et al., (2014), the level of collaboration between the MOE with education administrators or principals or other non-governmental bodies such as KIWANIS Down Syndrome Foundation or NASOM are not effectively achieved. By working closely together, collaborations could be successful, for example in the pilot project between the MOE and NASOM which was entitled; 'A Pilot Project for Inclusive

Approach for Children with Autism' in one of the school in Malaysia (Kamaliah and Wan Amimah, 2010 cited in Kaur, 2015). This project was to identify the effectiveness of the implementation of IE at primary school level in one of the schools. Eight autistic children supported by teaching assistants from NASOM were included in the mainstream classroom. The project was successful as these children were happy and seemed able to follow the teaching and learning process. Thus this study highlighted the need of good planning and monitoring in the implementation of IE.

### **2.6.6 Lack of support**

The lack of allied health support services in schools has been a major barrier to the full implementation of IE in Malaysia (Lee and Low, 2014). For example, the shortage of specialists such as clinical psychologists, speech therapists and audiologists has resulted in a long waiting list for diagnostics process, the underutilisation of screening tools (such as MOH's Health Book Records) and a lack of standardised approaches for detection (MEB, 2013). Wah (2010) argued that the current resources and structure in the MOE is still inadequate to provide education for all children with SEN in mainstream classrooms. Although in general, teachers have positive attitudes towards IE (Ali et al., 2006), the support from every school and society members are needed by realising and accepting individual differences. Jelas and Ali (2014) concluded that the human side of education is more than just an ethics of justice but an ethics of care which is needs-based. The elements of understanding, values and beliefs may assist in formulating policies and practices of IE.

### **2.6.7 Lack of governance in IE policy**

Education in Malaysia is highly centralized yet the governance of ECCE and SE are under different Ministries which suggest a complexity not only in the implementation of IE but also in ECCE. Jelas and Ali (2014), argued that IE in Malaysia is seen as challenging "as policy makers have serious reservations about children with SEN because of competing priorities within the school system" pp 997. This could be because the primary concern of the government is to provide compulsory primary education to all children (including children with SEN) rather than emphasising IE (Wah, 2010).

The World Bank (2013) criticized that the centralised approach is the key constraint to improving the quality of basic education specifically to the lack of autonomy and shortcomings in teacher training and recruitment. The Education for All National Review Report (2015) reported that the administration of the entire education system under one ministry enables the application of sector wide planning using a single budget framework, which will lead to more rational decision-making and increase harmonisation across different levels of education.



## **2.7 Summary**

The accurate, clear and systematic implementation of policy should be addressed so that the process of its implementation can run smoothly. The management, integration and co-ordination at various levels within the ministries involved should be optimised in order to avoid confusion among the parents and the teachers as well as to ensure effective planning. Furthermore, the teachers, parents and society's attitudes need to change so that they realise the importance of IE particularly at the preschool level. This is not just about imposing a caring society but also accepting and understanding as well as creating an awareness on individual differences as well as understanding the uniqueness of an individual and tapping his or her potentials.

## Chapter Three: Literature Review

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into seven main sections. The first section 3.2, Understanding SEN, will define SEN and explore medical and sociological perspectives in relation to SE. Definitions of IE from international and developing countries perspectives will also be analysed. The second section 3.3, Trends in IE will discover different views from international and South-east Asia perspectives and models of IE. The third section 3.4 will relate IE with ECCE context. The fourth section 3.5, Exploring attitude, will discuss different views of attitudes, roles of attitudes and the formation of attitudes. It will then specifically explore teachers' attitudes in the context of IE. The fifth section 3.6, Developing the Theoretical Framework, will give an overview of the combination of the three-component attitude model and the ecological system of a teacher. Finally, the sixth section 3.7 will explore the potential factors influencing teachers' attitude by examining the bidirectional interactions that occur in teacher's life based on the four layers of the ecological systems theory. The summary in section 3.8 will then revisit all the important key ideas which are discussed in each section of this chapter.

### 3.2 Understanding SE

The history of SE is complex because many debates and issues are shaped by emotional responses, historical and cultural beliefs (Winzer, 2014). The development of SE has gradually changed from the establishment of institutions based on charity to the principle of normalization for social integration (which has become a target of criticism). Today, due to the changes of the idea of social justice, the reformation of education is adopted by SE as inclusive schooling. Although the ultimate goal of IE may be ideal, the complex definitions of SEN, the process of understanding and interpreting the ideas of IE as well as the barriers in its implementation remain entangled.

Generally, SE is specifically catered for children with SEN. This has led to more opportunity to education as SE offers service to fulfil educational rights yet simultaneously promotes segregation within the education system (Florian, 2014). This dilemma has been recognised by many scholars such as Homby (2012), Odom et al., (2011) and Anastasiou and Kauffmann (2011) who all agree that IE has important implications for SE policies and practices. This is reflected by the UNESCO's effort through EFA to ensure the rights for basic learning needs for all children with or without SEN. However, the term 'special' has explicitly reinforced the segregation which therefore, unable to resolve the problem of stigmatisation and discrimination among the children with SEN. Florian (2014) urges for new approaches in looking SE by

shifting the focus from differences among learners to learning for all. Florian (2014) also argues for a shift in thinking away from the idea that SE is a specialised response to individual difficulty to extending what is generally available to everybody in the classroom.

### **3.2.1 Defining SEN**

Broadly, the concept of SEN can be defined as to include “all children who are in need of additional support” (Florian, 2014, pp. 11). However, it is critically important to recognize that definition of SEN depends on one’s own perceptions and experiences. Different countries define SEN differently as they are specific to each country’s legislation. Some countries define SEN using a general definition of disabled children, others categorise SEN pupils into more than ten different categories.

For example, the definition of SEN in England and Wales which is based on the SEN Code of Practice (2001) refers to a child who has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. According to it, a child is considered as having learning difficulty if he or she has: 1) a significantly greater difficulty learning than the majority of children of the same age; 2) has a disability which either prevents him or her from utilising education facilities provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority. Moreover, if a child is under five and falls within the both definitions (1) or (2) or would do if special educational provisions was not made for the child. The current SEN and Disability Code of Practice (DfE/DH, 2015) acquires a different approach in identifying and supporting children with SEN than the previous categories of support ‘School Action’ and ‘School Action Plus’ (DfES, 2001). For example, children with more complex needs, a coordinated assessment process and an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan have replaced the Statement of Needs.

Whereas in United States of America, SEN means a child must be diagnosed as having a disability and the disability must be found to require special services. To receive SE services, a student must demonstrate a disability in one of 13 specific categories including autism, developmental disability, specific learning disability, intellectual impairment, orthopaedic or physical impairment, emotional and/or behavioural disability, speech and language disability, deaf-blind, visual impairment, other health impaired (including attention deficit disorder), multiple disabilities and traumatic brain injury (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004).

In Sweden, there is no legal definition of SEN as Swedish education follows the principle of school for all and the focus is on what kind of support the students’ needs and access to equivalent to education for all. In Spain, students with SEN refer to those who require certain support and specific educational attention due to disability or serious behavioural disorder

either for a period or throughout the whole of their schooling. The schooling of these students in SE centres or units which may be extended until the age of 21, will only take place when their needs cannot be met by the special needs provisions available in regular schools (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012).

It could be summarised that in each country, the national strategy for SEN provision and policy is based on the diverse national cultural values. Additionally, a child is recognised as having SEN if he or she is not able to benefit from education made generally available for other typically developing children. Thus SEN can cover from a range of needs including physical or mental disabilities, and cognition or educational impairments (UNESCO 2011). However, the identification of SEN causes dilemma which “categories may be justified in positive terms for disability and other areas of additional need but at risk for negative outcomes such as stigma, devaluation and exclusion” (Norwich, 2014, pp.68). The goal and rationale for IE may differ based on two different perspectives namely medical and sociological which will be further discussed in 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

### **3.2.2 The medical perspective**

According to Barnes and Mercer (1996), the medical perspective is based on the deficits and personal and functional limitations which is still dominant in SE. Booth (1988) argues that the medical perspective dominates the conceptualising of the problems children face in schools. From this perspective, “the goal of SE is to provide children with SEN with the skills needed to function normally in a normal situation... when people differ from the norm on various traits and abilities they are considered exceptional ”(Dudley-Marling and Burns, 2014, pp. 18). In order to achieve the goal, several approaches are employed to assist the specific needs for example giving more time on tests or certain materials given and applying different strategies or methods in teaching presumably by trained SE teachers to address children with SEN.

Following this perspective, if the children of SEN are able to function in the mainstream classroom without changing the curriculum, the placement in the mainstream classroom would be appropriate (Scanlon and Baker, 2012). If the children with SEN are unable to learn the regular curriculum in mainstream classrooms, then the placement is regarded as unsuitable for them (Ferri, 2012). This principle concurs with Liasidou et al., (2014) who indicate that SE is intended to respond to children’s right to education by devising effective educational measures and intervention. It is also argued that children with SEN require supports from specialized trained teachers (Anastasiou and Kaufmann, 2011); accommodation in terms of class size and curriculum (Kilanowski-Press, Foote and Rinaldo, 2010); and extra attention from teachers which negatively affect typically developing children in the same classroom (Grider, 1995).

Indeed the active process of mixing the children with SEN with typically developing children requires critical roles in facilitating social interactions among the children. From the view of educational practices, medical perspective seems to offer the classification and placement of children with SEN based on different types of SEN (Lalvani, 2013). According to Dupoux et al., (2005), teachers tend to regard education in separate settings as best practices for children with severe, cognitive and multiple disabilities. This concurs with Oliver and Rechly (2010) who indicate that teachers are not adequately prepared to manage children with EBD because they are frequently too disruptive and need to be separated from other typically developing children.

In relation to this, the concept of inclusion has been criticized as ideological and value-based rather than pedagogical rationale that results in the delusion of being present in school equates with socially and educationally included (Cooper and Jacobs, 2011). Warnock and Norwich (2010), also questioned the concept of inclusion as all children 'under the same roof' and the need for some specialist provisions for some children in separate settings. Indeed, IE is not just about enrolling in mainstream classrooms but it is about attending to the individual needs by ensuring the use of the most appropriate practice.

On the other hand, Farrell et al., (2010) criticizes that the medical perspective is insufficiently holistic and insufficiently concerned with patient's participation and violate his or her rights to be responded to as a person not an object. Terzi (2007) also agrees that medical perspective focuses on the causal origins of disabilities rather than looking at the capability approach where the judgements about equality/inequality become a matter of capabilities.

Consequently, schools should be improved by involving moral and political reasoning (Ainscow and Miles, 2008) that are based on the understanding of IE and the theories and perspectives which underpin SE before embarking IE. This is in line with Gallagher (1994) who concludes that including children with SEN in the mainstream classroom does not indicate fairness however, meeting their needs such as specialised instruction (Causton-Theoris, 2011), modification of methods and materials (Scanlon and Baker, 2012), training in SE for mainstream teachers (Osgood, 2005) and team teaching (Scanlon and Baker, 2012) are important toward achieving good quality of life. As such, the collaboration among SE teacher, preschool teacher, parents and specialists through IEP will allow technical solutions for best practices for children with SEN (Anastasiou and Kauffman, 2011).

### **3.2.3 The sociological perspective**

Based on sociological perspective, IE is about social justice and a political position (Slee, 2011) as well as human rights agenda (Wilde and Avramidis, 2011). The existence of SEN is recognised as differences and a social construction which represent normal human variation

(Miller, 1993). Biklen (2005) argues that sociological perspective focuses on a presumption of competence. This means that all children regardless of their differences are smart and competent learners. It is suggested that these children should be challenged with rich and various activities in the classroom yet the need for individualised support provided by SE teachers is still needed.

As discussed in 3.2.2, children with SEN are permitted to access to mainstream classroom only when they can function within the normality of typically developing children. However, the sociological perspective rejects this idea because IE requires treating all children the same and ignoring differences, which at the same time giving extra support in order to function in mainstream classrooms (Morrier and Gallagher, 2011). Ferguson and Nusbaum (2012) demonstrate that the presence of children with SEN in mainstream classrooms does not negatively affect the academic achievement of typically developing children.

From the sociological perspective, two broad paradigms relating to social theories of SE are based on functionalist and critical paradigms. According to Riddel (2014), based on the functionalist paradigms, the role of SE is to identify those children who should be excluded because they may disturb the social order. Conventionally, this approach is utilised in SE where majority of the countries adopting SEN classification system such as hearing impairment, visual impairment, learning difficulties and others (Florian and McLaughlin (2008). Thus, placements for children with SEN are based on the types or categories of special needs.

In the early of 1980s to mid-2000s, making regular schools more inclusive has become the highlight (Riddel, 2014). The curriculum, pedagogy and classroom organisation are reformulated to support teachers, resources, assessments as well as achievement which gear the policy makers in maximising efficiency. According to Farrell (2004), the concern with the structure and equilibrium in society has become a focus because SEN is seen as a social problem. Similarly, Ho (2004) warns us to be aware of 'pathologising differences' and the disadvantaging potential of our educational and social structure as we often ignore and stigmatise those who are considered different. In this light, the attitudes of non-disabled persons are considered the most important barrier that people with disability face (Anastasiou and Kauffman (2013), World Health Organisation, 2011). Thus, social model of disability provides accommodation for the children with SEN in order to minimize the impact of disability on the person's personal experience.

In contrast to the medical perspective, the sociological perspective considers on the practice and policies that oppress the children with SEN rather than focusing on specific impairments. Although there may be practical and pedagogical limitations to IE, denying opportunity and access to education violate the rights of children with SEN. As such, social inclusion discourse

may influence the government's decision in imposing policy particularly regarding the children with SEN and equal opportunities to education. Therefore, Slee (2011) concludes that IE is an inspiration and a statement of value which highlights the principle of equality and social justice in education and community.

### **3.2.4 Beyond medical and sociological perspectives**

In addition to the medical and sociological perspectives, it is useful to view other perspectives from the combination of those two perspectives. For example, the ecological system theory, causal modelling and a new synthesis in motor development.

The ecological system theory explains the interactions that happen within the layers or systems that influence the teacher's attitude towards IE. The four interacting levels of the system are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. The development of this framework will provide a clarification on identifying factors which encircled the study of teachers' attitude towards IE.

Within the system which encompasses the four main layers demonstrate the interconnectedness of an individual and the environment which influence their attitudes, behaviour or motivation. The relationships and interactions that happen within the system may help to understand how a person perceives and deals with the environment. It is suggested that the teachers' attitude is influenced by bi-directional interactions within the ecological system namely microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem which is conceived as a set of nested structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This enables us to assess factors that may relevant to such problems. Research on teachers' attitude has addressed many factors such as, age, teaching qualification, gender, training and experience with contact and support which has an impact on the teachers. Yet attitudes are influenced by a set of factors operating inside and outside the classroom.

Understanding the linkages amongst these factors is crucial in identifying the barriers to the implementation of IE at the preschool level. The inclusive classroom settings may be influenced by the relationship among the children with SEN, the parents, other teachers, SE teachers, specialists, therapists who provide services, the school principals, school communities, the MOE policies relating to children with SEN, and cultural values of the community at large. The multidimensional relationship within the system may help to understand and shape the implementation of IE at the preschool level.

Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) conceptualisation of the ecology of human development provides a useful framework for this study and the use of attitude model may help to unpack the teachers' attitudes towards IE. Thus, this framework is developed by combining the attitude

model and the ecological system theory to provide insights and understanding of the preschools' attitudes towards IE as well as identifying barriers in the implementation of IE. The factors within the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem should be investigated as these may not only affect the quality of inclusion in the classroom setting (microsystem) but also the relationship of the parents and other professionals (SE teachers, specialists, school principals and other teachers) (mesosystem) may affect the process of inclusion. Therefore how the policies are organised and delivered can affect its implementation (exosystem) and indeed cultural context may also affect the beliefs and ideology of IE (macrosystem).

Causal modelling defines disorders or conditions within the biological and behavioural level. In other words, from medical perspectives the cause of SEN is often stressed from the biological level whereas from sociological perspectives may tend to focus on the behavioural level. Thus Morton and Firth (1995) proposed the third level which is the cognitive level. This means that between the biological level and behavioural level, the intervening cognitive level is required such as biological, cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors (Morton, 2008). This model is a tool to understand existing research about autism, dyslexia, hyperactivity and conduct disorders. The diagrams are used to create the causal modelling framework by utilising the concept of causation to facilitate diagnosis. Morton (2008) argues that the focus on the true cause arises at the biological and cognitive level with environmental interaction taking place at both substrates.

A new synthesis in motor development allows a new insight into the processes by which infants and children learn to control their bodies. Thelen (1995) argues that studies are less concerned with how children perform and more with how the components cooperate to produce stability or change. Thus she proposes a new multidisciplinary in developmental psychology which emphasises mental and social life of the child and uses individuals and their families and environmental contexts as the units of analysis.

From these point of view, therefore, the dilemma between medical and sociological perspectives could be balanced and pragmatically acted in sensible ways. Thus, for this study, the ecological model is chosen as the theoretical framework in order to understand teachers' attitude towards IE as it provides multidimensional ways in exploring teachers' attitudes (see section 3.6).



### 3.3 Trends and Issues in IE

Over the past years, IE can be characterized by segregation, by integration and by inclusion (Nutbrown et al., 2013). The concept of IE can be seen as welcoming and educating all learners including the children with SEN by removing discrimination and segregation 'regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional or other conditions' (UNESCO 1994). To date, IE has not only become an international trend in developed countries but also in many developing countries including Malaysia. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994) and Article 24 of the UNCPRD has been generally accepted by most of the countries in the world. Both policies highlighted the importance of IE as a means of enabling disabled people of all ages to participate freely in society. Thus many countries have pledged to the UN Convention in supporting IE under the premise of EFA which is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all (Peters (2004).

Farrell (2004) sees the conflict arises in IE. On one hand, children with SEN should be included in mainstream classrooms because not providing opportunity for children with SEN in mainstream classrooms is seen as inequality, intolerance and discrimination. On the other hand, children with SEN who received education in SE schools are seen as receiving appropriate attention and treatment in terms of funding, better facilities and proper education that suitable for them. Both perspectives as discussed in 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 have impacted on the different approaches in attending the children with SEN as well as in the implementation of SE and IE.

Kauffmann and Hallahan (1995) criticise that full IE would be damaging both to the children with SEN and SE community. This statement is supported by Warnock (2005) who argues that the ideal IE is superficial which means that for some children SE schools could be the best or the only option for them. Thus Terzi (2010) suggests that IE should be redefined so that the children with SEN could be included in the settings which suit them best.

Ainscow et al., (2012) argue that the debate about the terminology, definitions and implications of IE is often contested, confusing and stagnant which creates a barrier in understanding IE not only amongst the stakeholders but also the public. Meanwhile Hornby (2012) highlights that "the confusions are about definitions, rights, labelling, peers, etiology, intervention models, goals, curricula, reality, finance, means and ends, and research evidence" (pp. 53). Farrell (2010) concludes that the rationale for IE is flawed and that there is lack of empirical evidence to support its effectiveness due to misunderstandings or lack of knowledge of current theory. Thus, Tedesco et al., (2014) propose that IE should contain "openness, willingness and competencies to understand, embrace and support the diversity of learners' profiles,

circumstances, needs, styles and expectations as a powerful source for democratising and enhancing learning opportunities, process and outcomes” (pp.149).

The political judgement about the roles of SE and IE provisions influence the interactions within schools and society. In relation to both perspectives as discussed in 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 has impacted on the different approaches in attending the children with SEN as well as in the implementation of SE and IE. According to Slee (2011), the educational reformation such as changes in the thinking, curriculum, pedagogy and school organisation should be the focus in the implementation of IE. In reality, IE faces resistance from certain groups such as members of the deaf community (Osgood, 2005) as well as mainstream teachers and parents. This could be because politically, mentally and practically they are not ready to embark IE; not because they are negative towards children with SEN but the existing barriers affect in the implementation of IE (Malak, 2013; Rajovic and Jovanovic, 2013; Purdue, 2009).

Undoubtedly, all agencies including teachers, parents, specialists and policy makers are committed to give the best for the children with SEN. The movement based on the sociological perspective emphasises on social and cultural contexts where schools need to be able to accommodate children with SEN. Thus schools have been given greater pressure to respond to the demands of IE and children with SEN.

To conclude, IE has received much attention that many policy guidelines and SEN provisions support the principle of including as many children as possible in regular schools but at the same time maintaining SE provisions (Hornby, 1999). This could be related to the different perspectives and ideologies undertaken by policy makers which influence the concept of IE and its interpretations. The policy makers need to address a realistic vision for IE and in terms of practice they should be aware of the resources available based on the socio-cultural context (Hornby, 2012).

### **3.3.1 Defining IE**

Stemming from the development of SE since the 1920's, SE has been widened and refined because segregation of children is now perceived as unacceptable (Pijl et al. (1997). The history of IE is rooted from SE research (Florian, 2014) where the definition of IE has evolved. In 1960s, the definitions of IE are concerned about the segregated education and overrepresentation of children with SEN which link to civil right issues while in the early 1970s the definitions of IE have been advanced to the fundamental change of structure and practices of SE (Osgood, 2005). In 1990s, IE is seen as a process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion which has led to the ideas school improvement in order to shift away from differences between learners towards changing school practices (Ainscow, 1991). In

2000s the definitions of IE has become contextual reflecting different concept of inclusion and has taken in many forms in different part of the world (Florian, 2014). As a result, various views and perspectives in understanding IE have brought a new challenge for teachers in its implementation. Table 6 below shows different views and definitions of IE.

**Table 6.** Different views and definitions of IE

No	Definition/Views	Authors
1	Four key principles of IE; 1. Providing all learners engaging and flexible curricula; 2. Embracing diversity and responsiveness; 3. Using reflective practices and differentiated instruction and 4. Establishing community collaboration.	Salend (2015)
2	“IE is generally considered to be a multi-dimensional concept that includes the celebration and valuing of difference and diversity”	Homby (2015) pp.235
3	“IE demands respects for students diversity based on social justice principles that underpin democratic societies by considering all students as learners with equal rights but with a diversity of needs”	Bentley-Williams and Morgan (2013) pp.173
4	IE (based on the social model of disability) recognizes the value of people with disabilities and the positive contributions they make to society.	Florian (2008)
5	IE is a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education.	UNESCO (2005)
6	“Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.”	The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, para 3
7	“...including all children in the common educational enterprise of learning, whenever they learn best”.	Wamock (2005) pp.14
8	“IE ..involves the identification and minimising barriers to learning and participation and the maximising of resources to support learning and participation”.	Booth (2000) pp.13

Based on the table, it can be concluded that within SE, IE refers to a philosophy of education that promotes education of all children in regular schools. Salend (2015) has drawn four key principles of IE that include providing all learners engaging and flexible curricula, embracing diversity and responsiveness, using reflective practices and differentiated instruction and

establishing community collaboration. All children have the right to learn and play together and they should not be devalued or discriminated against by being excluded or sent away because of their SEN. Instead, the diversity should be celebrated, addressed appropriately and respected based on social justice by including and accommodating their needs to increase participation in learning (Homby, 2015; Bentley-Williams and Morgan, 2013; Florian, 2008; UNESCO 2005; Warnock, 2005; Booth, 2000).

The Dakar Framework of Action called for more inclusive approaches to address for all children to be educated together. Prior to the first conference on EFA in Jomtein 1990, the Salamanca Statement in 1990 and the World Education Forum at Dakar in April 2000 have resulted in the paradigm shifts in many countries especially towards equal opportunities for children with disabilities. However, full IE cannot be successfully implemented without changing the education policies which may treat selected children as members of minority groups.

For the purpose of this thesis, the definition of IE which has been adopted is that of Homby (2015) who summarised IE as a multi-dimensional concept that values differences and diversity by addressing human rights, social justice and equity issues. It proposes a social model of disability and a socio-political model of education which include the process of school transformation and focuses on children's entitlement an open access to education. This definition is chosen for the reason that it corroborates comprehensive elements in IE by recognising the complexity of human rights from the sociological perspective as well as considering the socio-cultural context which ultimately emphasises on the school improvement.

### **3.3.2 Models of IE**

Due to the lack of consensus regarding a definition of IE, there are many forms of IE which are undertaken by different schools or programmes (Odom et al., 2004). Guralnick (2001) identifies four different models of IE that can be implemented in schools namely 1) *full inclusion* where children with SEN are full participants in the general environment and the general early childhood teachers are responsible for all of the children although specialists such as speech therapist can be integrated into the early childhood curriculum; 2) *the cluster model* where a small group of children with SEN is embedded within an existing program designed to serve typically developing children; 3) *reverse inclusion* refers to settings in which 40% of all children are typically developing children who are added into a specialised program (substantial variations in terms of curriculum, structure and philosophy of education) for children with SEN; and 4) *social inclusion* where children with SEN and typically developing children are in the same location or building but spend most of their days separately with separate staff. Social interaction opportunities are planned during recreational times and free play.

Similarly, Norwich (1999) has proposed four conceptual models of IE namely; 1) full non-separatist inclusion where the concept of accommodation of full diversity of individual needs without dedicated support services; 2) participation in the same place means that dedicated systems for the children with SEN to support participation in the mainstream classrooms but not in separate location; 3) focus on individual need where children with SEN participated to socialise with wider diversity of children; and; 4) elective inclusion is the education system accommodates parental preference.

Meanwhile, Black-Hawkins and Amrhein (2014) propose the framework for participation which include; 1) participation and access (being there); participation and collaboration (learning and working together); 2) participation and achievement (supporting everyone's learning) and; 3) participation and diversity (recognizing and accepting differences). This framework not only helped to address concern and support for IE but also contribute to an understanding of IE as a pedagogical knowledge.

Malaysia has adopted two different models of IE which are full inclusion and half inclusion (MOE, 2014). In full inclusion, the children with SEN will learn together with the typically developing children in full time. They will also follow the same national curriculum or modified national curriculum with or without any support services. Meanwhile, half inclusion means that the children with SEN will learn together with the typically developed others only in certain subjects or only involve in certain co-curriculum activities which are based on their potentials, talent and abilities (see section 2.5).

Although there are many different models of IE, Baglieri et al. (2011) stress that IE is a model of democracy at work as nowadays the trend is towards more inclusive forms of education. This is because in reality, schools are experiencing a large diversity of children including children with SEN who require a range of different approaches to meet their needs. Although many scholars resist the idea of IE and some disability-focused organisations argue for separate and specialist services (Ainscow 2008; Booth, 2011). Attempts are being made to provide and improve more effective and quality provision and equal opportunities for all children regardless of their differences.

Despite the strong movement towards IE, major controversies remain. For instance, different countries have uniquely interpreted and implemented IE influenced by the politics, allocation/budget, priority, locality, resources as well as cultural background. The following sections will explain the different perspectives of IE derived from the western perspectives such as United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. These countries were chosen because of the development of policies and practice of IE have been well-established as compared to South-east Asia countries namely, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei and Thailand

where IE is still progressing and developing. Additionally, the term IE and inclusion will be used interchangeably.

### **3.3.3 International perspectives of IE**

IE has become a global agenda as an objective of EFA initiated in Jomtien in 1990 and reaffirmed by the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000. Convened by UNESCO in 2015, a comprehensive new vision “beyond 2015” has been developed by placing education at the heart of the global development agenda. “Beyond 2015: The Education We Want” recognizes the consensus on the need for a new and forward looking agenda which addresses new challenges and at the same time tries to reach the most marginalized and gives more emphasis on equity, quality and learning. Similarly, the Incheon Declaration (2015) sets out a new vision for education for the next fifteen years; Education 2030. One of the new visions is inclusion and equity as a tool for changing education agenda. The focus will be on those with disabilities through the commitment in addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, inequalities in access and learning outcomes.

Globally as well as in the Western countries, there is a move towards inclusive practice in line with the Salamanca Statement and the UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009) such as the educational justification, social justification and economic justification. In the United States, Education of All Handicapped Children’s Act gazetted in 1975 where Public Law 94-142 mandated all students with disabilities be provided with a free and appropriate education in the least restricted environment which eventually renewed as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 (Dudley-Marling and Burns, 2013).

Meanwhile in England, the Warnock Committee (DES, 1978) introduced the concept of SEN and supported the principle of educating children with SEN in regular schools and endorsed parental participation in decision-making about their children (Norwich, 2008). These ideas were stipulated in the Education Act 1981 that established the legislative framework. In Italy, the 1971 Education Acts reinforces the inclusion of handicapped pupils in regular schools (Buzzi, 1995 cited in Mittler 2012) and in the Netherlands, the government introduced the ‘Weer Samen Naar School’ (WSSN) which focused on children with learning disabilities and mild mental retardation at primary level in early 1990s (Norwich, 2008). New Zealand has less than 1% of children educated in SE schools and its policy of IE through the 1989 Education Act gave the legal right for all children to attend their local mainstream schools from age 5-19 years (Hornby, 2012).

It can be concluded that the ideology of IE is implemented in different ways across different contexts and national policies which are influenced by social, cultural contexts. Therefore,

differing policy and practice as well as models of IE may not suitable to be adopted and transferred due to different political, social and economic. However, one common consensus is that IE is a process of increasing participation in the culture, curriculum and community of regular schools and must be understood as a human right but also as a tool for achieving human rights (Booth et al., (2002) and Florian (2008).

The current situation shows that many schools have a large diversity of children including children with SEN which will require differentiated education (Pijl, 2010). Thus, Norwich (2008) suggests the restructuring of regular schools to accommodate all children to promote inclusive society as well as to reduce social exclusion. Most importantly, all agencies must work together towards a more balanced model which will benefit the children with SEN both in school environment and society.

### **3.3.4 South-east Asia countries' perspectives of IE**

In other parts of the world, IE is interpreted and implemented differently based on socio-cultural reasons. South-east Asia comprises of Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, the Philippines, Timor Leste, Cambodia, Laos and Brunei have embraced IE. These countries are located between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean with different kind of languages and dialects as well as religions and diverse cultures. For example, based on the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) (2016), the Human Development Index (HDI) indicates that Brunei and Singapore are rank as very high HDI, followed by Malaysia and Thailand with high HDI and Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam, the Philippines, Timor Leste, Cambodia and Laos as medium HDI. Based on the countries' economies, World Bank (2017) categorised Singapore and Brunei as high income countries, meanwhile, Malaysia and Thailand are categorised as upper middle income whereas Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam, the Philippines, Timor Leste, Cambodia and Laos are categorised as lower middle income.

In relation to the studies on IE in the South-east Asia regions specifically Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia and Thailand show that IE is on-going and developing. In Singapore, SE provisions typify a dual system where children with severe disabilities are placed in separate special schools and children with mild disabilities are served within general education schools (Yeo et al., 2016). Meanwhile, in Brunei, the emphasis on IE is reflected in the teacher education by developing innovative strategies for teaching and managing children with SEN including the collaborations between mainstream teachers with Special Educational Needs Assistance (SENA) teachers (Koay, 2014). Interestingly, the implementation of IE in Indonesia and Thailand seemed to share similar challenges such as the lack of commitment by the government, lack of information about IE and lack of support in terms of finance, training and infrastructure (Poernomo, 2016; Bualar, 2015).

Nonetheless, the implementation of IE is very much influenced by the locality and resources available which include the culture, finances, people and attitude. Groce and Bakhshi (2011) listed assumptions linked to disabilities in developing countries; 1) education is not needed as child born with disability will not survive long; 2) if the child survives, he/she will not learn or only learn with difficulty; 3) the child with disability is a lifelong burden; 4) his/her education is undervalued and 5) poor parents often prefer to invest in education of a non-disabled sibling. In addition, some of the common barriers to IE such as external factors (legislation/policy, regulations), school factors (the structure of special services in schools, role of special education), teachers factors (teachers' attitudes, the knowledge and skills) and parents factors (awareness about services and educational options) have been identified (Srivastava, 2016). All of these barriers may limit the implementation of IE due to the socio-cultural and political contexts.

Debating IE along medical and sociological perspectives lines seems never ended. IE can be positioned as a cause of concern particularly in its practice and on the other end IE means the changes in the education system which involves school system, teacher education, beliefs, attitudes and values. According to Charema (2010), there are some of the major challenges that many developing countries faced in the implementation of IE which include; 1) Individual differences are normal; 2) Learning differences must be adapted to the needs of the child; 3) Schools must attend to the needs of the child; and 4) IE is an exercise of human right. These elements are some of the fundamental elements in the conceptual of IE. However, the lack of availability of resources, the lack of the funding for teacher training and professional development create barriers in implementing IE.

Miles and Singal (2010) conclude that the difference between IE in western countries and developing countries is that in most western countries, IE means including children with SEN in mainstream schools whereas in developing countries IE means providing schooling for all children including children with SEN. This could be interpreted that any models of inclusion adopted in western countries may or may not work in developing countries. This can be supported by the statement from UNESCO (2011) whereby, approximately 57 million primary school-aged children still do not attend school and many children with SEN have been denied access to education due to many reasons. It is important to note that the terms impairments (loss or lack of functions), handicap (disadvantage that makes achievement unusually difficult) and disabilities (inability to perform some activities) are used interchangeably which may be interpreted differently across contexts.

Indeed there are challenges of using Western literature to understand IE in the Malaysian context. The perspectives of Western authors regarding IE can be considered on a continuum.



At one end IE is viewed as all or nothing. For example, Slee (2011) and Ainscow et al., (2013) view IE as the right for every child to be included in the mainstream classroom regardless of their SEN. Others provide a more moderate, flexible or half-way response to the IE agenda (Hornby, 2012; Florian, 2014) (see section 3.3). In addressing these notions within the continuum, I think a flexible approach in IE is more aligned with Malaysian context, taking into account socio-cultural factors such as political views and the availability of funding and resources. I believe that raising societal understanding and awareness of IE and the needs of children with SEN is the current priority.

From my perspectives as someone who has worked in different roles in the Malaysian education system and has spent time in the UK reading extensively in the discourse of IE, I think IE in Malaysia has adopted a moderate approach. IE in Malaysia is still in progress and developing, the concept of full inclusion is not feasible at this point of time. At present, although the concept and approach of IE is clearly stated in the guidelines, the focus is still on the functionality of a child (see section 2.5). The medical perspective dominates Malaysian discourse and approach to SE in general and IE specifically (see section 2.6).

However, I believe full participation for all children regardless of their SEN could be possible when IE in Malaysia becomes more 'mature' and experienced in its implementation. Drawing on the work of Slee (2011) and Ainscow et al., (2013) as well as Hornby (2012) and Florian (2014), the best practices of IE for Malaysia should relate to the real situation in Malaysian education system which involve paradigm changes for IE. Utilising the available resources and improving the quality of teacher education and continuous professional development amongst teachers need to be recognised by continuously imparting knowledge about IE and children with SEN. Thus teachers need support from every agency in order to implement IE and to promote the potential of the children with SEN. To increase participation of children of SEN in the mainstream classrooms, attitudinal changes not only among teachers but also the parents, school administration, specialists and society are needed.

### **3.4 IE and ECCE**

UNESCO gives special attention to children with disabilities as they are overrepresented in the population of those who are not in education (UNESCO, 2017). However, ensuring every individual receives an equal opportunity to education remains as a challenge. Preschool or ECCE settings have been emphasised as one of the most crucial for a child's life regardless of whether or not they have SEN specifically for physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. According to UNICEF (2017), childhood is a precious time in which children should live free from fear, safe from violence and protected from abuse and exploitation.

Therefore, the preschool setting which typically the first setting the children enter outside of their family circle should provide the environment that maximise the full potential in a child. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2017) indicates that preschool education delivers foundations for a child's prospective skills development and learning. This section will highlight the importance of IE within the ECCE context and explore the concerns related to IE which seemingly have not changed over the years.

### **3.4.1 The rationale of IE in ECCE context**

Experiences in the first few years of a child's life build a good foundation for health, intellectual development and social competence (Rhodes and Huston, 2012). Some ECCE programmes are known as infant education, nursery education, pre-school education, kindergarten or early childhood education. Upon completion of these programmes, children continue their education at the primary level. Indeed, quality provision of ECCE programme will ensure the children's happiness, healthiness, curiosity and ultimately their preparedness for primary school. The UN General Assembly which adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989 has emphasised child well-being as well as child development. Thus providing ECCE of good quality is a powerful means of ensuring the rights of young children especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged (UNESCO, 2015).

Different countries have different approaches to ECCE provision. The roles of women, household structures and fertility levels have influentially shaped ECCE provision (UNESCO, 2006). The changes in family structures and household such as more women working outside home, single-parent and female-headed households potentially have an effect the ECCE. The historical pattern of ECCE provision are changing from charity movement to public responsibility (Lascarides and Hinitz, 2013). The existence of early childhood programme in developing countries such as Malaysia is more recent (1970s) and preschools mainly exist in urban areas. Preschools established by private providers are normally expensive and the quality of teaching is often questionable (Boon, 2015). According to Rhodes and Huston (2012), this is could be because a large number of teachers are poorly trained and badly paid.

Indeed, ECCE is the foundation for lifelong learning and well-being whereby quality ECCE programmes can facilitate holistic early child development (Marope and Kaga, 2015). The positive impact of ECCE programmes on participation in education at the primary level is well documented (Arnold, 2004; Bertrand and Beach, 2004; Young and Mundial, 1996, Young, 2002). Philips and Lowenstein (2011) indicate that high quality care and education matter that it could affect children's developmental needs. Thus, Maraope and Kaga (2015) emphasise that teachers should be recognised that they are professionals who require specialised and updated knowledge and skills in order to establish a strong relationship with the children. This

is in line with Magnuson and Shager (2010) who assert that high quality experience affect particularly for children from low-income background.

Walker et al., (2007, 2011) list principal factors that influence child development outcomes in poorly resourced ECCE settings namely; 1) stunting (indicative of chronic under-nutrition); 2) micronutrient deficiencies such as iodine and iron and; 3) inadequate cognitive stimulation adversely affect at least 20-25 per cent of young children in developing countries. Furthermore preventable risks such as poor nutrition, infections during pregnancy, difficult births and exposure to alcohol and drugs have been associated with low intelligence, learning difficulties, and sensory impairment (Kippler et. al., 2012; Noland et al., 1990; Klebanove and Brooks-Gunn, 2006).

These developmental risks in early childhood need to be attended before they become worse. For example, deaf and hard of hearing infants show significantly better language development if their hearing loss is addressed before the age of six months (Yoshinaga-Itano et al., 1998). Therefore, comprehensive early identification, assessment and intervention processes (Early Childhood Interventions-ECI) may potentially minimize the impact of disabilities (UNESCO, 2015). Ford et al. (2004) suggest adapting routine activities and individualised support in home and mainstream centre-based setting as one of the intervention approaches. This is in line with Guralnick et al. (2008) who conclude that early inclusion creates momentum to build maximum participation in inclusive settings. Many different countries such as Jamaica, Vietnam and Egypt have adapted ECI models (Portage model of home based intervention and Intervention for Sensitizing Caregivers), methods (parents as key partners) and tools (Parental concern-developmental scales) (Kapci et al., 2010; Fernald et al., 2009; Malhi and Singhi, 2001).

In summary, the support during the first few years of life is crucial in order to avoid a lasting long term effect on the children with SEN such as lack of self-esteem due to labelling. They may also be prevented from being stigmatised and labelled so that they are able to adapt their capabilities and tap their optimum potentials.

### **3.4.2 The Importance of IE in ECCE context**

Allen and Cowdery (2014) mentioned that, there are three benefits of IE; firstly it is related to the fundamental rights of children no matter what their abilities and disabilities are; secondly the provision of quality education and thirdly; the provision of opportunities to develop the children's social skills. According to Bricker (1995), there is a three-part rationale for preschool IE; first, it will provide opportunities that do not exist in SE classes containing only children with SEN. Second, the law recommends that children with SEN receive a free, appropriate education in settings that are typical and that include same-aged peers. Third, IE of a child in a class is the

most appropriate and ethical placement as it meets the child's and family's needs. Indeed, community awareness on children with SEN and IE needs to be increased specifically in basic understanding and acceptance of the children with SEN.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in November 1989 affirmed the right of all children to equal education without discrimination within the mainstream education. Following that, there are many views which consider the importance of IE particularly with preschool children. Based on National Association for the education for young children (NAEYC, 2009, pp.2), the definition of early childhood inclusion means "a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning". Therefore, providing access, participation and supports are the elements of early childhood inclusion which need to be taken into considerations. In order to articulate these elements, shared expectations, understanding, philosophy from families, organization and practitioners as well as revising the programs and professional standards are needed for high quality of IE.

Similarly, it can be synthesised from various research such as Odom, (2002); NPDC on Inclusion (2009); and Buysse and Hollingsworth (2009) on early childhood inclusion that; 1) IE has many characteristics; 2) Universal access to IE for all children with SEN is far from a reality; 3) Factors such as policies, resources and beliefs influence the acceptance and implementation of IE; 4) Specialised instruction, interventions and supports are important elements of IE which may affect child outcomes; 5) Collaborations is a key of high quality inclusion; 6) IE can benefit both children with SEN and typically developing children and; 7) Professional development is likely to ensure that teacher need the knowledge, skills and continuous support. Even though teachers may not be adequately prepared to serve children with SEN in inclusive settings, collaborations among parents, teachers and specialists is critical for high quality IE provision.

Following that, professionals or specialists must play their roles in informing, assisting, supporting and providing policy makers with accurate and objective information. Thus, segregating children with SEN will discriminate their chances of learning with their peers which exclude them the right for education. Based on the preschool context, the earlier children with SEN receive educational support in life, the more successful their schooling will be and in later years their quality of life will be higher. Therefore, early intervention should be prioritized by including inclusive strategies at the preschool level (3-6 years old) to assist children in earlier life (Sucuoglu et al., 2013). In order to have a wider reach, pre-service teaching programmes for IE as well as continuous professional development for in-service teachers need to be emphasised.

Research by Koegel et al. (2012) showed that children with SEN displayed better social skills and academic achievement when they learnt in the same environment with their peers. This is because IE can assist children with SEN in reducing the anxiety in building friendship and attaining respect from others around them. Johnstone (2010) claims that IE focuses on the effort of eliminating or reducing learning obstacles caused by inaccessible pedagogy, unsuitable expectations or the environment that limiting physical ability.

### **3.4.3 Concerns related to IE in ECCE context**

Opertti and Belalcázar (2008) have identified five major concerns on IE which are; 1) attitudinal changes and policy development; 2) ensuring inclusion through early childhood care and education; 3) inclusive curricula; 4) teachers and teacher education and; 5) resources and legislation. In addition, the issues of definition of inclusion, quality of inclusion, intensity and instructions; outcomes and goals, social integration as well as cost and funding (Odom 2000) have still remained as issues. Thus, IE requires a paradigm shifts in attitudes and values by clearly understand the concept of inclusion. Creating an inclusive curriculum requires flexibility in adjusting to different kind of needs so that everyone can benefit from a basic education.

Teachers have been overwhelmed by the shifts towards IE, therefore teachers face a new challenge in terms of understanding the concept of IE, teaching practice and classroom management. Indeed an effective inclusion may depend on the ability of the regular schools to meet the needs of the children with SEN which requires not only shared responsibility amongst school members but also in enhancing professional developments such as training amongst the teachers. With relation to inclusive schools, Campbell (2002) has identified six characteristics of inclusive school namely; recognising individual needs; recognising achievement; appreciating the diversity; physical location of the school; educational experience of the children and emotional well-being and social interaction of the children. However, presenting a holistic approach to bring about changes in the entire education system may seemed a bit superficial and impossible. Thus, in relation to this research, the study of teachers' attitudes towards IE is seen worth to be explored in order to understand human thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

## **3.5 Exploring Attitudes**

Attitudes are an aspect of human psychology frequently studied in the field of social science. Attitudes can be viewed from two key perspectives, psychological and sociological. According to Chaiklin (2011) psychological definitions of attitude attempt to reduce prejudice and discrimination by changing attitudes whereas sociological definitions of attitude looks at verbal

expression as an intention to act and to reduce prejudice and discrimination by changing behaviour. Several decades of research have stressed the importance of understanding how attitudes guide behaviours (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Petty et al., 1995; and Regan and Fazio, 1977). This section will explore attitudes in general and how it link within the context of IE.

### 3.5.1 Defining Attitude

The study of attitude formation is essential in understanding human thoughts and behaviour. Allport (1973) asserted that behaviour is as a direct result of attitudes whereas Johnson and Boynton (2010) state that attitudes both often directly and indirectly often impact on behaviour. Corsini (1999) defined attitude as a learned and stable predisposition to react to a given situation, person or other set of cues in a consistent way. This is parallel with Zimbardo and Leippe (1991) who stated that attitudes are formed by experience and learning and may reflect a person's personality. In contrast, LaPiere (1934) contended that behaviour is only minimally predicted by attitudes because attitudes are complex and variable. Table 7 shows a summary of different views and definitions of attitudes.

**Table 7.** Different views and definitions of attitudes

No	Definition/Views	Authors
1	Attitude as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour and disfavour."	Eagly and Chaiken (1993) p.1
2	Attitude as "an association in memory between a given object and a given summary evaluation of the object."	Fazio (1995) p.247
3	Attitude as "a general and enduring positive and negative feeling about some person, object and issue."	Petty and Cacioppo (1981) p.7
4	Attitude as "the categorization of a stimulus object along an evaluative dimension."	Zanna and Rempel (1988) p.391

Maio and Haddock (2014) indicate that there are three important aspects of attitude namely; attitude content, attitude structure and attitude function. These aspects are inseparable but distinct and they influence the attitude strength. They propose that there are also three attitude components, cognitive, affective and behavioural. Based on cognitive, affective and behavioural information; attitudes involves decision making of liking versus disliking a particular issue, object or a person. According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), attitude can be conceptualised as an evaluative judgement (positive versus negative) which differs in strengths in terms of the ability to withstand attack and guide behaviour (Petty and Krosnick, 1995).

Attitude can be measured in number of ways whether explicitly and implicitly (direct or indirect responses) and different intensity which may influence the undertaken actions. Most notably Louis Thurstone who developed the Equal Appearing Interval Method (1928) and Rensis Likert who created the Likert Scale (1932) both cited in Mueller (1986) have had a significant influence in the field of the attitude measurement. The Equal Appearing Interval Method is a unidimensional scale that measures attitudes based on a whole range of opinions from most strongly favour to most strongly disfavour, often in 11 categories, Category I indicates very favourable, neutrality and in Category XI indicates great favourableness (Sartain and Bell, 1949). A group of judges sort out the statements to find median score and interquartile range for each statement to create an attitudinal measurement scale. The Likert Scale is also a technique for attitudes measurement using five points classification: strongly approved, approved, undecided, disapproved and strongly disapproved to rate the degree to which the respondents agree and disagree with a statement. According to Boone and Boone (2012), Likert scale combines the responses from the series of questions to create an attitudinal measurement scale.

In order to explore and understand the attitudes of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE in Malaysia, this study will adopt the definition by Chambers and Forlin (2010), attitude is 'a learned, evaluative response about an object or an issues and a cumulative result of personal beliefs' (p 74). This is because the three-component model of attitude may provide a framework in understanding the teachers' attitudes. The behavioural, affective and cognitive component influence ones actions, feelings and beliefs towards attitudes objects.

### **3.5.2 Attitude formation**

Attitudes are mainly formed from experience, learning as well as social factors. Allport (1973) describes attitudes as "a state of mind of the individual towards a value." In other words, attitude can be described as a mental process which influences behaviour, feeling and thinking. For example, a person is likely to response based on his or her personal experience. Thus a person's attitude will determine what he or she will hear, think and do about the object (Allport, 1973).

Glasman and Albarracin (2006) indicate that attitudes based on direct experience promote greater attitude-behaviour consistency than those based on indirect experience. Whereas Franzoi and Christopher (2001); Smith and Mackie, (1995) and Jonas et al. (1997) agree that attitudes are developed from three sources: 1) beliefs about the object's positive or negative characteristics; 2) feelings and emotions towards it and; 3) past and current behaviours

towards it. In order to make sense of the social environment and gain connection with others, attitudes seems to be functional in the social activity.

Social constructionism is based on the sociological theory of knowledge which was developed by Mead, Marx, Schutz and Durkheim in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in order to understand the nature of reality (Burr, 2003). It aims to uncover ways in which individuals and groups play their parts in creating their own perceived reality. This is in line with Berger and Luckmann (1991) who view society as existing both as objective and subjective reality through social interactions which in turns caused in habitualisation and routinisation.

The patterns of evaluation is more or less consistent pattern with affective, cognitive and behavioural components. According to Glasman and Albaracin (2006), it is assumed that both direct experience and personal involvement induce individuals to think about their attitudes. In other words, people can construct stable attitudes if they have all the information about an object whether it is one sided or homogenous (Erber et al., 1995).

### **3.5.3 Models of Attitude**

de Boer et al. (2012) stated that in the field of attitude research, there are three major theoretical viewpoints about the basic nature of attitudes: the three-component model of attitude (e.g., Triandis, 1971), the two- component (e.g., Ajzen, 2005) and a single- component model (e.g., Dillon and Kumar, 1985). The three component viewpoint holds that attitude is a single entity with three-component- affective, behavioural and cognitive. This model was popular in 1960s but it has some weaknesses as identified in the research. Such as, some individuals base their attitude predominantly on their feelings whereas others base their attitude mainly on beliefs (Huskinson and Haddock, 2004).The second viewpoint about the nature of attitudes assumes that one usually distinguishes the cognitive and affective components, while the behavioural intentions are excluded (Fishbein and Ajzen (1974). Whereas the single – component models proposes that a distinction between the three components cannot be sensibly made (Dillon and Kumar, 1985).

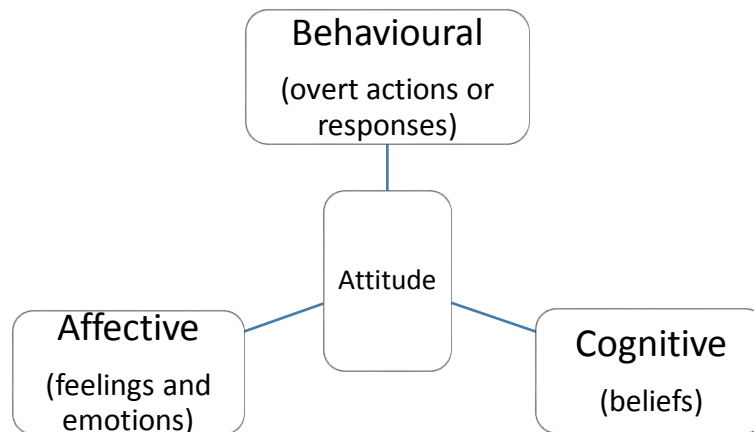
For the purpose of this study, the three-component model proposed by Eagly and Chaiken (1993); Triandis (1971) is adopted. This model offers how attitudes may be connected to thoughts, feelings and actions which may facilitate our understanding of how attitudes form, strengthen and change (Maio et al., 2012). Moreover this model dominates in research of attitudes (Avramidis et al., 2000).

The three component model asserts that attitudes consist of three components: affective, cognitive and behavioural. In relation to this study, cognitive is the individual belief or knowledge about IE, affective is the feeling about IE and behavioural is the predisposition to act



towards IE in a particular way. Thus, the teachers' attitudes could be perceived as the teachers' viewpoints or disposition towards an idea of the concept of IE and its implementations.

**Figure 4.** The three-component model of attitude (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Triandis, 1971)



Based on figure 4, affective is something related to feelings and emotions that one holds toward an attitude object, cognitive is about the beliefs one has towards an attitude object and behavioural is the overt action / responses that one has towards an attitude object. These three components will shape the formation of an attitude and they are influenced by the interaction that happens within the context or system in which the person is positioned. According to Weisman and Garza (2002), the formation and modification of teacher attitudes are an important area of education research to understand relationships between attitudes and the individuals' behaviour, feelings and beliefs.

Although there are many viewpoints on the model of attitude, the number of attitude components is still a matter of debate (de Boer, 2012). It can be concluded that contemporary attitude researchers generally agree and it is evident that attitude can be formed from cognitive, affective and/or behaviour information about the attitude object and expressed through cognitive, affective and/or behaviour responses (Eagly and Chaiken 2005, Fabrigar et al. (2005) and Oskamp and Shultz, 2005).

### 3.5.4 Attitudes and IE

Attitude plays a significant role in determining behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977). Triandis (1971) explains that the attitude construct is related to a person's affective responses including feelings, moods and emotions. Thinking positively or negatively towards a group of people can be categorized as having a positive or negative affect towards a member of that group

(Triandis et al., 1984). Thus, it can be deduced that a person who has positive affective experiences develop positive attitudes while a person who has negative affective experiences may develop negative attitudes. Decisions to include and exclude children with SEN depend on the willingness of teachers to accept and support these children (Forlin and Forlin, 1994). This demonstrates the influential roles of attitudes in determining the success of particular education policies or programmes.

There is a range of literature which identifies teachers' attitudes and their readiness to accept children with SEN as the most important aspect in ensuring the success of IE (de Boer et al., 2011; Sharma et al. (2008). According to Wu et al., (2008), teachers' attitudes are influential in affecting the social and psychological condition of the inclusive classrooms. Bakken (2008) argues that teachers cannot be expected to facilitate learning in the absence of his or her belief system. In particular, the impact that personal beliefs have on a teacher's willingness to engage in inclusive practices is vital to its implementation (Forlin et al., 2008). While most teachers have generally reported as being supportive of the ideology of IE, they tend to raise many concerns about their ability to be able to execute it effectively (Forlin and Engelbrecht, 1998). Therefore, in this study, it is important to explore the teachers' attitude in order to understand what their concerns are that might act as the barriers to their attitudes towards the implementation of IE.

Florian (2008) argues that IE is based on the principle that local schools should provide for all children regardless of any perceived difference, disability or other social, emotional, cultural or linguistic difference. As mentioned in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994), *"the trend in social policy during the past two decades has been to promote integration and participation and to combat exclusion. IE and participation are essential to human dignity and the exercise of human rights (p.11)"* which shows that IE is part of the global agenda that requires reforms not only leadership in policy, administration and programme implementation but also strategies to support teachers in an inclusive setting.

To some extent, creating inclusive learning environment is guided by the core principle that all children and young people should be educated in their local school whatever type of SEN they experience (Florian et al. (2010). In relation to teachers' role, their responsibilities and accountability need to be highlighted. Hegarty (1995), mentioned that IE depends critically on teacher variables specifically their willingness and ability to carry it out. This notion is consistent with Forlin (2010) and Leung and Mak (2010) statement that the role of teachers in establishing inclusive learning environment is vital as it relies to a large extent on teachers' knowledge, skills, understanding, capacity and attitudes (Hornby and Forlin, 2010; Home and Timmons,

2009). Thus, it is essential for teachers to be equipped with knowledge and skills to better prepare themselves for the implementation of IE.

Sharma et al. (2006) claim that a positive attitude is the most crucial factor in becoming an inclusive teacher. Teacher training is the first step in promoting positive attitudes and IE as teachers must know how to handle differences in the classrooms. This also relates with Rose (2008) who asserts that teachers' attitude could be shaped during the initial teacher training programme because experiences with IE can stimulate positive attitudes and abilities (Pijl et al, 1997). Avramidis et al. (2000a) conclude that teacher training should be viewed as a potentially influential antecedent to the teachers' commitment towards implementing a successful IE.

In relation to preschool teachers, they are facing increased pressure as their role has expanded and diversified (Avramidis et al. (2000b). Westwood and Graham (2003) argue that teachers have different responses to these challenges. Peterson and Beloin (1998) emphasise that mainstream teachers need to be more sensitive and more adaptive in their teaching styles in accordance to individual differences and different learning styles. According to Bernard (1990), some mainstream teachers view the philosophy of IE as an exciting challenge where the stresses are seen as life-sustaining, enjoyable and beneficial; on the other hand the experience can be challenging enough to cause teachers to become physiologically and psychologically stressed (Whiting and Young, 1996). This shows that the attitudes of teachers towards the implementation of IE are complex. Studies clearly demonstrate the success of IE depends on many factors including teachers' attitudes (Dymond et al. (2008); Hsieh et al. (2012).

According to Pijl et al. (1997), the study on attitudes has not reached that point of sophistication yet. Several research studies criticise the attitudes of teachers towards IE. Although research is clear that teachers' attitudes and expectations have a significant impact on a children self-concept and success (Purkey and Novak, 1996), research should not focus on demonstrating that attitudes are for or against IE. It should rather give insight into the reasons for different perceptions, trace the development of these attitudes and try to analyse their effects on those with SEN and their peers.

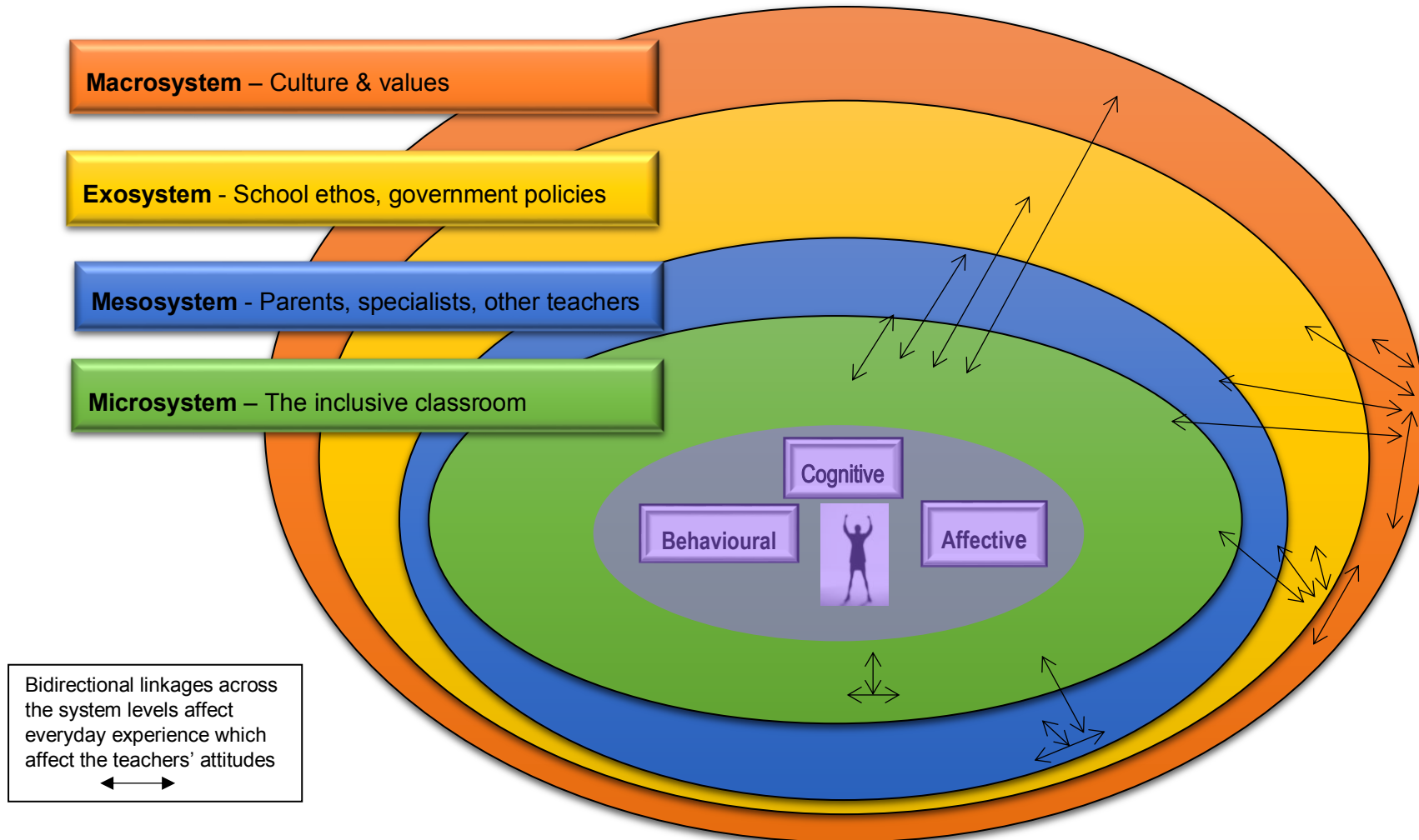
Another criticism on the implementation of IE is about the reforms of education policy which does not consider the teachers' perspectives or views before implementing IE. Reforms to teacher education have frequently not kept pace with these changes, making teacher preparation for IE often an unplanned and invariably an on approach (Sharma et al. (2006). As for Malaysia, because of the commitment prior to the Salamanca statement, the Ministry of Education is trying to keep up with the 'global trend' in IE. Farrell (2000) argues that IE is not necessarily appropriate to all children; which therefore creates tension among preschool

teachers who are not fully exposed to IE. Moreover, Agbenyega (2011) claim that lack of specialised teaching skills and lack of knowledge of IE are the challenges in relation to teachers' attitude towards IE.

### **3.6 Developing the Theoretical Framework**

For the purpose of this study, the three-component model of attitude which are cognitive, affective and behavioural (Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Triandis 1971) and ecological system theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) are adopted. Based on Figure 5, an attitude is comprised of three correlated but distinct components i.e. affective, cognitive and behaviour which is encircled by the ecological system theory. The ecological system theory explains the interactions that happen within the layers or systems that influence the teacher's attitude towards IE. The four interacting levels of the system are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. The development of this framework will provide a clarification on identifying factors which encircled the study of teachers' attitude towards IE.

**Figure 5.** Theoretical framework based on the three-component model of attitude (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Triandis, 1971) and ecological system theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)



## **3.7 Examining potential factors which influence teachers' attitudes using the ecological framework**

### **3.7.1 Attitude and Microsystem**

The first layer of the system is the microsystem which is related to the teacher's immediate environment. It consists of a "pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features, and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality and systems of belief" (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 227). As preschool teachers need to interact with the children with SEN, potential factors such as knowledge of IE, types of SEN, teaching experience and experience with contact and training will be examined. All of these factors might contribute to the teachers' attitudes towards IE whether it is a positive one or vice versa.

Agbenyega (2011) and Gyimah (2010) argue that many teachers viewed IE do not always benefit the children with SEN. This could be because of the inability to understand the concept of IE. Teachers may also seem unsure on delivering the concept of IE as they seemed to ground IE on the medical model perspectives which stressed the impairment and ignored the impact of environmental factors (Lindsay, 2003). However, Hornby (2012) reminds that whilst the children with SEN have a right to be included, they also have a right to receive an appropriate education which meets their specific needs.

Florian et al. (2010) claim that teachers need to understand the aspects of human development in any conceptualisation of learning or in other words teachers need to rethink the idea of not being capable to teach different types of learners. This means that rather than identifying and targeting specific groups of children in their pedagogical decision-making, the focus should be more towards what is generally available in classrooms (Florian and Rouse, 2009). Thus the concept of IE and its objectives must be clearly explained and defined. Moreover, teachers can shine and be more effective if they are given the right context, with well-designed curricula and assessment strategies to improve teaching and learning (UNESCO, 2014). Thus the knowledge to meet the learning needs of the children with SEN would therefore influence the teachers' attitudes towards IE.

The next factor which may influence teachers' attitudes is the types of SEN. Alhassan (2014) reported that children with severe disabilities would pose problem to effective teaching because they take a lot of time and that is unfair for typically developing children. These findings also resonate with Cooper and Jacobs's (2011) study which reported that teachers appeared to

experience significant difficulties such as children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the classrooms. Ling et al. (2010) found that teachers who had more knowledge about autism and had more work experience with children with autism showed less punitive intentions and saw the children as having more control over their own symptoms than teachers who had less experience working with children with autism and had less knowledge about autism. Their study emphasised that knowledge and experience correlate with less stereotyping of children with autism. Thus, knowledge about autism and interaction with autistic children may help in reducing labelling effects. Teachers seem to be more negative towards children with severe disabilities, emotional-behaviour difficulties or cognitive impairment. This can be related to teachers' self-confidence and their beliefs in their ability to deal with such pupils in the mainstream classrooms. It can be concluded that teachers' attitudes depend to a large extent on factors related to children with SEN.

Cooper and Jacob (2011) assert that teachers appeared to experience significant difficulties with children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the classrooms and therefore, this significant experience may contribute to the development of the teachers' positive or negative attitude towards IE. In contrast, it is found that teaching experience is not an important factor in teachers' attitudes towards IE (Marshall et al. 2002, Kalyva et al. 2007; Batsiou et al 2008 and Gyimah et al. 2009, De Boer et al. (2011). Instead, the younger teachers and teachers with less working experience hold more positive attitudes towards IE (Hefflin and Bullock, 1999; Emam and Mohamed 2011; Todorovic et al., 2011).

Teacher training should be viewed as a factor that potentially influence teachers' commitment toward implementing a successful IE (Avramidis, et.al., 2000). Seçer (2010) argues that, preschool teachers who graduate without receiving adequate information on IE and children with SEN should be supported to provide in-service programmes. Bentley-Williams and Morgan (2013) who investigated the reflexive learning pathways of pre-service teachers to understand their roles as prospective inclusive teachers, suggest that more training and opportunities to reflect on becoming inclusive teachers and to make them feel better prepared.

Tsakiridou and Polyzopoulou (2014) reveal that teachers who have attended SE courses appeared to be more willing to accept children with SEN in mainstream classrooms. In other words, teachers with prior training in SE generally have more positive attitude towards IE than those without (de Boer et al., 2011; Forlin et al., 2008). Leung and Mak (2010) in their study report similar findings with teachers commenting that the professional training available was inadequate and they urgently required training in classroom management. Therefore, Tangen and Beutel (2017) suggest that teachers need time and practical experience to develop their

ideas about IE. This indicates that the teachers need to be placed in classrooms where exemplary inclusive teaching occurs to learn from more experienced IE teachers.

Hemmings and Woodcock (2011) claim that a source of anxiety for pre-service teachers is their capacity to cater for students with diverse educational needs and abilities. Many teachers feel underprepared for dealing with such diversity. Similarly, the experienced teachers also have voiced similar concerns (Florian and Rouse cited in Rose (2010)). Moreover Blecker and Boake (2010) report that teachers are concerned at the lack of planning time and support for effective collaboration.

In the context of inclusive classroom settings, the support from other teachers, SE teachers and parents would also influence the teachers' attitudes. For example a teacher who faces problems in managing the children with SEN may seek advice from SE teacher or get a consultation from the specialists. Likewise, a teacher may contact the parents of the children with SEN to discuss about the children's well-being. As a result, bi-directional interactions will influence the teachers' decision in determining the classroom arrangement, teaching pedagogy and planning for classroom activities.

van der Veen et al. (2010) state that teacher attitudes are used to predict referral of children with SEN to SE. This suggests that teachers form attitudes towards children with SEN and IE based on a child's characteristics, the factors in the classroom and their previous experiences. Therefore, the preschool teachers' attitudes are affected by the interactions with the children with SEN, other teachers, SE teachers, specialists as well as parents within the microsystem. Additionally, Odom and Wolery (2003) argue that another factor to make IE more successful is to have an adequate space and equipment to the needs of all children.

It can be argued that teachers' concerns towards IE are based on practical concerns of how IE can be implemented. Increasing the knowledge about children with SEN will improve the teachers' attitudes towards IE. This is because the interactions within the teachers' microsystem (inclusive classroom settings) will influence the teachers' affective, cognitive and behavioural component towards IE. Preschool teachers who interact with the parents of the children with SEN will be able to communicate with the parents about what the children's experience in the inclusive classroom.

### **3.7.2 Attitude and Mesosystem**

The second layer of the system is the mesosystem which "comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (such as, among family, work and social life)" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.250). He also stressed that the



interrelations are not only linked within settings but also between settings. Thus a mesosystem is a system of microsystems.

The bi-directional interactions among the specialists and between the SE teachers and other subject teachers will also influence the teacher's attitude. For example the collaborations between either the specialist, SE teacher or other subject teachers may contribute to preschool teachers' attitudes towards IE. Forlin et al., (2008) in their study on Australian teachers' perceptions' on inclusion claimed that the teachers' professional competency is regarded as one the key issues in the implementation of IE. These teachers could be labelled as 'super teacher' who made an effort beyond their capacities in order to fulfil the needs of the children with SEN by regularly communicating with parents, working collaboratively with the specialists and updating their professional skills (O'Rourke, 2015).

In relation to this research, working co-operatively with mutual trust and understanding may develop teachers' confidence in teaching children with SEN and influence their attitudes towards IE. This is because including children with SEN in mainstream classrooms will demand extra time, resources, personnel and co-operation within the school community (Avramidis et al., 2000). Thus, Forlin and Chambers (2011) suggested that long-term support for teachers specifically required for mentoring new teachers as well as providing them continuous professional development. Thus co-operation, collaboration and mutual respect between mainstream and SE teachers and specialists are important in the implementation of IE.

The support from the school principals are also essential in influencing the teachers' attitude. According to Lindqvists et al., (2011) as leaders, they need to find a balance between various groups' interests and views when dealing with school difficulties. In other words, the principals need to be able to work together by owning trustworthiness, active participation and being flexible in their leadership in order to support the teachers. Their understanding and views on IE might also help the success of IE. Additionally, as principals, imposing fair workload distribution, creating harmonious atmosphere and fair promotion opportunity should reduce the teachers' stress level. Therefore the amount of support from principals is crucial in influencing mainstream teachers attitudes towards IE. In terms of support for the parents, Hornby (2000) stated that teachers need to be able to provide support parents in terms of basic counselling and guidance regarding their children's learning and behaviour. Thus teachers need to be able to refer parents who need more intensive help to appropriate sources of support that are available in their communities.

### 3.7.3 Attitude and Exosystem

The third layer of the system is the exosystem which “consists of one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in that setting”. (Bronfenbrenner 1979 p. 25). He defined an exosystem as a part of the system where the developing person is not involved as an active participant but affects or is affected by what happens in the system in which events occur. Government policies can be considered as exosystem variables that affect IE program and are often created outside of the microsystem.

Education policy also contributes to teachers’ attitude. For example, many education policies implemented by the government such as the publication of league tables based on examination results have had clear consequences in the reduced willingness of schools to accept children regardless of ability or background. Schools are now wary of accepting children who might depress exams or Standard Assessment Task (SAT) scores. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) highlighted that the emphasis on subject matter (to increase grade level) is generally negatively influence teachers’ attitudes towards IE. Likewise, Yuen and Westwood (2002) found that many Hong Kong secondary teachers found children with SEN as additional burden and felt that they should not be included in their already stressful working environment.

In addition, a positive school ethos and the positive attitudes of staff within schools are factors that usually contributed to the success of IE (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010; Loreman, 2000; Shelvin and Flynn, 2011). Teachers’ lack of confidence relating to personal instruction, skills and availability of resources represented significant challenges in developing inclusive environments (Croll and Moses, 2000; Forlin, 2010). A study by Villa et al., (1996) indicates that the vision and the amount of support from school leaders is one of the most powerful predictors of mainstream teachers towards inclusion. The concept of IE must be understood by school management and teachers to ensure all legal requirements are complied with at all times. However, sometimes policies are not clearly explained and ad hoc instructions by the policy makers result in teachers and school administrations being confused.

In this study, school ethos and government policies on IE and SEN potentially influence the teachers’ attitude towards IE. Policy makers and school administrators affect the provision of inclusive programs for preschool children. Wolery and Gallagher (1998) highlighted three policy factors that affected the number of children served in inclusive settings: a) policymakers’ interpretations of the federal law; b) the emphases (on inclusion) they choose to follow in policy development and c) the specificity of the policy created. Thus the preschool teachers will be affected by whatever changes or development in the education system.

A positive school ethos and the positive attitudes of staff within schools are factors that usually contributed to the success of IE (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010; Loreman, 2000; Shelvin and Flynn, 2011). However, teachers' lack of confidence relating to personal instruction, skills and availability of resources represented significant challenges in developing inclusive environments (Forlin, 2010). This is in line with Lalvani (2013), who argues that many teachers supported IE as good practice for all students but interpretations of 'all' seemed varied. Thus, the support from principals, consultation from specialists and accessing appropriate resources are important factors involved in inclusive classrooms (Sucuoglu et. al, 2013).

Another factor that has consistently been found to be associated with more positive attitudes is the availability of support services at the classrooms and school levels (Center and Ward, 1987; Clough and Lindsay, 1991; Myles and Simpson (1989). Support could be seen as both physical (resources, teaching materials, Information Technology, equipment, a restructured physical environment) and human (learning support assistants, special teachers, speech therapist, principals, and parents). Therefore, collaborations between parents, other teachers, specialists and principals are equally important as this bi-directional interaction may influence teachers' attitudes.

A significant restructuring (making buildings accessible to students with physical disabilities) and the provision of adequate and appropriate equipment and materials were also instrumental in the development of these positive attitudes. The availability of physical and human support was consistently found to be associated with positive attitudes to IE (Ainscow et al. (2013). For example, teaching materials, physical resources and specialist supports were found to critically affect teachers' attitudes towards IE (Bradshaw and Mundia, 2006). To some extent, big classroom size, lack of teaching materials, inflexible time table, inadequate time, didactic teaching approach, lack of specialist support and types of schools are the most cited factors found to negatively affect teachers' attitudes towards IE (Peters and Forlin, 2011).

#### **3.7.4 Attitude and Macrosystem**

The fourth layer of the system is the macrosystem which refers to "the consistency observed within the given culture or sub-culture in the form and the content of its constituent micro-, meso- and exosystem as well as any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies". (Bronfenbrenner 1979 p. 26). It recognises the interaction with the cultural and social values that shape human relationship at every level of the social institutions from school environments to social exchanges taking place between children and teachers. For example, a teacher who comes from a culture which accepts people with disabilities will have a positive attitude towards IE. Cultures and sub cultures can be expected to be different from each other

within the macrosystem. This is because every society differs for various socioeconomic, ethnic, religious aspects which reflect contrasting belief system and lifestyles.

The interaction between an individual's development and the system within the social context are significant which, in turn, directly and indirectly influence the teachers' attitudes. Therefore, it is impossible to separate culture, community and family because inclusion extends beyond the classroom setting. Booth and Dyssegaard (2008) argue that in education, an understanding of the values will give rise to our actions is essential if we are to do the right thing. The culture and values that a community holds affect the teachers' attitude towards IE. Sukbunpant et al. (2013) stated that the beliefs of karma or past sins in the Thai's culture where disabilities are viewed as receiving punishment and therefore some people may believe that it is not necessary to assist people with disability. This is supported by Lewthwaite (2011) and Stewart (2011) who indicate that the societal and cultural ideologies, practices, values, customs and laws have an impact on the individual.

In Malaysian context, as a multi-racial country, every race have a right to practice its own religion such as Islam, Hindu, Taoist, Christianity etc. which all teach a good way of life. According to the Islamic, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity teachings one needs to respect and support all human life and to value the potential of every individual. They believe that whatever they have done will be rewarded by God in the hereafter life. They also believe that everything happened for a reason as well as accepting it as a fate and gift (the children with SEN) from God as none of His creation is dishonourable. This belief helps a person to be more responsible, accepting and be positive in life. Moreover, children with SEN are also part of the society who have the rights to participate fully and equally in all kinds of activities in life. Therefore, Malaysian community believes in caring society values whereby disabilities are accepted as part of the community, however, stereotyping, labelling, bullying and inequalities towards disabilities do exist in the community (Jantan, 2007).

This is in line with UNESCO (2015) the Incheon Declaration stated that the new vision for education is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This is in line with the Qur'an which addresses all of humanity in this way:

*"O mankind, We created you from a single [pair] of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other [not that you may despise each other]. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is [he who is] the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted [with all things]" (49:13).*

Furthermore, seeking knowledge is obligatory for both men and women as the purpose of education is an obligation to understand Islam and build a civilization and culture (Sri

Wahyuningsih, 2016). Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in the hadith narrated by Muslim:

*“Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave”.* (HR Muslim)

Thus education is the best starting point to promote a caring culture, tolerance and harmonious community. Through IE, children with SEN should be meeting all their needs in order to increase their ability to achieve academic and physical growth to their optimum potential as well as improving their overall quality of life and social status. However, Hornby (2012) stated that whilst the children with SEN have a right to be included, they also have a right to receive an appropriate education which meets their specific needs.

### **3.8 Summary**

Since this is a newly developed framework which integrate the three-component model with ecological theory, it contributes to the body of knowledge particularly in the IE and attitudes study. This theoretical framework has been developed to get deeper understanding and better insights on the teachers' attitudes by considering relationships and bidirectional interactions that happened within the system. Landsberg et al. (2005) stress that a multidimensional approach which is the ecological system theory is important in order to understand the complexity of the influences, interactions and interrelationships between the teacher and multiple other systems to which he or she is connected. Additionally, direct interaction with children with SEN, instruction on policy and legislation relating to IE and opportunities to gain confidence in practical teaching situations with children with SEN will develop positive attitude among the teachers (Forlin, 2007).

Two different perspectives, the medical and sociological perspective; are provided in order to understand the concept of IE. Beyond these two perspectives, ecological system theory, dynamic systems and causal framework are identified in understanding IE. Although there are differences in the interpretations of IE from different part of the world, the idea of IE is to welcome and embrace participation of the children with SEN by accommodating their specific needs. Indeed this should not be seen as a problem but rather as a challenge to all involved in the education system. By understanding teachers' attitude, it will yield the reason behind their attitude towards IE and most importantly it could modify the teachers' attitudes towards IE. Therefore all agencies need to understand the complexity of IE which include the challenges and issues as well as its implications within the ECCE context.

## Chapter Four: Research Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will describe the research design of the study and provide a rationale for the research methodology. The first section 4.2 introduces the research questions for the study. The second section 4.3 explains the research paradigm of this study. This is followed in the third section 4.4, a discussion of the adoption of mixed method approach of the study. The fourth section 4.5 describes the research setting and the strategy employed for sampling together with the researcher's positioning towards the participants. The fifth section 4.6 introduces the research methods and describes how the research instruments were employed. In the sixth section 4.7 is a description of data collection phases which I covered while being in the research field. This is followed by a description of the analysis process 4.8. The next section discusses the steps taken to enhance the quality of this study 4.9. Finally, the ninth section 4.10 describe the process of tool validation which involved factor analysis.

### 4.2 Objectives and Research Questions

In chapter three, I highlighted the importance of the teachers' attitudes towards IE. I also argued that teachers' attitudes are influenced by attitude components and the ecological context of a teacher. I developed a theoretical framework based on the combination of three-component attitude model and the ecological system theory to explore teachers' attitudes. In chapter two, I related the teachers' attitude to the Malaysian educational context since there is not many studies have not looked onto IE in the early years. The gap in the existing literature warrants the current study has driven me to explore the attitudes of the preschool teachers regarding IE. The main objectives of this study are to determine the:

1. attitudes of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools.
2. factors that might influence their attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools.
3. changes need to be considered or made at the preschool level before children with SEN are included in the mainstream classrooms.

This study will contribute to the available international literature on the attitudes towards IE specifically, it will contribute to the expansion of the existing knowledge on teachers' attitudes towards IE with a clear focus on preschool teachers. The combination of the three component model of attitude and ecological system theory will enable the identification of factors that will

contribute to teachers' attitude towards IE. Furthermore this study will provide some opportunities or voice to the teachers to give some insights on their attitudes towards IE. Stoiber et al. (1998) argue that the voices of those directly involved in change should be heard because they provide valuable inside perceptions and information. Additionally, the three-component model of attitude and the ecological system approach will provide a clear framework to guide me in conducting this study particularly in constructing the research questions and designing my research instruments.

The research questions are:

1. What is the attitude of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE?
2. What factors that influence the attitudes of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE?
3. To what extent do these factors affect the preschool teachers' attitudes towards IE?

These research questions will be explored in the context of quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis with subsequent discussion of the research questions in Chapter Eight.

### **4.3 Research Paradigm**

Historically, the philosophical developments in mixed methods research had taken form much earlier than the late 1980s. There are a number of factors that have contributed to the evolution of mixed methods research. One of them is the complexity of the research problems which is beyond simple numbers in quantitative sense and words in qualitative sense (Creswell and Clark, 2011). They argue that the combination of the both forms of data provides the most complete analysis of problems.

Following the philosophy of pragmatism, Morgan (2007) highlights that both quantitative and qualitative research tools can be used in order to answer the research questions and suggest that rather than making either-or choices, it is more effective to combine methods. Pragmatism proposes that research is determined by the research question and 'there can be both singular and multiple versions of the truth and reality, sometimes subjective and sometimes objective (Cohen et al., 2013). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) argue that pragmatism is the best philosophical foundation of mixed method research. Using different paradigms in mixed methods research is to honour each (quantitative and qualitative data) and be explicit about when each is used (Greene and Caracelli, 1997).

As I intend to investigate the attitude of the preschool teachers and the factors that might influence their attitude, I realised that a mixed method approach is suitable for this study. The

types of data collection methods are more towards mixed method approach which can yield convincing answers to the questions of the study. I intended to know the general attitude of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE in the first research question. The second and third research question would identify the factors influencing the teachers' attitude and to what extent the factors affects their attitudes. I will now explain how I will answer these research questions using the mixed method approach in the next section.

## **4.4 Research Design**

The study has adopted a mixed methods research approach within the research paradigm as stated earlier. In this section, the rationale for the use of a mixed method approach is discussed.

### **4.4.1 Mixed method research design**

This study focused on measuring teachers' attitudes towards IE and sought in depth understanding on what factors may have influence on their attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools. In order to obtain more information about the teachers' attitudes, it cannot be solely judged by interpreting the numerical data, the qualitative data will be able to provide a wider picture in understanding the reason and changes that could be made in the introduction of IE in Malaysia.

Thus I employed a mixed method design as it allowed me to apply several options to obtain answers for my research questions in this study. Given the large number of participants, I would hope and expect the results to produce sufficient data to help in assessing teachers' attitude towards IE. Whereas, qualitative data such as the semi structured interviews offered wider range of perspectives on the attitudes and provided a complex picture of the situation. These chosen designs had also helped in developing a deeper understanding of the factors that influenced teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE in the Malaysian government preschools.

According to Creswell (2012), quantitative research allows the researcher to develop knowledge utilising strategies of inquiry such as experiment and surveys and collects data that yield statistical data. Furthermore, it allows the researcher to ask specific questions, collect numeric data, analyse it using statistics and conduct inquiry in an unbiased and objective manner. This approach also focuses on the testing and confirming of researchers hypothesis (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). By combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study can help elucidate various aspects of the phenomenon under investigation,



providing a more holistic understanding of it, and resulting in better-informed education policies (Steckler et al., 1992).

On the other hand, the qualitative research is a type of research which relies on the view of the participants by asking broad and specific questions to reveal participants' views. Data collected consist largely of text or words from participants. The data are analysed to determine themes and it is conducted in a subjective manner (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative data are useful because respondents can freely express their thoughts, perceptions and experiences in more detail. Therefore, it is useful to provide a better understanding of the research problems.

Using a single method can be seen to create biased results; however, this can be diminished in mixed method studies as it may be balanced out and can provide a complete understanding of the phenomena. As stated by Li et al. (2000), mixed method designs have been increasingly used in the area of preschool IE studies. The advantage of this approach is that it captures the best of both quantitative and qualitative as the researcher may survey a large number of respondents to obtain a general result before setting an interview with fewer respondents to obtain a rich and robust view about the study. Creswell (2012) pointed out that both close-ended quantitative data and open-ended qualitative data prove advantageous to best understand and address a research problem.

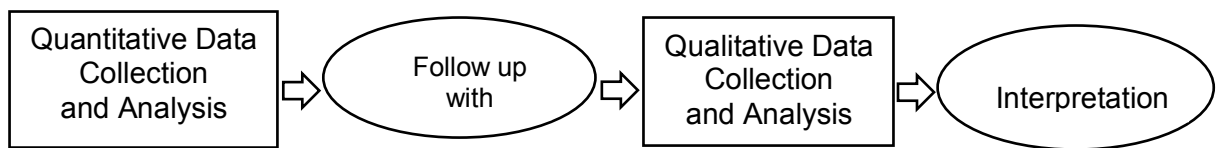
Denscombe (2008) suggested that mixed method could increase the accuracy of data and provide broader picture of the phenomenon. This view is in line with Reams and Twale (2008) who also argued that mixed method can cover information and increase corroboration of the data and it is less biased and more accurate in conclusion. Therefore, mixed method allows researchers to use the most appropriate method for specific research question such as survey and semi-structured interview. It also leads researchers to confirm and disconfirm the information gathered from different methods and sources which lead to a much higher quality measurement.

#### **4.4.2 Choosing a mixed method design**

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) there are four key decisions involved in choosing an appropriate mixed method design. In this study I have considered; 1) the level of the interaction occurred in the quantitative and qualitative strands are independent where the two strands are mixed during the overall interpretation at the end of the study; 2) the methods have an equal priority; 3) sequential timing is adopted by collecting the quantitative data first followed by qualitative data and; 4) the mixing of the two approaches occurred during the final step of the research process when both sets of data have been collected and analysed.

Based on Creswell (2012), I utilised the sequential explanatory design which mainly consists of two phases; quantitative followed by qualitative. The first phase was collecting the quantitative data to explore the general attitudes of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE. The second phase was collecting the qualitative data through semi structured interviews to help to explain and elaborate the quantitative data results. The quantitative data analysis provided a general understanding of the research problem while the qualitative findings from the second phase of the study helped to clarify and explain the quantitative result from the first phase of the study by exploring more in-depth views from the participants (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6.** The sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2012)



## 4.5 Research Setting and the Participants

### 4.5.1 Research setting

It is important to select the sample and population in a purposeful way to ensure the data collected are relevant and will answer the key questions (Patton, 1990). The population of this study were chosen from 5,941 government preschools across the whole of Malaysia (MOE, 2015). This study was conducted in one of the states in Malaysia. The reasons for choosing this particular state were based on practicality, feasibility and familiarity with the context. Moreover, the state chosen is a highly populated state in Malaysia which provided a diversity of teachers in terms of demographic information such as age, gender, teaching experience, types of primary schools, locations: urban, suburban and rural areas, races and cultural background. Therefore, the information could generate rich and robust data. According to Silverman (2007), recognising what is possible, given available resources is important to successful research.

### 4.5.2 Sampling strategy

There were about 501 preschools identified within ten districts in that particular state (MOE, 2015). Every preschool teacher in each of 501 preschools was purposively invited to participate in this study in order to avoid potential bias in responses. Cohen et al. (2011) stated that purposive sampling is chosen for a specific purpose as it provides greater depth to the

study than does probability sampling. In this research, a group of preschool teachers were chosen to study their attitudes towards the introduction of IE. Although their comments may not be generalizable, this is not a primary concern as this study was aimed to acquire in depth information from the research participants.

Reflecting on the field work experience, I had to deal with the Prime Minister's Office in order to get a researcher pass. Only then I was allowed to contact an officer in the State Education Department who is in charged for preschool division. Then I was given 10 District Education Offices (DEO) officers' names who acted as a gatekeeper to all preschool teachers based on the respective districts. After the arrangement with the DEO officers, then I was allowed to distribute the questionnaire to preschool teachers. Initially, I chose to post the questionnaire to each of the preschool teachers. However, the response rate of questionnaire distributed through post was very low. Thus, I had to change my strategy and decided to contact the DEO officers to arrange and assemble all preschool teachers during their district level activities (such as workshops, meeting or briefing). 421 preschool teachers responded to the questionnaire and 20 of them volunteered to be interviewed. However, two of the potential participants were unable to be interviewed because of personal reasons (see section 4.7.3).

Initial face to face meeting were then arranged for each respondent via text messages and telephone conversation. In the meetings, I discussed the rationale of the research and explained the contents of the informed consent forms (see Appendices 1 and 2). The purpose was to make teachers fully aware of the voluntary nature of their involvement in the research, to explain the nature of the study, data generation processes and how findings would be used and how the confidentiality of their responses would be preserved. The teachers were invited to take the form and reflect on it before signing and returning it back to me. They were also given a copy of the consent form for their own reference.

The interview session was conducted based on the availability, convenience and agreement with the participants. 11 participants preferred the interview to be conducted after the school session ended in their classroom. I managed to go to 11 different schools such as an estate school, National-type schools (Chinese and Tamil), rural schools including one aboriginal school and National schools (semi-urban and urban) in 10 districts. Three participants requested for the interview to be held on the weekend at the park, public library and a mosque. Another three participants requested for skype interview and one participant preferred a telephonic interview.

In terms of personal characteristics such as gender and race the participants were mostly homogeneously similar but, in terms of location and SEIP they were heterogeneous as explained in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Participant information

<b>Pseudonyms</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>SEIP</b>	<b>location</b>
<b>1.Umi</b>	Female	Indian	no	Estate
<b>2.Fendi</b>	Male	Malay	yes	Rural
<b>3.Syami</b>	Female	Malay	yes	Semi-urban
<b>4.Wong</b>	Female	Chinese	no	Rural
<b>5.Nurul</b>	Female	Malay	no	Rural
<b>6.Kathy</b>	Female	Malay	yes	Urban
<b>7.Ani</b>	Female	Malay	no	Urban
<b>8.Mas</b>	Female	Malay	no	Rural
<b>9.Su</b>	Female	Indian	no	Estate
<b>10.Alin</b>	Female	Malay	yes	Rural
<b>11.Ana</b>	Female	Malay	no	Rural
<b>12.Zue</b>	Female	Malay	yes	Rural
<b>13.Nor</b>	Female	Malay	yes	Urban
<b>14.Suzie</b>	Female	Malay	no	Rural
<b>15.Amy</b>	Female	Malay	yes	Semi-urban
<b>16.Siti</b>	Female	Malay	no	Rural
<b>17.Mun</b>	Female	Malay	no	Semi-urban
<b>18.Fara</b>	Female	Malay	no	Semi-urban

### 4.5.3 Positioning towards participants

In this study, my role was that of a 'non-participant observer' (Cohen et al., 2013). In other words, I was not professionally involved in the preschool settings though some of the participants were my ex- students (during their initial teacher training). In agreement with Creswell (2012) who stated that being an insider brings a familiarity with the context and might help to create a degree of rapport, however, due to my adoption as an outsider status, I was able to avoid initial assumptions. This is very important in maintaining the position as a researcher whilst being part of the system. However, as a researcher, I acknowledged and realised that as the person who does the action is also the person who is affected by it. In other words, in doing this study, the unavoidability of my experience as a preschool teacher may affect my own beliefs and attitudes towards IE. Thus Halliday (2002) mentions that reflexivity provides a solution in overcoming this issue as it allows researchers to reflect upon the data and interpretation process. In this case I needed to work hard to distance myself from making easy conclusions and being prejudice by separating what can be seen and heard from what it might mean.

## 4.6 Research Methods

### 4.6.1 Questionnaire

A survey design has been used extensively across many disciplines. It is a procedure in quantitative research particularly in investigating the attitudes, opinions, behaviour or characteristics of the population (Creswell, 2012). Generally, using this procedure, a survey is used to collect quantitative data which can be analysed statistically. One of the purposes of the survey is to describe trends such as on education policies which will help to identify the beliefs and attitudes of the population rather than offering rigorous explanation.

Considering the large number of preschool teachers in all preschools in the particular state a questionnaire is suitable for exploring their attitudes towards IE. As stated by Bryman (2015) and Cohen et al., (2013), the application of questionnaires across a large geographical area is the most commonly tool used. Furthermore, questionnaire is also relatively economical, they pose standardized questions which have been written/constructed for specific purposes and they can ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents (Dömyei (2007).

In this study, I adopted a cross-sectional survey design as I intended to measure the current teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE (see Appendix 4). I was obliged and was required by MOE Malaysia to collect data in three months. I considered that this design was the best option for me to administer the questionnaire and collect the information within a short period of time. I distributed 501 questionnaires consisted of 34 items and several items asking for demographic information such as gender, age, race and years of teaching to a purposive sample. Of this sample, 84% (421 respondents) responded to the questionnaire.

I decided to modify an instrument which has been used in Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden study (2000). The instrument is called *Teacher's Opinions Relative to The Inclusion of Special Needs Children in Mainstream Settings*. The first Likert scale is measuring beliefs related to inclusion (cognitive component) and consists of 12 items taken from the Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming (ORM) scale (Antonak and Larrivee (1995). All the other scales have been developed by Avramidis himself. According to Creswell (2012), 'modifying an instrument means locating an existing instrument, obtaining permission to change it and making changes in it to fit your requirements'. I have contacted the author and obtained his permission to modify his instrument. The main reason I decided to choose this instrument is because it has already been used in previous studies such as de Boer et al. (2012) and Avramidis et al., (2000) where it appeared to provide reliable data. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients were:  $\alpha=0.88$  for the scale addressing the cognitive component,  $\alpha=0.90$  for the affective component

and finally  $\alpha=0.88$  for the behavioural component. Ideally, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of a scale should be above 0.70 (Pallant (2013); Field and Hole (2002)).

This instrument consists of three parts: PART ONE-Section A: A Likert Scale measuring beliefs relative to inclusion (Cognitive component), consisting of 12 items taken from the Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming (ORM) scale (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995; Larrivee, 1982) which was adopted for the Malaysian context (e.g words like handicapped and mainstreaming were replaced by children with SEN and IE). Section B: A semantic differential scale consisting of bipolar adjectives (Osgood et al. (1978), Brenner et al. (2006) measuring the teachers' emotional reactions when they had to deal with children with SEN (Affective component). The scale consisted of seven items and included adjectives such as 'anxious-relaxed', 'worried-self-assured', 'negative – positive'. Section C: a Likert scale (eight items) measuring intentions (Behavioural component). In the above Likert scales, the teachers will indicate the extent of their agreement with each statement by selecting among the following response choices: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2) Neither Agree nor Disagree (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). In the semantic differential scale, the teachers will circle the number closest to the adjective which best described their feelings on a scale 1 to 7. The items will be totalled to generate a composite score for each component; a higher score indicated a positive attitude. Section D: is another Likert scales to measure teachers' perceptions of the skills they possessed in teaching a diverse group of children and meeting all their needs.

*PART TWO:* is a demographic information asking about the background experience of the teachers. I included the race of the teachers such as Malay, Chinese, Indian and others. This is because these races represent the multi-cultural identities in Malaysia.

*PART THREE-* Open –ended questions consists of questions such as: 1) What extra things which would make the participants' responses more positive towards children with SEN (specifically with learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties)?; 2) What changes to be considered before including children with SEN at the preschool level? i) in the classroom environment/practice; ii) In the school and; iii) in the community

Although the questionnaire is widely used in the quantitative research, there are several limitations which need to be highlighted. The respondents might provide superficial or incomplete answers particularly when the questions were incomprehensible and too long which took time to answer the questionnaire. According to Domyei and Taguchi (2010), the respondents may also not be interested to answer the questionnaire because the topic may not be of interest to them or they may be reluctant to reveal the information.

I have also considered Malaysian literature on attitudes to IE to assist in the development of the instruments particularly in the development of the questionnaire as well as open-ended

questions and semi structured interview questions which helped to frame the pre-determined themes that might emerge from the qualitative data. Studies by Wah (2010), Ali et al., (2006), Jelas and Ali, (2014) and Toran et al., (2010) have informed the issues such as the misconception of IE, lack of training, stigmatisation and discrimination, lack of communication and collaboration, lack of support and lack of governance in IE policy. Additionally, the terms such as SEN (Murid Berkeperluan Khas), regular schools (sekolah harian biasa) and mainstream classrooms (kelas aliran perdana) were carefully selected to better translate and fit in the Malaysian education system. The term 'typically developing children' was translated to 'kanak-kanak normal' because it is widely accepted by the system. All of these terms can also be seen the MEB (2013-2025).

#### **4.6.2 Semi-structured interview**

Semi structured interview questions were developed in order to obtain greater understanding of teachers' opinions. According to Brenner et al. (2006), a semi structured protocol provides the research with opportunities to ask the respondents the same core questions with the freedom to ask follow up questions that build on the responses received. Thus the questions were developed to probe teachers' understanding in IE, how they perceive children with SEN in the mainstream classroom, their preparedness in including children with SEN in their classroom and their opinion on the factors that might contribute to the success of IE implementation (see Appendix 3).

McNamara (2003) stated that the interview is used as a follow-up to further investigate respondents' responses. The interview also offered an in depth-understanding of the respondents' beliefs, views, perspectives and conceptualisation on a topic. Thus these unobservable values were explored which appeared to provide more opportunities in getting the full story and understanding behind their attitudes towards IE.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were employed as it allowed eliciting more details and explanation. The researcher (interviewer) also had some control over the flow of the interview because the general themes had already been determined based on the literature review and initial quantitative data. This flexibility allowed for openness to change the sequence of questions where I could amend the question based on the teachers' views of IE and maintain a more natural flow to the interview process. Furthermore, in order to seek more clarifications from the teachers, the probing technique allowed me to generate more robust data as Ritchie et al. (2013) argued that probing and clarification can produce detailed accounts of data. After the interview the data was transcribed and analysed to identify themes and patterns. However, as the interview provided more details, therefore, it took me more time to analyse data and sometimes I came across with less relevant topics.

### **4.6.3 Language of data collection**

As for the questionnaire, in order to ensure that the Bahasa Malaysia version represents the English version, this study used the 'back translation technique' (Brislin, 1970 cited in Maneesriwongul and Dixon (2004). Three steps are used in the back translation: First, the researcher translated the English version questionnaire into the Bahasa Malaysia version. Second, the second person who has expertise in educational psychology and also works as an English teacher translated the Bahasa Malaysia version into the English version. Third, the third person who has expertise in educational psychology and fluent in English reviewed both the English and the Bahasa Malaysia version. Based on the feedback from the second and the third person, the researcher corrected all the questionnaires and made a final version of the questionnaire.

Meanwhile for the interview session, it was conducted in Bahasa Malaysia as majority of the participants were Malay. The use of the mother tongue allowed them to be more comfortable and encouraging in expressing their thoughts and ideas on the questions posed. Additionally, it also allowed the participants to be more clear and critical in explaining the factors which influenced their attitudes. Undoubtedly the process of translation took more time and challenging. However, the back to back translation process assisted me in avoiding inappropriate interpretation or mistranslation of the data.

## **4.7 Data Collection Phases**

The data collection process was carried out in two stages, namely the first phase: Quantitative research questionnaire and the second phase: Qualitative research interview.

### **4.7.1 The first phase: Quantitative research questionnaire**

The first phase of the study comprises the questionnaire administration to preschool teachers in one of the states in Malaysia. The statistics I received from Education State Department at the time of the fieldwork showed 501 preschools in 10 districts. However, when I contacted the officer who was in charged for the Preschool department, I was told that some of the preschools have more than one class. Therefore, I considered the second list and distributed 550 questionnaire. In the initial plan, it was intended to send the questionnaire through mailboxes in which official documents were usually sent to schools. However, I realized that using schools mailboxes would take longer for the questionnaire to reach the schools. Therefore I contacted each of the officers in each district and I personally submitted the questionnaire to them. In some cases, I had to travel for longer distance to each District Education Office (DEO). After waiting for two weeks the response rate was still minimal.



This was the point of time that I decided to change my design from sequential to concurrent design. The nature of sequential design needed me to collect the quantitative data and analyse them first and only then I could proceed to the qualitative data. The limited time was a great challenge that I had to face as I was not able to conduct the interview until the quantitative data collection was completed. After discussing these issues with my supervisors, I completely changed the strategy so that I could seek a higher response rate. However, I also realised that bias is a larger concern than the return rate, because if the returned responses are biased, the data base will be inadequate regardless of the return rate (Creswell, 2012).

After changing my design, I contacted each of the officers to seek their permission to administer the questionnaire during the meeting or workshop at the respective DEOs which were compulsory attended by all preschool teachers. Many of the officers were co-operative, helpful and allowed me to spend 15-20 minutes administering and collecting the questionnaire before they started their meeting or workshop. However, in order for me to administer the questionnaire, I had to adhere to their time-table as the meeting or workshop would take place once a month. As I had to travel to 10 DEOs, I have to carefully plan my schedule so that it would not overlap with their schedule. In some cases two districts had the meeting and workshops at the same date so I divided the time appropriately to attend both. Simultaneously the interview arrangement also happened and I had to arrange the schedule for the interview accordingly. Apart from this, there were some unforeseen constraints in the fieldwork challenges as explained further in section 4.7.4.

#### **4.7.2 The second phase: Qualitative research interview**

One of the aims in conducting the semi-structured interview in study was to understand the teachers' attitudes by exploring the factors that influenced their attitude. While the questionnaire was aimed at exploring their general attitudes towards the introduction of IE at the preschool level, the interview was to seek and yield their attitudes in more detail and in a deeper understanding.

Before the participants returned the questionnaire, I requested them to fill in the last section to indicate their willingness to be interviewed on a voluntary basis. If the participant willingly desired to be interviewed, they had to complete details of their contact number. The researcher contacted them after the meeting or session ended in order to arrange an appointment for the interview session. At first 20 participants agreed to be interviewed. However, two of them decided to withdraw from the interview because of personal reasons such as they were too busy and no longer interested in the study. Afterwards, I contacted the willing participants in order to arrange an appointment for the interview session.

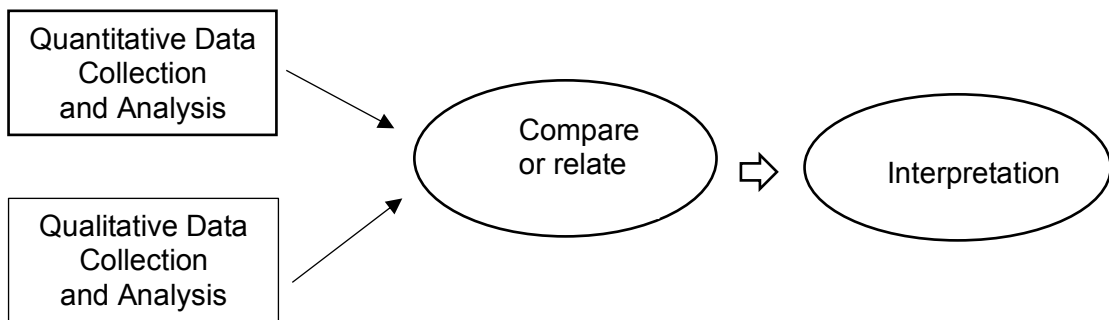
18 participants from 10 different districts who volunteered to be interviewed were contacted to inquire about a convenient time and place to conduct the interview. Malay language was used to allow good rapport and comfort with the participants. The researcher also informed the participants of the research aims and the right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. A digital voice recorder was used to record interviews for which participants had given their consent before the interview. The data was transferred to a computer at the University of Leeds.

### 4.7.3 Practical constraints on data generation

In this section, I provide a detailed account of the challenges I encountered during the process of the fieldwork such as:

- a) Although originally the intention was to adopt the sequential explanatory design, during the fieldwork, the researcher decided to change to convergent (concurrent) parallel design. According to Creswell (2012), this design is used when the researcher uses the concurrent timing to implement the quantitative and qualitative strands during the same phase of the research process (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7.** Convergent/concurrent parallel design (Creswell, 2012)



The decision was made by the researcher after discussing with the supervisors. This happened because of the response rate for mailed questionnaire was very low and the time was limited (three months). Even though the researcher used several strategies to encourage high return rates, the number was not very promising. The strategy used was; 1) Mail out the original questionnaire; 2) Follow it up two weeks later with a second questionnaire to the individuals who have not responded and ;3) After another two weeks, send a postcard to the non-respondents, reminding them to complete the questionnaire (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, the sampling strategy was changed as already explained above in section 4.5.2.

- b) Although the official letter was sent to the State Education Department and DEO officers about my study, I had to explain to the whole school system the purpose of my study and my presence in their school. I also have to carefully explain to all teachers participating in my study so that they would not be influenced by any misconception from the school principals or DEO officers about the nature of my study.
- c) Dealing with the DEO officers (the gatekeeper) was challenging because they were constantly busy with so many activities. Although most of the DEO officers were helpful, some of them were unreachable that they promised to contact schools but it did not happen. In some cases, some of them forgot the arrangement which they made with the researcher.
- d) The participants were not always able to commit themselves to the interview session though they initially agreed to become the participants. There were some cases, the interview session have to be rescheduled a few times due to many reasons such as they have to attend school meeting, they forgot about the interview session and they have to fetch their own children from school.
- e) The interviews also were conducted at various locations according to the preference of the participants. Some of the schools and the public places were a long distance which was time consuming and expensive. However, the challenging part was holding the interview sessions at public places such as a garden, a mosque and a public library (meeting area) because of the noise level and frequent interruptions by other people such as librarians and the public.

## **4.8 Data Analysis**

The quantitative and qualitative data generated from the questionnaire and interviews were organised according to the each quantitative and qualitative process of data analysis as explained in the following sub-sections:

### **4.8.1 Statistical analysis**

A total number of 421 questionnaires were received. They are organised based on numbering for identification code from number 1 to 421. I used SPSS to organise and analyse the data from the questionnaire. At the initial stage I coded the responses according to number. Each of the five answers to the statements in Likert scale questions in Section A and C was given a number; 'strongly agree' was coded as 5 and 'strongly disagree' was coded as 1. For Section B, is about the teachers' reactions towards the different types of SEN, semantic differential scale which consisted of seven items including adjectives like anxious-relaxed, worried-self-

assured and negative- positive. The items were coded from 1 to 7. Regarding Part 2- Demographic and teaching information, “YES” was coded as 1 and “NO” was coded as 2.

With regard to the missing data such as unanswered statement or a statement which has more than one answer, this was marked as missing when the data was fed into SPSS (coded as 99). As there were not many missing answers by the same participant, no questionnaire was excluded from the study. Similarly, no statements were omitted from the analysis as there were not many questions left unanswered. After the initial coding, the data were checked to identify if any errors occurred and to ensure that the data was entered accurately. This was done through generating tables of frequencies for all statements and checking the values in the table.

The demographic and teaching information were then analysed by SPSS to get the general ideas of the participants followed by the individual variables. Frequency distribution analysis was run for each questionnaire statement to check how many respondents have answered. Frequency tables were produced which provide the number of participants and the percentage to each of the categories for the variable. These frequency tables helped in gaining an understanding of the overall distribution of the responses at the initial stage of the analysis. After that descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, variance and standard deviation) were calculated to summarise patterns in the responses of the preschool teachers in the sample as well as in inferential statistics where appropriate. Finally, in the last section three open-ended items were qualitatively analysed using content analysis.

In summary, Table 9 presents the data analysis as follow:

**Table 9.** Data analysis

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Statistical procedures</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>What is the attitude of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools?</b>	Table -frequency, percentage and group	To report the characteristics of the sample based on the demographic data: Gender, age, teaching experience, location, race, academic qualification, SEN training received
	Table -mean, SD	To report the mean scores measuring: Cognitive, behaviour and Affective
	Content Analysis	To analyse text by coding based on the following open ended questions:  What extra things which could make the participants'

		responses more positive towards children with SEN (specifically with learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties)? What changes to be considered in the classroom, school environment and community before children with SEN are included in the mainstream classes?
<b>What factors that influence the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE in Malaysian government preschools?</b>	t- test	To investigate the difference between the mean scores of the teachers on the two affective scales; learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties
	One way MANOVA	To test for differences in the cognitive, affective and behavioural components between group identified in terms of: gender, age, teaching experience, location , races SEN training received, academic qualification
	Pearson correlations	To test for correlations between mean scores of the cognitive, affective and behavioural scales.
<b>To what extent do these factors affect the preschool teachers' attitudes towards IE?</b>	Thematic analysis Semi-structured interview	To search for themes among codes for meaningful patterns.

## 4.8.2 Transcription

I used NVivo software to transcribe the audio recordings of the interviews in full. I adopted a non-verbatim approach to the transcription (not include all speech phenomena such as hesitation) since such information would not have increased my ability to answer the research questions. However, for the purpose of reading the data I included annotations such as pause indicated by three continuous dots (...) and punctuation where possible. As mentioned earlier, all of the transcriptions were done in Bahasa Malaysia and only one transcription was in English Language.

## 4.8.3 Data coding

I employed the general inductive approach for the data analysis where multiple readings and interpretations of the raw data were carried out. According to Thomas (2006), this process

allows researchers to make decision on the basis of the research questions about what is more important and less important in the data.

In the open-ended question, three items were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I used Nvivo11 software to carry out the coding process with the initial categories as the primary nodes. I coded the data for each item and created sub-nodes where there appeared to be useful sub-themes emerging within the data.

As in the interview, all the 18 interviews were transcribed. For the interview transcriptions, I also employed thematic analysis to help me to organise the large amount of qualitative data. The first phase was familiarising myself with data. During the transcription process, note-keeping on initial thoughts on the data helped to make sense of the data and identify the key issues and themes. (Wolcott, 1994) mentioned that a closer look and relook of the interview was made afterwards in order to develop a comprehensive picture of the content. Therefore, during this phase, I transcribed the data followed by reading and re-reading the data. I also noted down some initial ideas taken from the data.

In the second stage, with the research questions in mind, I began the thematic coding in which all the information from each teacher interview was classified into main categories (nodes). Then I classified the main categories into sub-categories. The third phase was searching for themes. In this process I collated codes into potential themes and gathered all the data which were relevant to each potential theme. This process involved coding any interesting features of the data in a systematic way across the entire data set. Through NVivo I was able to highlight related comments and placed them in the suitable sub-categories. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) commented that this process of organisation allowed for convenient handling of the data which also provided easy identification and comparisons for different patterns.

The fourth phase was consisted of reviewing themes where I checked all themes in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. Here I generated a thematic map of the analysis. The fifth phase was defining and naming the themes where the ongoing analysis was done to refine the specifics of each theme in order to generate clear definitions and the name of each theme. Finally, the sixth phase was producing the report where the selections of compelling extracts relating to the research questions and literature review would be done to produce the report of the analysis.

## **4.9 Trustworthiness**

A trustworthy piece of research is one which is 'worth paying attention to, worth taking account of' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, pp.290). It is a useful means of ensuring quality control

considerations to ensure that the research is conducted competently and ethically. Thus maximizing quality in research conduct depends to a great extent on quality measurement criteria and techniques undertaken by the researcher (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). These criteria influence the extent to which one can have confidence in the results.

To ensure the quality of this mixed method study particularly the trustworthiness and the credibility, a number of issues were considered. The various methods used in triangulation with a questionnaire, open ended questions and interviews were carried out. These confirmed the data can be triangulated and the trustworthiness of this study is safe guarded.

#### **4.9.1 The quality of research design**

The quality of the research design includes the researcher's clear understanding and self-awareness of the topic being investigated and the researcher's skills in using the research methods (Robson, 2002). Therefore, I attended research methods courses prior to my fieldwork which were useful in developing my skills in using appropriate research methods and provided me in-depth understanding of the different aspects of research methodology. I have also attended online courses specifically on quantitative methods to increase my confidence in the area.

#### **4.9.2 The quality of questionnaire**

In terms of the quality of the questionnaire, I have considered the selection of the instrument reflected on the understanding from the literature. The back to back translation of the questionnaire which was from English Language to Bahasa Malaysia was appropriately done. The piloting of the questionnaire was conducted where some modifications and changes were made to obtain good quality of data following the piloting.

#### **4.9.3 The quality of interview**

A few measures were adopted to enhance the quality of the interview data. This included taking steps in establishing appropriate rapport to ensure the participants felt relaxed as Shenton (2004) indicated that the rapport from the outset to facilitate frankness. I also compromised to their request on arranging the interviews appointment to avoid pressure and to ensure the quality of interview data. A pilot interview was conducted prior to the main field work in order to ensure my interviewing techniques such as not to ask leading questions, to avoid lengthy turns, to sufficiently probe and clarify the participants' responses (Bogdan and Bilken, 1992).

#### **4.9.4 The quality of data analysis**

One of the advantages of adopting the mixed method research is that one can achieve the confirmability of both the quantitative and qualitative data. In this study, it allowed me to confirm and disconfirm the data from different methods and sources. This leads to a much higher level of measurement of the quality of the data by providing a mix of the 'number' and the 'stories' in the data analysis. Therefore the methodological and theoretical assumptions which underlay the concepts and methods in this research allowed for fuller exploration as well as enhancing the level of trustworthiness. Apart from that Silverman (2001) argues that another means of enhancing the quality of data analysis is to establish the congruence of research findings with those of previous studies. I also invited a 'critical friend' (Rallis and Rossman, 2009) to read my work critically and challenge the conclusions that I have arrived at.

#### **4.9.5 The quality of data presentation**

Although this study is mainly focused on the Malaysian context, the sufficient descriptive data presented in this study allowed comparison to the readers to evaluate the possible transferability to his or her own setting (Guba and Lincoln, 1984). In addressing the issue of good quality of data presentation, I attempted to show that the data from both quantitative and qualitative study has been meaningfully condensed, presented and interpreted to enable readers to know the context of the study.

Reliability as defined by Domyei (2007, p.50) as "the extent of which our measurement instruments and procedures produce consistent results in a given population in different circumstances". In order to increase the reliability, the issues of ambiguity and clarity in the questionnaire has been taken into account. The Cronbach's alpha was used to check the reliability of the Likert scale items in the questionnaire and the result I achieved satisfied the minimum levels recommended in the literature (see section 4.6.1).

Also the use of the tape-recording during the interview sessions and the use of the original quotes to support the research arguments ensured the originality of the data used. Prior to the pilot study, I also used the same questions in the semi-structured interview to all the participants in order to gain the consistency of the data and to enhance reliability. However, the wording of the questions were varied according to the nature of the teachers' behaviour and attitudes. Validity deals with the question of whether the measuring instrument measures what it was originally intended to measure (Cohen et al., 2013). As for the validity, the questionnaire and semi-structured interview questions were improved by consulting and refining their items through suggestions and comments I received from the supervisor and the developer of the



instrument. The pilot study also further enhanced the validity of the instruments. The validity of the interview was also enhanced through the researchers' familiarity with the context.

#### **4.9.6 Pilot study**

A small-scale pilot study was undertaken prior to the main collection of data to find out how long the questionnaire took to answer and if there was any features that people were not likely to answer. It was also to ensure that the terms used were not ambiguous and to see how people interpret the questions. After making revisions, the instrument was reviewed and finalized before getting the approval from the ethical committee and starting the field work. The pilot study also allowed me not only to test the semi-structured interview questions. It allowed me to confirm whether the data produced from the questions would answer the research questions and also test the data analysis processes (both quantitative and qualitative data). Thus, the pilot study has enabled me to trial the chosen research instruments and to refine them as necessary (Drever, 1995). It also provided an opportunity for me to become more familiar with these instruments and to develop my skills in applying those (Cohen et al., 2013).

Reflecting on the pilot study, I identified and contacted 30 participants to answer the questionnaire via social media that is face book where all of them were my ex-students from different cohorts. They were teaching from different states all over Malaysia. After a month, I gathered and entered the data into the SPSS to check the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. I also managed to pilot the semi-structured interview to two of them via skype. However, there were limitations on using the skype interview as the connection was not strong that it halted the interview process several times and the arrangement for the interview was a challenge because of the time difference.

#### **4.9.7 Ethical issues**

Kimmel (1988) states that ethical connotes conformity to a code or set of principles. In this study, the research protocols have been undertaken to ensure that this study is responsible, professional and ethical based on the guidelines as follows:

a) Access and acceptance

As this study investigated teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE in government preschools, a number of considerations regarding the ethics of conducting research are important to consider such as gaining access and acceptance and other issues regarding anonymity of participants and confidentiality of data (Cohen et al., 2013; Creswell, 2012).

The Education Planning Unit (EPU) was contacted in writing to seek approval for the research area and design. After getting the feedback and approval from EPU, the Education Planning and Research Department (EPRD) had been contacted to gain access to the preschools. After getting the consent from the State Education Department, then I was allowed to work with the teachers at the preschools.

Based on my personal experience, the communication links between the EPU and EPRD were well established in a way that data collection would be possible from the preschool teachers which assisted me as a researcher in conducting the research methods in the selected preschools. I have also gained ethical approval from the ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix 5).

b) Data Protection

Any electronic data was stored in a password protected secure network location allocated at University of Leeds. No data was stored on thumb drives or laptops. My personal network location at the university could be accessed from my home computer- this access route was password protected through a secure log-in which matches the on- site process and times out after 5 minutes inactivity. A digital voice recorder was used to record interviews and the data were stored in a locked filing cabinet in a lockable office at the University of Leeds and kept on site at all times.

c) Informed consent

As mentioned by Cohen et al., (2013), participants should have appropriate information of the topic involved so that they could make informed decision in taking part of the research. Thus, information sheets and verbal inputs were provided for all participants before taking part in any of the research. Preschool teachers were given information about the questionnaire and consent forms in advance to indicate that they have given their consent for their responses to be collated and analysed before filling the questionnaire. They were assured that their responses would not be available in the public domain and the analysis would involve aggregation of all responses to make individuals less- identifiable.

In order to use the interview effectively, an initial meeting with the teachers was made to prepare them for the interview. They were contacted to inquire about a convenient time and place to conduct the interview. The motives and purposes of the research were made clear. Teachers gave their consent for the interview to be recorded and subsequent transcripts to be analysed. Teachers were also reminded of their right to

withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without the need to give reasons. Any interview data held about them at that time would not be used and would be destroyed.

d) Confidentiality

The teachers were ensured that their identity would not be revealed in any part of the research. This was made clear to all teachers that their views would be of great value and respected that confidentiality of their views and their anonymity was guaranteed.

Also there was no reference was made to the research sites or the participants.

'Pseudonyms' as described by Denscombe (2008, p. 181) were used as alternative and fictitious names to mask the true identity, to protect teachers' identities and the identity of the schools as well.

#### **4.9.8 Presentation of the findings**

In this study the data has been presented in two separate chapters. Chapter Five presents the findings from the quantitative data and Chapter Six and Seven present the findings from the qualitative data.

In Chapter Five, the statistical analysis of the findings is conducted and presented. Descriptive statistics based on the three-component of attitude is performed to reveal the general attitude of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE. Next, the paired sampled t-test, independent sample t-test, multivariate analysis of variance, two-way between group analysis and correlational analysis were conducted on the data set. The report of the findings are structured based on the tests conducted.

In Chapter Six and Seven, the qualitative data is structured into two chapters. First, the findings from the open-ended questions is presented in Chapter Six. The themes emerged from the three items in the open-ended question are presented and the summary findings are also included. This will be followed by the findings from the semi-structured interview in Chapter Seven. The data will be organised based on the second and third research question. The themes emerged will be highlighted and illustrated with evidence from the data. The presentation of the analysis will also utilise the theoretical framework which is the combination of attitude model and ecological system theory. Therefore the structure of the findings, will be organised based on the attitude components: cognitive, affective and behavioural as well as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem which influenced the teachers' attitudes.

## 4.10 Validation of Research Tool

The factor analysis is performed in order to validate the questionnaire. The main research instrument is a modified questionnaire used in a previous study investigating teachers' attitudes (Avramidis et al., 2000) which provide reliable scores in attempting the multidimensional nature of attitude and identifying sources of potential influence.

In order to search for relevant studies that use the same instrument developed by Avramidis et al., (2000), a search was performed using SCOPUS which is the largest databases. The term *teachers' attitudes* and *Inclusive Education* was combined to search for the potential references. The journals were published between 2004-2015. The combination of term *teachers' attitude* and *Inclusive Education* has resulted in 890 documents and 161 documents cited Avramidis et al (2000).

The instrument consists of three of the attitude components namely cognitive, affective and behavioural. One of the components which is the cognitive component is taken from the Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming (ORM) scale (developed by Larrivee and Cook (1979) which has been adapted by Antonak and Larrivee (1995). 12 relevant studies are identified have been using the ORM scale which are filtered from 161 documents. Table 10 demonstrates relevant studies which used the ORM scale.

**Table 10.** Relevant studies identified as having used the ORM scale

<b>Title</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Sources</b>
<b>Inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities: Primary school teachers' attitudes and willingness in a rural area in Uganda.</b>	N=125	Patrick Ojok & Siri Womaes. 2013	International Journal of Inclusive Education 17, no 9: 1003-1021
<b>Factors related to teachers attitudes towards IE of students with severe intellectual disabilities in Riyadh Saudi.</b>	N=318	Turki A. Alqurani 2012	Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs 12, no 3: 170-182
<b>The effectiveness of in-service training for school counsellors on the inclusion of students with disabilities.</b>	N=14	Sahbaz, Umet. 2011	Educational Research & Reviews 6, no 8: 580-585
<b>An analysis of the effects of in-service teacher training on Turkish preschool teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.</b>	N=66	Zarife Secer 2010	International Journal of Early Years Education 18, no 1: 43-53

<b>Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in Turkey</b>	N=194	Salih Rakap & Louise Kazmarek 2010	European Journal of Special Needs Education 25, no 1:59-75
<b>Religion and Attitude of college pre-service teachers towards students with disabilities: Implications for higher education.</b>	N=1145	Yona Leyser & Shlomo Romi 2008	Higher Education 55, no 6: 703-717
<b>The influence of an in-service teacher training INSET program on attitude towards inclusion by regular classroom teachers who teach deaf students in primary schools in Turkey.</b>	N=122	Sari H. 2007	Deafness & Education International 19, no 3: 131-146
<b>Teachers' attitudes towards students with disabilities in Haiti.</b>	N=183	Dupoux E, Hammond H, Ingalls L, Wolman C. 2006	International Journal of Special Education 21,no 3: 1-4
<b>Exploring inclusion pre-service training needs: a study of variables associated with attitude and self-efficacy beliefs.</b>	N=1150	Yona Leyser & Shlomo Romi 2006	European Journal of SEN 21, no 1: 85-105
<b>Teachers' experience, attitudes, feelings and behaviour intentions towards children with SEN.</b>	N=87	Levins, T, Bornholt, L, Lennon B. 2005	Social Psychological of Education 8, no3: 329-343
<b>Teachers' attitude toward integration of students with disabilities in Haiti and the US.</b>	N=183	Dupoux E, Wolman C., Estrada, E.	International Journal of Disability Development & Education 52, no 1: 43-58
<b>Teachers' attitudes towards mainstreaming and their pupils' perceptions of their classroom learning environment.</b>	N=1729	Jeremy J. Monsen And Norah Frederickson 2004	Learning Environment Research 17, no 2: 129-142

Out of the studies above, three studies with more than 1000 samples were taken out to reveal the factor analysis results. As shown in Table 11, two of the studies done by Leyser et al., generally had the same results which four factors extracted and the study by Monsen et al. yielded 5 factors extracted.

**Table 11.** Three studies which performed factor analysis

<b>Title</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Factor analysis</b>
<b>Religion and Attitude of college pre-service teachers towards students with disabilities: Implications for higher education</b>	N=1145	Yona Leyser & Shlomo Romi 2008	Higher Education 55, no 6: 703-717	Benefits of inclusion Classroom management Perceived ability to teach students with disabilities Special versus regular education placement
<b>Exploring inclusion pre-service training needs: a study of variables associated with attitude and self-efficacy beliefs.</b>	N=1150	Yona Leyser & Shlomo Romi 2006	European Journal of SEN 21, no 1: 85-105	Benefits of integration Classroom management Perceived ability to teach students with disabilities Special versus general education placement
<b>Teachers' attitudes towards mainstreaming and their pupils' perceptions of their classroom learning environment</b>	N=1729	Jeremy J. Monsen And Norah Frederickson 2004	Learning Environment Research 17, no 2: 129-142	General philosophy of mainstreaming Classroom behaviour of special needs children Perceived ability to teach special needs children Classroom management of special needs children Academic and social growth of special needs children

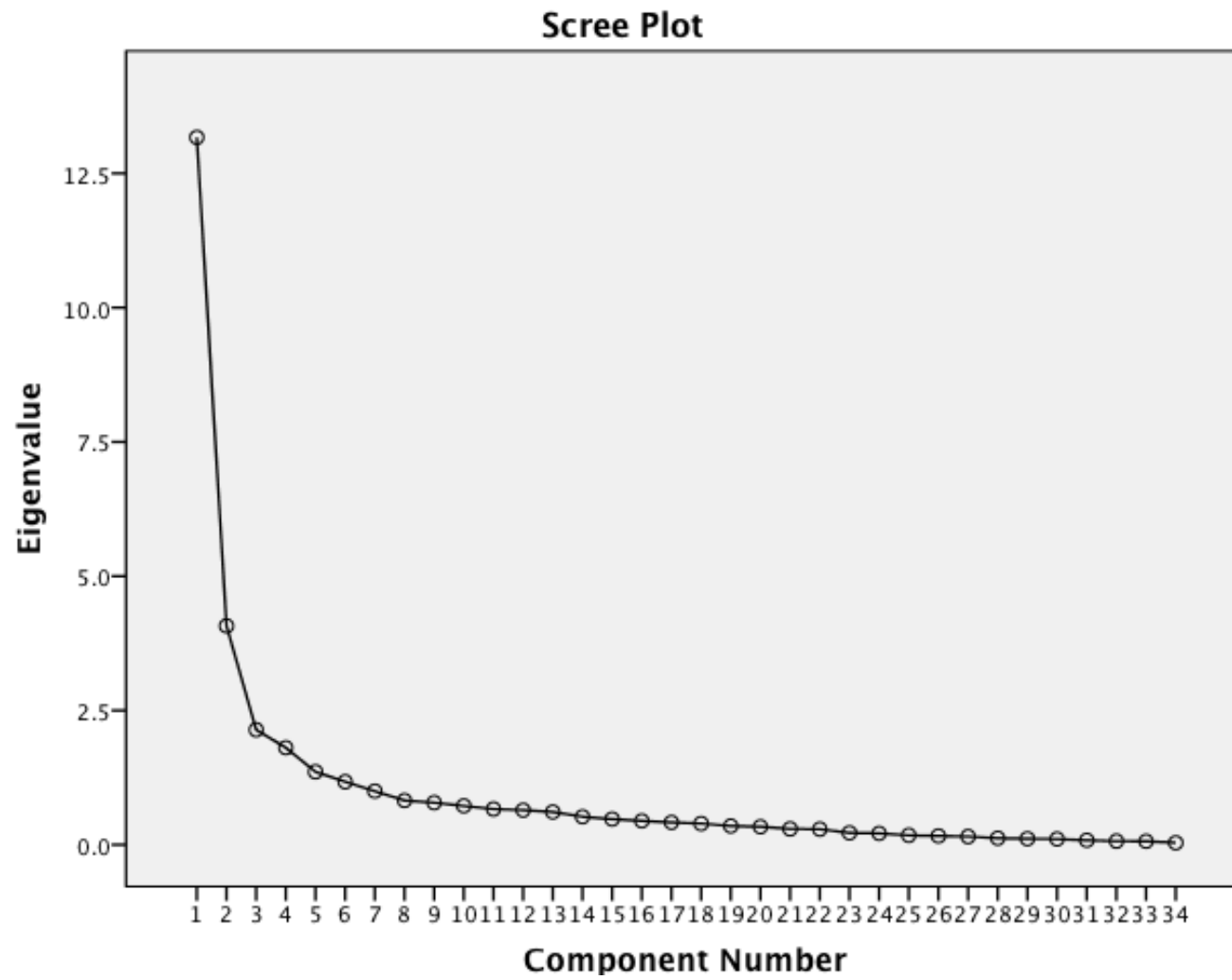
Thus in this study, factor analysis was conducted in order to group the variables which have something in common. Exploratory factor analysis is employed to explore previously unknown groupings of variables and to seek underlying patterns, clustering and groups (Cohen, et. 2013). Thus, before determining whether the data was suitable for factor analysis, several steps need to be considered. The first stage is to consider the sample size; as Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggest that a sample size of 50 is very poor, 100 is poor, 200 is fair, 300 is good, 500 is very good and 1000 is excellent. In relation to this study, the sample size is 421 which could be considered as good. The data was a normal distribution and fit with the two specific statistics for the factorization. The Bartlett test of sphericity should show statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ ) and the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin should yield the overall measure of 0.06 or higher (maximum is one). Therefore, Table 12 shows the Bartlett test is significance at .000 and the KMO was 0.922.

**Table 12.** KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.922
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	12115.146
	df	561
	Sig.	.000

Next, a scree plot is another tool to determine the suitability for the factor analysis. Figure 8 shows that the scree flattens out after the second factor and level out for the next four factors. This suggests that the second factor is the significant factor in explaining the greatest amount of variance.

Figure 8. The scree plot





Following this, the varimax rotation was utilized as the researcher believes that the factors may be uncorrelated. Based on Table 13, in the column *Rotation Sum of Squared loadings*, the first factors was 30.060% of the variance, and factors 2,3,4 and 5 each accounted for 15.856%, 10.668%, 5.053%, 4.299% and 3.839% of variance. The amount of explanatory power was 69.775% which can be considered as moderate.

**Table 13.** Principal component analysis

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	13.171	38.738	38.738	10.220	30.060	30.060
2	4.075	11.984	50.722	5.391	15.856	45.916
3	2.140	6.295	57.017	3.627	10.668	56.584
4	1.806	5.313	62.330	1.718	5.053	61.637
5	1.358	3.994	66.325	1.462	4.299	65.936
6	1.173	3.450	69.775	1.305	3.839	69.775

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The second stage is to decide on which variables to include in a factor. According to Cohen et al., (2013), factor analysis is not a statistical matter but a matter of professional judgement. In other words, the researcher has to identify the variables by deciding the cut-off point, looking for homogeneous high values and numerical distance from other variables in the list. Table 14 shows six factors that have been extracted.

**Table 14.** The rotated components matrix in principal component analysis

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
pessimistic - optimistic	.903					
unconfident - confident	.898					
negative - positive	.893					
unhappy - happy	.889					
disinterested - interested	.864					
worried - self assured	.845					
unhappy - happy	.819					
If a new student who was described as having EBD (ADHD etc.) Uncomfortable - comfortable	.816					
pessimistic - optimistic	.790					.387
negative- positive	.782					.304
unconfident - confident	.772					.334
worried- self assured	.768					
disinterested - interested	.765					

If a new student who was described as a severe learning difficulty ( a child with DS, autism CP etc.) was about to join your class tomorrow you would feel uncomfortable - comfortable	.737					
I will engage in developing the appropriate skills to teach children with SEN		.841				
I will engage in developing skills for managing behaviour of children with SEN.		.836				
I will co-operate with the parents of the children with SEN for the benefit of their children.		.815				
I will be willing to engage in in-service training on teaching children with SEN.		.769				
I will continuously assess myself to inform my teaching practice.		.769				
I will change my teaching processes to accommodate children with SEN in my classroom.		.761				
I will accept responsibility for teaching children with SEN within a whole-school policy.		.735				
I will be supportive towards the idea of including children with SEN in my classroom.	.456	.481	.365			
The inclusion of children with SEN can be beneficial for regular children.			.764			
Including the child with SEN will promote his/her social independence			.706			
Inclusion offers mixed group interaction which will foster understanding and acceptance of differences.			.693			
Children with SEN should be given every opportunity to function in the general classroom setting where possible.		.359	.638			
The challenge of being in a mainstream classroom will promote the academic growth of the child with SEN.			.632		-.419	
The presence of children with SEN will promote acceptance of differences on the part of other children.			.630		.329	
Isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of a child with SEN			.509			
Inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the child with SEN.				.789		
The child with SEN will be socially isolated by other children.				.737		
The contact mainstream-class children have with included children may be harmful				.601	-.301	
The needs of children with SEN are best served through special, separate class.					.671	
The child with SEN will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom than in a mainstream classroom.					.318	-.635
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.						
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.						

Based on Table 14, six factors have been extracted with the factor loadings for each variable reported in brackets.

*Factor One: Teachers' feelings towards the LD and EBD children*

Cut-off point:0.74

Variables included:

*If a new student who was described as having EBD was about to join your class tomorrow, you would feel:*

pessimistic – optimistic(factor loading .903)

unconfident – confident(factor loading .898)

negative – positive(factor loading .893)

unhappy – happy(factor loading .889)

disinterested – interested(factor loading .864)

worried - self –assured(factor loading .845)

unhappy – happy(factor loading .819)

*If a new student who was described as having learning difficulties was about to join your class tomorrow, you would feel:*

Uncomfortable – comfortable(factor loading .816)

pessimistic – optimistic(factor loading .790)

negative- positive(factor loading .782)

unconfident – confident(factor loading .772)

worried- self –assured(factor loading .768)

disinterested – interested(factor loading .765)

uncomfortable – comfortable(factor loading .737)

*Factor Two: Teachers' intentions that predict how they will behave*

Cut-off point:0.48

Variables included:

I will engage in developing the appropriate skills to teach children with SEN. factor loading .841)

I will engage in developing skills for managing behaviour of children with SEN.  
(factor loading .836)

I will co-operate with the parents of the children with SEN for the benefit of their children .(factor loading .815)

I will be willing to engage in in-service training on teaching children with SEN. (factor loading.769)

I will continuously assess myself to inform my teaching practice.(factor loading.769)

I will change my teaching processes to accommodate children with SEN in my classroom.  
(factor loading .761)

I will accept responsibility for teaching children with SEN within a whole-school policy. (factor loading .735)

I will be supportive towards the idea of including children with SEN in my classroom.(factor loading .481)

*Factor Three: teachers' opinion on IE*

Cut-off point:0.51

Variables included:

The inclusion of children with SEN can be beneficial for regular children.( factor loading .764)

Including the child with SEN will promote his/her social independence (factor loading .706)

Inclusion offers mixed group interaction which will foster understanding and acceptance of differences .(factor loading .693)

Children with SEN should be given every opportunity to function in the general classroom setting where possible. (factor loading .638)

The challenge of being in a mainstream classroom will promote the academic growth of the child with SEN.(factor loading .632)

The presence of children with SEN will promote acceptance of differences on the part of other children.(factor loading .630)

Isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of a child with SEN(factor loading .509)

*Factor Four: special education vs mainstream education placement*

Cut-off point:0.60

Variables included:

Inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the child with SEN.(factor loading .789)

The child with SEN will be socially isolated by other children.( factor loading .737)

The contact mainstream-class children have with included children may be harmful.(factor loading .601)

The presence of children with SEN will promote acceptance of differences on the part of other children. (factor loading .329)

The needs of children with SEN are best served through special, separate class. (factor loading .671)

The child with SEN will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom than in a mainstream classroom. (factor loading .318)

In summary, in order to obtain conceptually similar and significant clusters of issues of the variables, principal component analysis with varimax rotation and Kaiser Normalization was conducted. Eigenvalues equal to or greater than 1.00 were extracted. With regard to the 34 variables used, orthogonal rotation of the variables yielded six factors, accounting for 30.060, 15.856, 10.668, 5.053, 4.299 and 3.839 per cent of the total variance respectively, a total of 69.775 per cent of the total variance explained. To enhance the interpretability of the factors, only variables with factor loadings as follows were selected for inclusion in their respective factors: > 0.74 (factor one), > 0.48 (factor two), > 0.51 (factor three) and >0.60 (factor four). The factors are named, respectively: teachers' feelings towards EBD and LD, prediction on how the teachers behave, teachers' opinion on inclusion and special education vs mainstream education placement.

#### **4.11 Summary**

In this chapter, I presented different aspects of the research methodology which include the research objectives and research design, the rationale for choosing the research design, the processes of fieldwork, the procedure involved in the data collection and analysis which highlights the methods, samples, stages and instruments. I also discussed an account of some of the ethical considerations related to this study. These descriptions should assist readers by providing them with information about the design and the conduct of this study in order to make judgement about its quality. Finally, I also presented the process of factor analysis which has been performed to validate the questionnaire used in this research. The following chapter (Chapter Five) presents the analysis of the quantitative data generated from the questionnaire.

## Chapter Five: Analysis of Quantitative Data

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter mainly provides the report and the analysis of the quantitative data. The instrument used in this study was carefully chosen in order to ensure its suitability, therefore, the factor analysis was performed to explore any unknown groupings of variables in the previous chapter (4.10). In section 5.2, the demographic information about the participants is presented. Then in section 5.3, Descriptive statistics on the three-component of attitude were performed to reveal the general attitude of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE. Next, in section 5.4, Differences between two affective scales utilising the paired sampled t-test is performed. In section 5.5, Differences between attitude components were presented by performing independent sample t-test. In section 5.6 Variations between subgroup data analysis were conducted using multivariate analysis of variance tests. In section 5.7, Interactions between subgroups and constructs using two-way between group analysis tests were presented. In section 5.8, Co-relational analysis was conducted on the data set to discover relationships between constructs. Finally the summary of the key findings will be presented in section 5.9.

### 5.2 Demographic Information about the Participants

There were 421 preschool teachers who participated in this study. The background information of the preschool teachers who responded to the questionnaire is presented in Table 15.

**Table 15.** Demographic information of preschool teachers who participated in this study

Background variable	Groups	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	16	3.8
	Female	405	96.2
<b>Age</b>	20-30	38	9.0
	31-40	248	58.9
	41-50	123	29.2
	51-60	12	2.9
<b>Location</b>	Urban	151	35.9
	Semi-urban	56	13.3
	Rural	214	50.8
<b>Race</b>	Malay	347	82.4
	Chinese	35	8.3
	Indian	31	7.4
	Others	8	1.9

Based on the data presented in Table 15, it is apparent that most of the preschool teachers were female (96.2%) as compared to male teachers (3.8%). The majority of the respondents of this study were teachers whose age ranged between 31 to 40 years of age (58.9%).

Meanwhile, teachers between 41 to 50 years of age were 123 (29.9%) and 20 to 30 years of age are 38 (9.0%). Only 12 (2.9%) preschool teachers' age ranged between 51 to 60 years of age.

Based on Table 15, it shows that majority of the teachers were Malays 347(82.4%) followed by Chinese 35(8.3%), Indians 31 (7.4%) and other races such as aboriginals and mixed 8 (1.9%). With respect to location, 151 (35.9%) teachers were from urban government preschools, 56 (13.3%) were from semi-urban government preschools and 214 (50.8%) teachers were from rural government preschools.

**Table 16.** Teaching background information

<b>Background variable</b>	<b>Groups</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Teaching Qualification</b>	Certificate in Teaching Foundation	75	17.8
	Post-diploma in Teacher Training Course (Preschool Education)	92	21.9
	Post-degree Teacher Training Course (Preschool Education)	98	23.3
	Bachelor of Education (Preschool Education)	62	14.7
	Others	94	22.3
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	Less than 2 years	20	4.8
	2-5 years	63	15.0
	6-10 years	168	39.9
	11-15 years	68	16.2
	15-20 years	56	13.3
	More than 20 years	46	10.9
<b>SEN Experience</b>	Yes	71	16.9
	No	349	82.9
<b>Training in Special Education</b>	Yes	27	6.4
	No	294	93.6
<b>Special Education Integration Programme (SEIP)</b>	Yes	122	29
	No	298	70.2

Table 16 shows the information relating to teaching qualification, teaching experience, training in SEN and SEIP. Based on the information, 98 preschool teachers (23.3%) were fully trained

by ITE as they possessed Post-degree Teacher Training Degree in Preschool Education, 92 preschool teachers (21.9%) held Post-diploma Teacher Training Course in Preschool Education, 62 preschool teachers (14.7%) held Bachelor of Education in Preschool Education and 75 preschool teachers (17.8%) possessed Certificate in Teaching Foundation. The remaining of 94 preschool teachers (22.3%) held Bachelor of Education from local universities (other than Preschool Education offered by ITEs).

168 preschool teachers (39.9%) have six to 10 years of teaching experience, while 68 (16.2%) and 63 preschool teachers (15%) have 11 to 15 years of teaching experience and two to five years of teaching experience respectively. Only 20 preschool teachers (4.8%) were young teachers who have less than two years of teaching experience. However, 46 preschool teachers (10.9%) were very experienced teachers who have more than 20 years of teaching experience. In relation to this, 349 (82.9%) of them did not have any experience with children with SEN and 294 (93.6%) of them claimed that they did not receive any trainings in SE. Interestingly, 289 (72.9%) preschool teachers were from non- SEIP school while 122 (29%) of them were from SEIP schools.

### 5.3 Descriptive Statistics

#### 5.3.1 The respondents in this study generally prepared in terms of cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitude towards the introduction of IE in Malaysia.

Considering the range of the scales (from 1 to 5 in the scale measuring the cognitive component, from 1 to 7 in the scale measuring the affective component and from 1 to 5 in the scale measuring the behavioural component) it could be argued that the mean scores of the participants demonstrated that they were generally prepared towards the introduction of IE at the preschool level (see Table 17).

**Table 17.** Mean scores of the respondents in the scales measuring the cognitive, affective and behavioural component of attitude

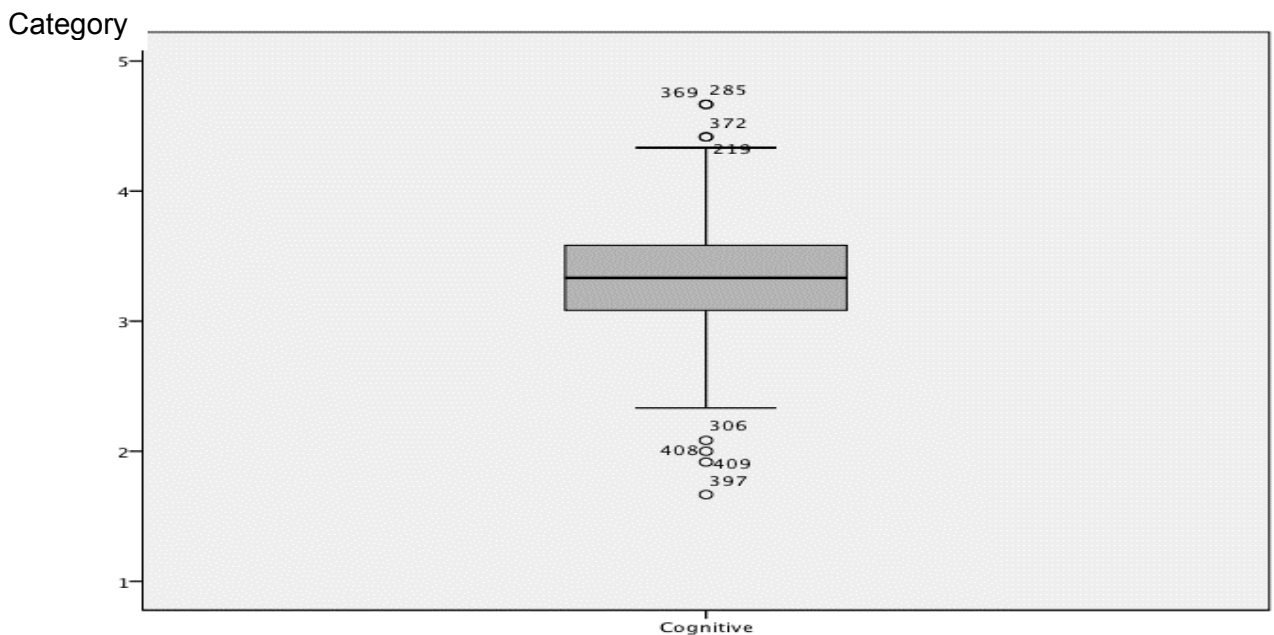
Attitude components	Scale	n	Percentage	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Cognitive component</b>	1-Strongly disagree	421	0.80	3.36	0.42
	2-Disagree				
	3-Either agree nor disagree				
	4-Agree				
	5-Strongly agree				
<b>Affective component</b>	Semantic scale 1-7	421	0.89	3.73	1.12



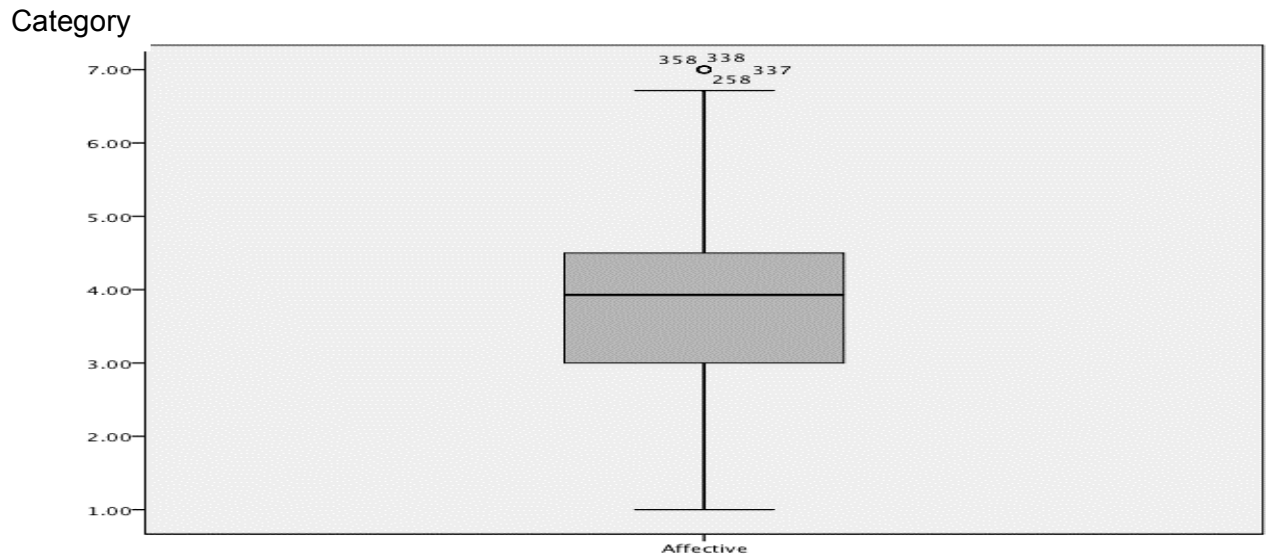
<b>Behavioural component</b>	1-Strongly disagree	421	0.79	3.33	0.76
	2-Disagree				
	3-Either agree nor disagree				
	4-Agree				
	5-Strongly agree				

Table 17 shows the mean of attitude components given by the respondents of preschool teachers. The means of cognitive, affective and behavioural were  $M = 3.36$ ,  $M = 3.73$ , and  $M = 3.33$ , respectively whereby the cognitive scales range from 1 to 5 which is slightly above the central point (3.0) which is *neither agree nor disagree*, however, the affective scales range from 1 to 7 which is slightly below the central point (4.0) towards the negative direction and the behavioural scales from 1 to 5 which is also slightly above the central point (3.0) which is neither agree nor disagree. The standard deviations show that the three components had different levels of variability  $SD = 0.42$ ,  $SD = 1.12$  and  $SD = 0.76$  respectively. Box and whisker plots revealed that the distributions were approximately normally distributed (see Figure 9, 10 and 11).

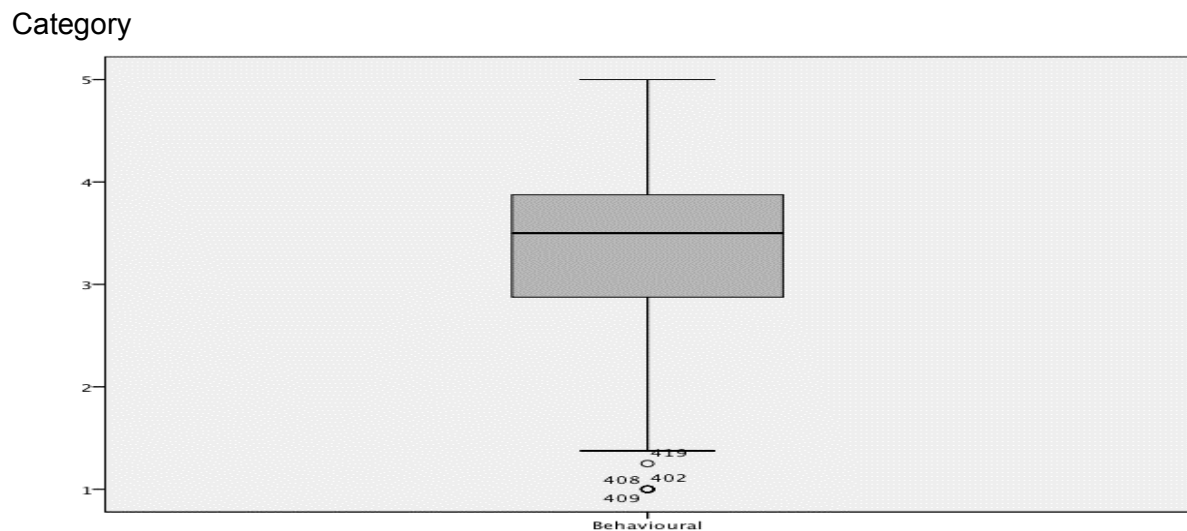
**Figure 9.** Box and whisker for normally distributed data for cognitive component



**Figure 10.** Box and whisker for normally distributed data for affective component



**Figure 11.** Box and whisker for normally distributed data for behavioural component



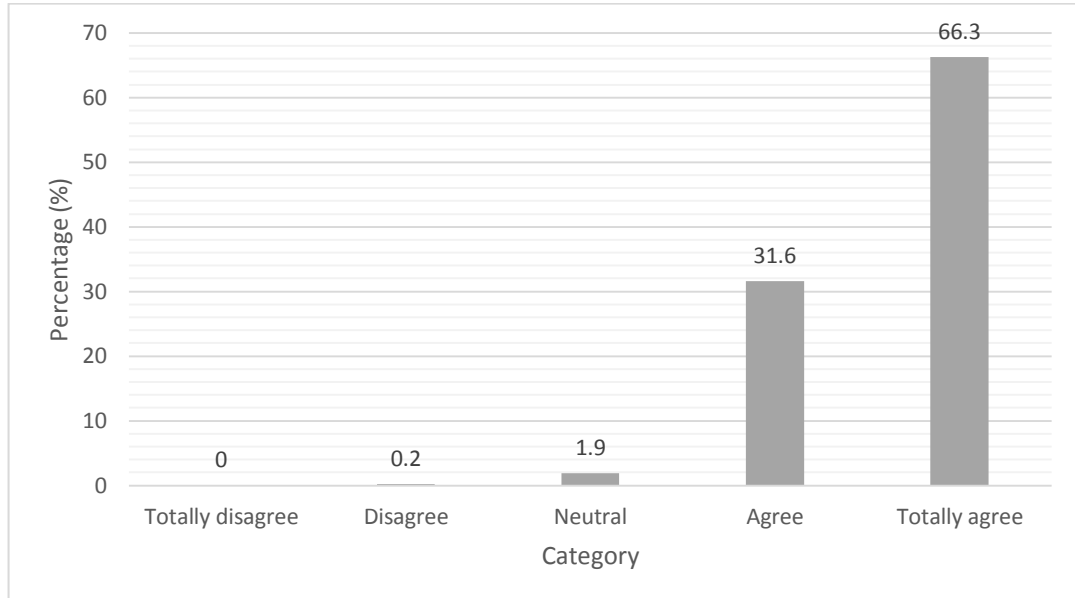
As there were two different questions in the affective component, it is decided to separate the analysis of the two scales because the scales were about two different items. The first question is designed to measure emotional reactions to placement of a child with a severe LD such as Down Syndrome, an autistic child etc. in a mainstream classroom whereas the second question is designed to measure emotional reactions to the placement of a child with EBD in the mainstream classrooms.

### **5.3.2 Descriptive statistics of preschool teachers' cognitive component**

All of the 12 items in the cognitive component scale are independently analysed across the sample (421 respondents).

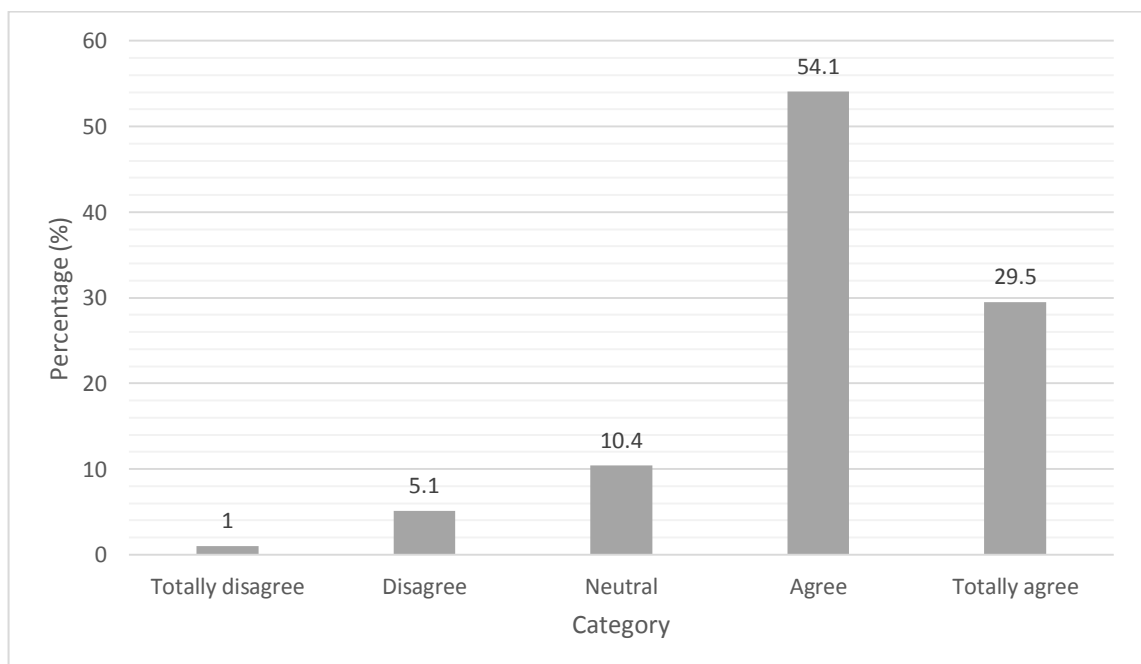
5.3.2.1 *97.9% of the respondents reported that the children with SEN are best served through special or separate classes.*

**Figure 12.** The children with SEN are best served through special classes



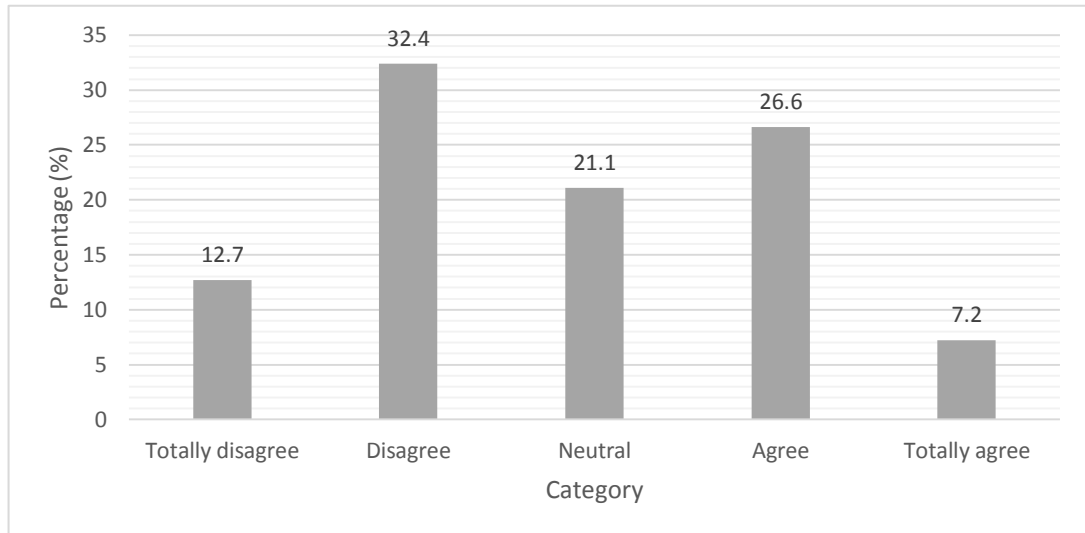
5.3.2.2 *82.2% of the respondents reported that the children with SEN will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom than in a mainstream classroom.*

**Figure 13.** The children with SEN will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom than in a mainstream classroom



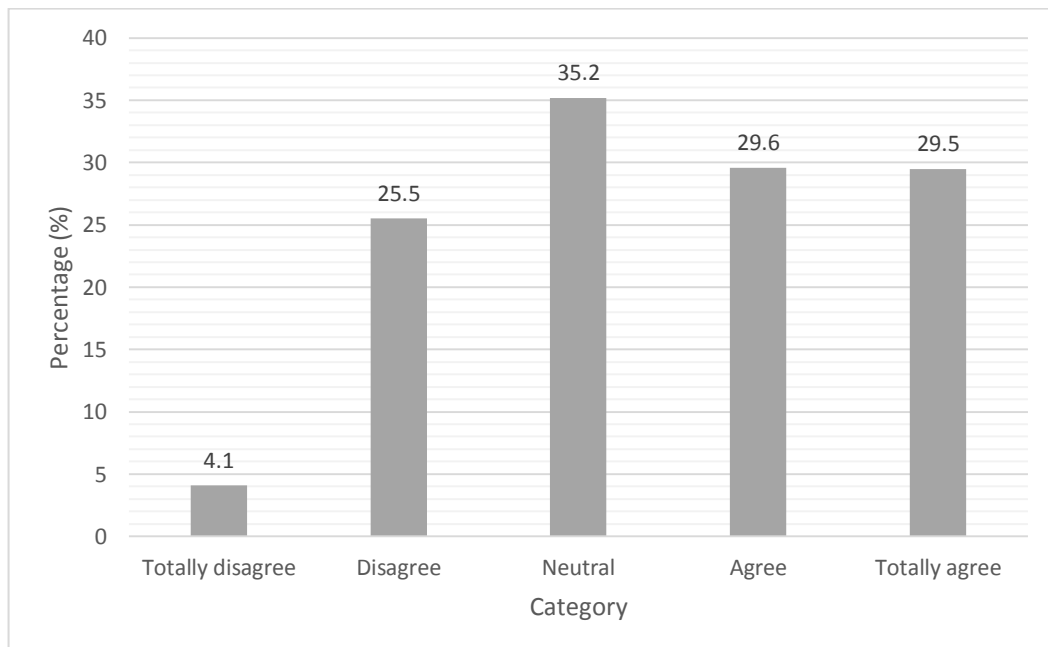
5.3.2.3 *33.5% of the respondents reported that the challenge of being in a mainstream classroom will promote the academic growth of the child with SEN.*

**Figure 14.** The challenge of being in a mainstream classroom will promote the academic growth of the child with SEN



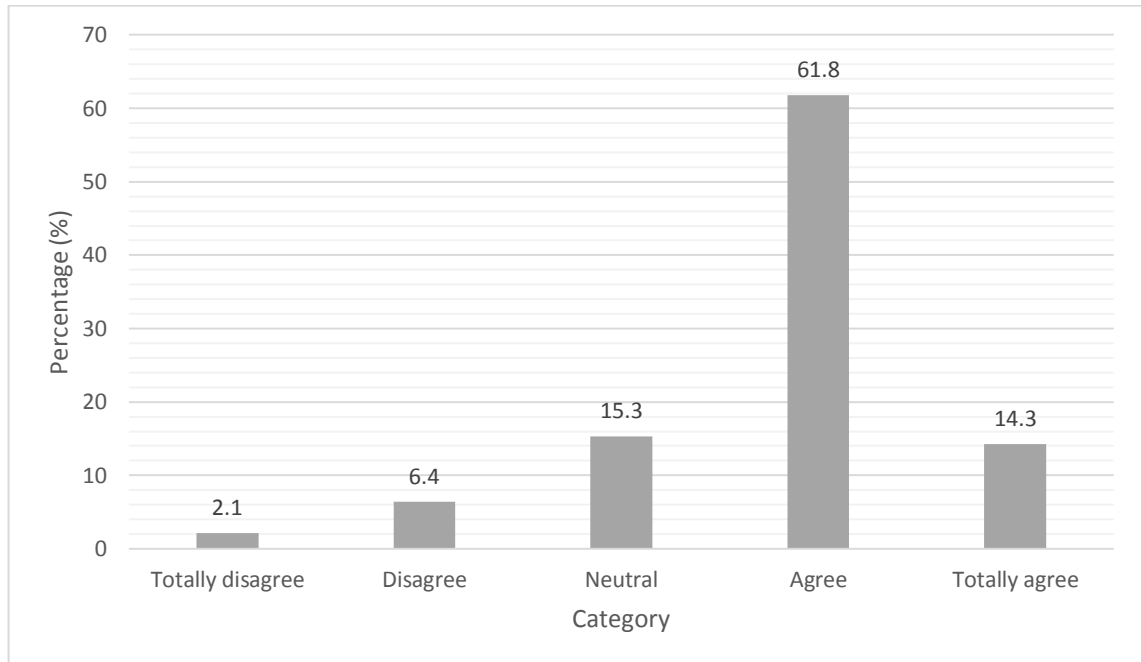
5.3.2.4 *34.7% of them believed that the inclusion of children with SEN can be beneficial for regular children.*

**Figure 15.** The inclusion of children with SEN can be beneficial for regular children



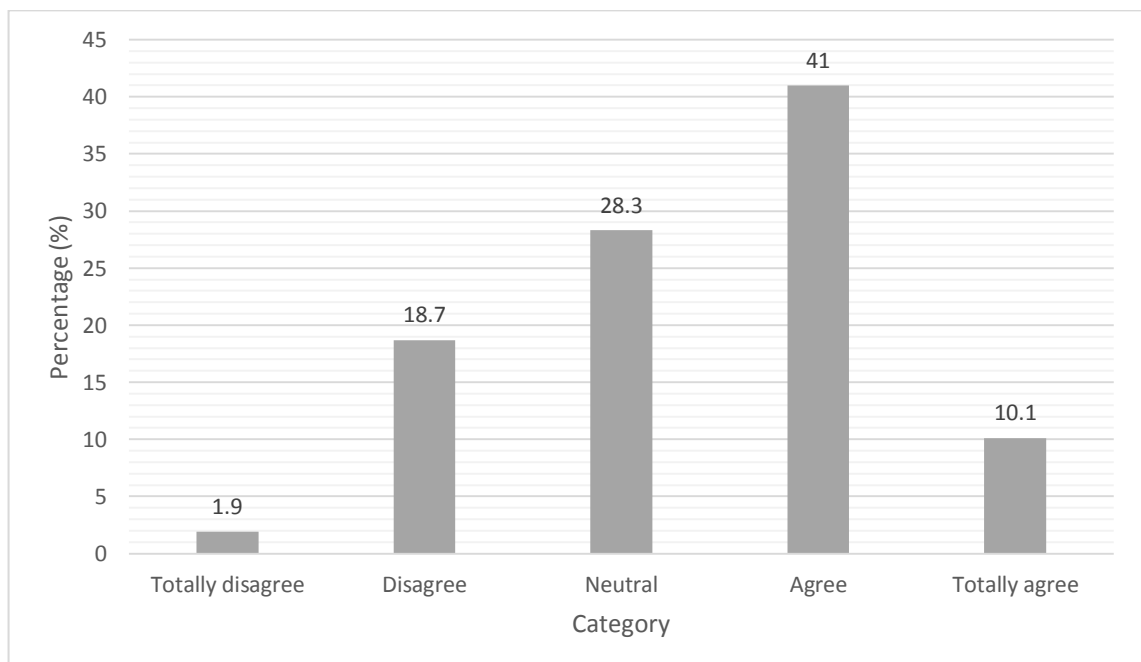
5.3.2.5 *75.8% of the respondent believed that IE will foster understanding and acceptance of differences.*

**Figure 16.** IE will foster understanding and acceptance of differences



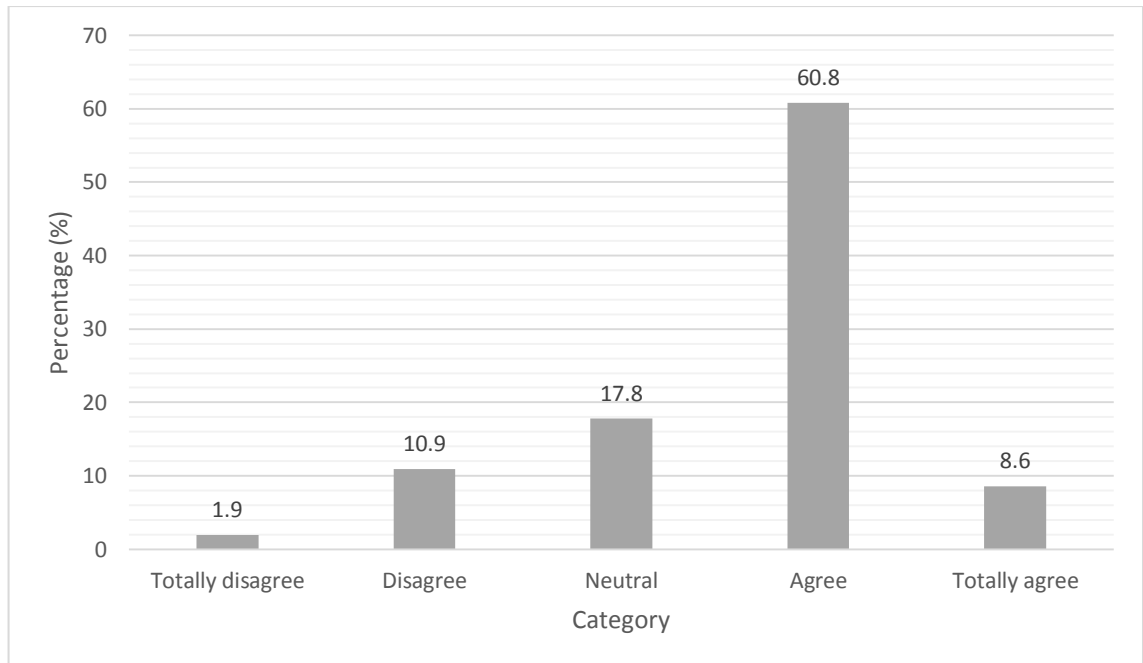
5.3.2.6 *50.6% of the respondents believed that IE will promote social independence.*

**Figure 17.** IE will promote social independence



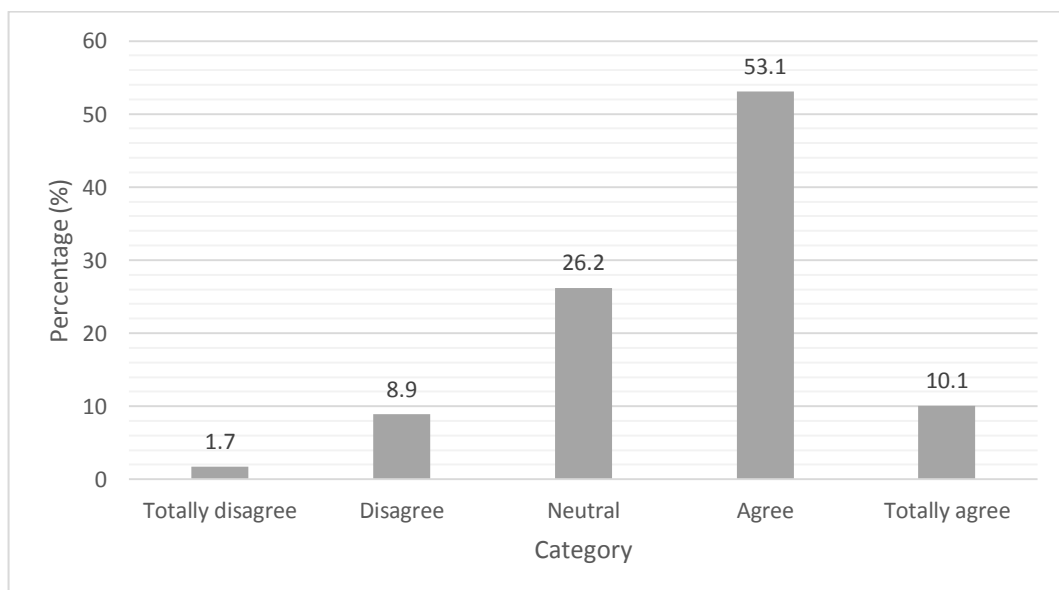
5.3.2.7 *69.4% of the respondents reported that the children with SEN should be given every opportunity to function in the general classroom setting where possible.*

**Figure 18.** The children with SEN should be given every opportunity to function in the general classroom setting where possible



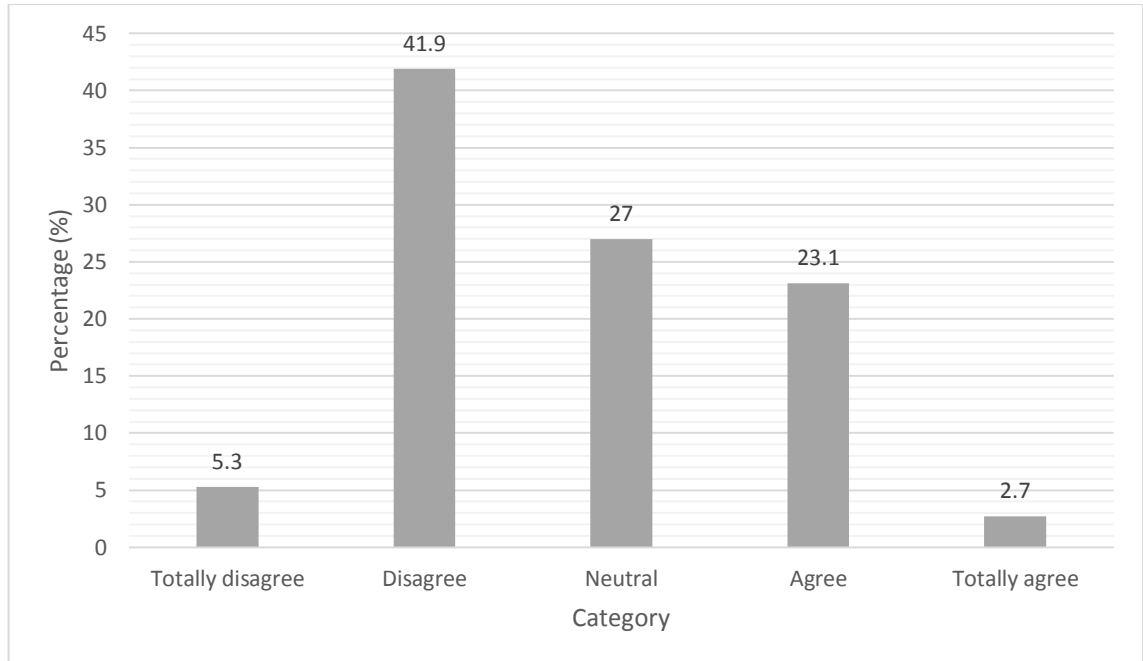
5.3.2.8 *62.5% of the respondents believed that the presence of the children with SEN will promote acceptance of differences on the part of other children.*

**Figure 19.** The presences of the children with SEN will promote acceptance of differences on the part of other children



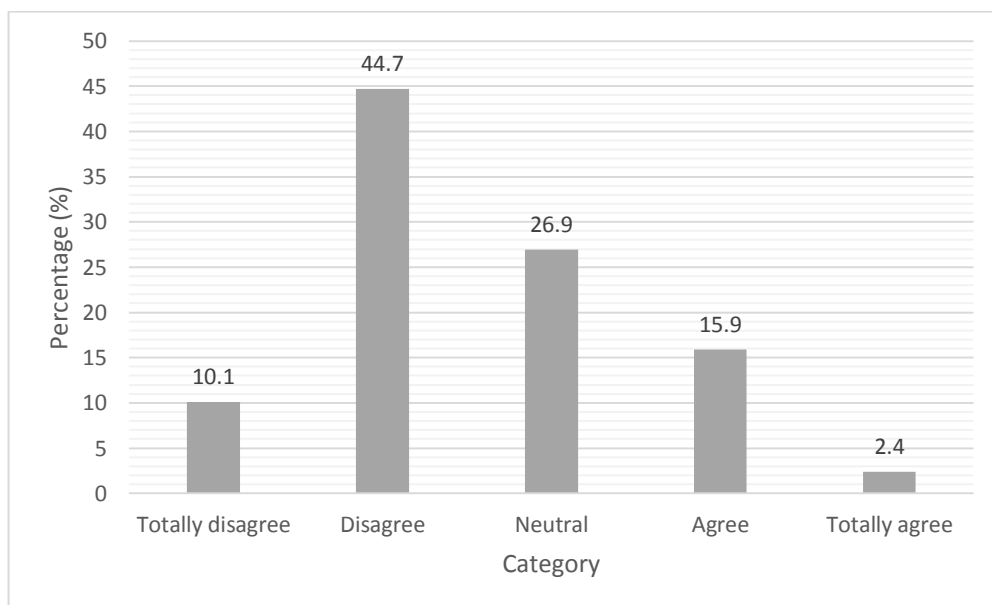
5.3.2.9 *30.6% of the respondents reported that isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of a child with SEN.*

**Figure 20.** Isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of a child with SEN



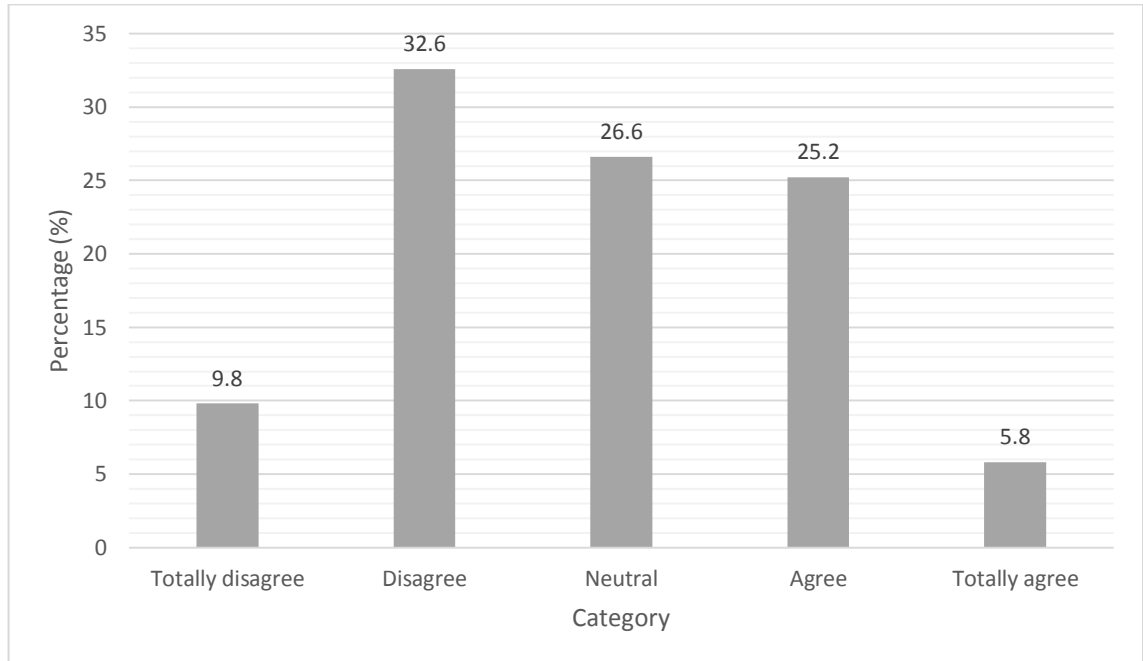
5.3.2.10 *18.1% of the respondents also reported that the contact mainstream class children have with included children may be harmful.*

**Figure 21.** The contact mainstream class children have with included children may be harmful



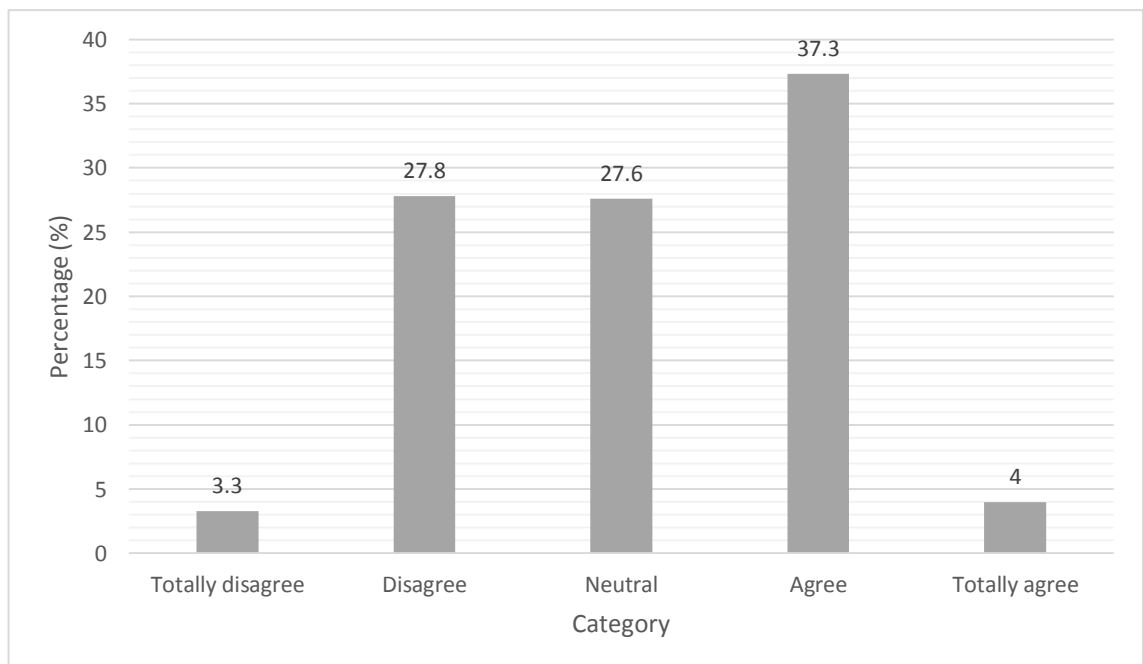
5.3.2.11 *25.4% of the respondents reported that inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the child with SEN.*

**Figure 22.** Inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the child with SEN



5.3.2.12 *41.3% of the respondents reported that the child with SEN will be socially isolated by other children.*

**Figure 23.** The child with SEN will be socially isolated by other children





In summary, figure 12 until 23 shows that, 97.9% of the respondents reported that the children with SEN are best served through special classes. They also reported that the children with SEN will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom than in a mainstream classroom (82.2%) (see Figure 12 & 13). On the other hand only 33.5% of the respondents reported that the challenge of being in a mainstream classroom will promote the academic growth of the child with SEN and only 34.7% of them believed that the inclusion of children with SEN can be beneficial for regular children (see Figure 14 & 15). However they believed that IE would foster understanding and acceptance of differences (75.8%) as well as promote social independence (50.6%) (see Figure 16 & 17). Meanwhile 69.4% of the respondents reported that the children with SEN should be given every opportunity to function in the general classroom setting where possible and they also believed that the presence of the children with SEN will promote acceptance of differences on the part of other children (62.5%) (see Figure 18 & 19). Nevertheless, 30.6% of the respondents reported that isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of a child with SEN, 18.1% of the respondents also reported that the contact mainstream class children have with included children may be harmful (see Figure 20 & 21). Thus only 25.4% of the respondents reported that inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the child with SEN and 41.3% of the respondents reported that the child with SEN will be socially isolated by other children (see Figure 22 & 23).

5.3.2.13 *The summary of descriptive statistics of preschool teachers' cognitive component*

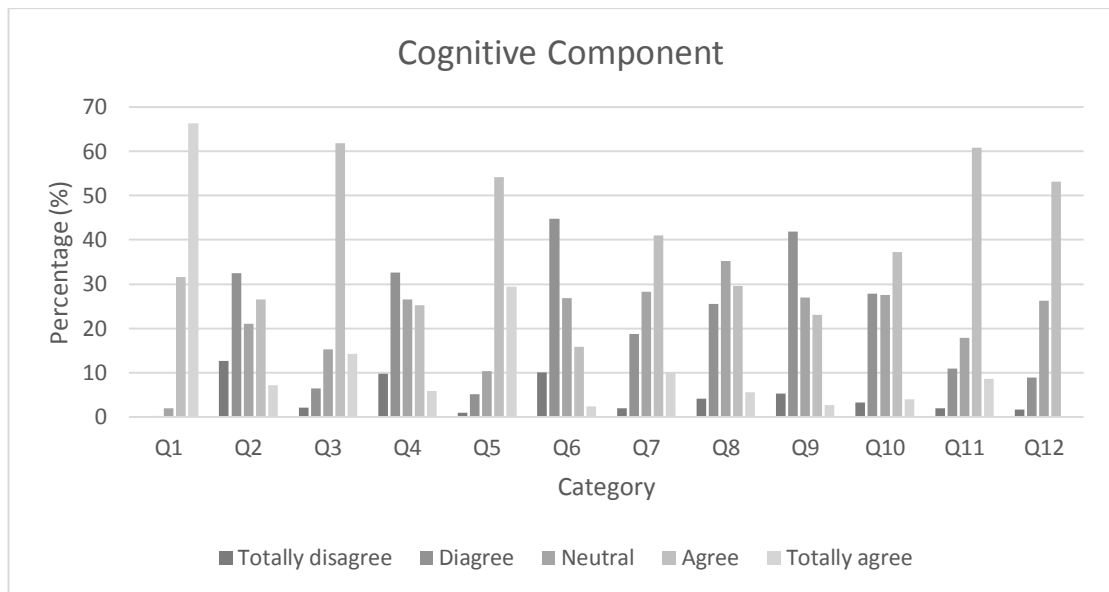
**Table 18.** Means and standard deviations of preschool teachers' cognitive component

Item	N	M	SD
The needs of children with SEN are best served through special, separate class.	401	4.64	0.53
The challenge of being in a mainstream classroom will promote the academic growth of the child with SEN.	401	2.84	1.18
Inclusion offers mixed group interaction which will foster understanding and acceptance of differences.	401	3.80	0.83
Isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of a child with SEN.*	401	2.84	1.09
The child with SEN will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom than in a mainstream classroom.	401	4.05	0.84
The contact mainstream-class children have with included children may be harmful.	401	2.57	0.96
Including the child with SEN will promote his/her social independence.	401	3.38	0.97
The inclusion of children with SEN can be beneficial for regular children.	401	3.07	0.98
Inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the child with SEN.	401	2.76	0.95
The child with SEN will be socially isolated by other children.*	401	3.11	0.96
Children with SEN should be given every opportunity to function in the general classroom setting where possible.	401	3.61	0.87
The presence of children with SEN will promote acceptance of differences on the part of other children.	401	3.59	0.85

1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neutral, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 0- don't know \*Coding reversed

Based on the data in Table 18, the mean values of the preschool teachers on the cognitive component are ranged from 2.57 to 4.64. Question number one 'The needs of children with SEN are best served through special, separate class' is rated the highest (M= 4.64, SD = 0.53) followed by question number five 'The child with SEN will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom than in a mainstream classroom' (M= 4.05, SD = 0.84). On the contrary, question number six 'The contact mainstream-class children have with included children may be harmful' is rated the lowest (M = 2.57, SD = 0.96). The standard deviations show that the cognitive component scale had similar levels of variability.

**Figure 24.** The overall responses across all items relating to the cognitive component



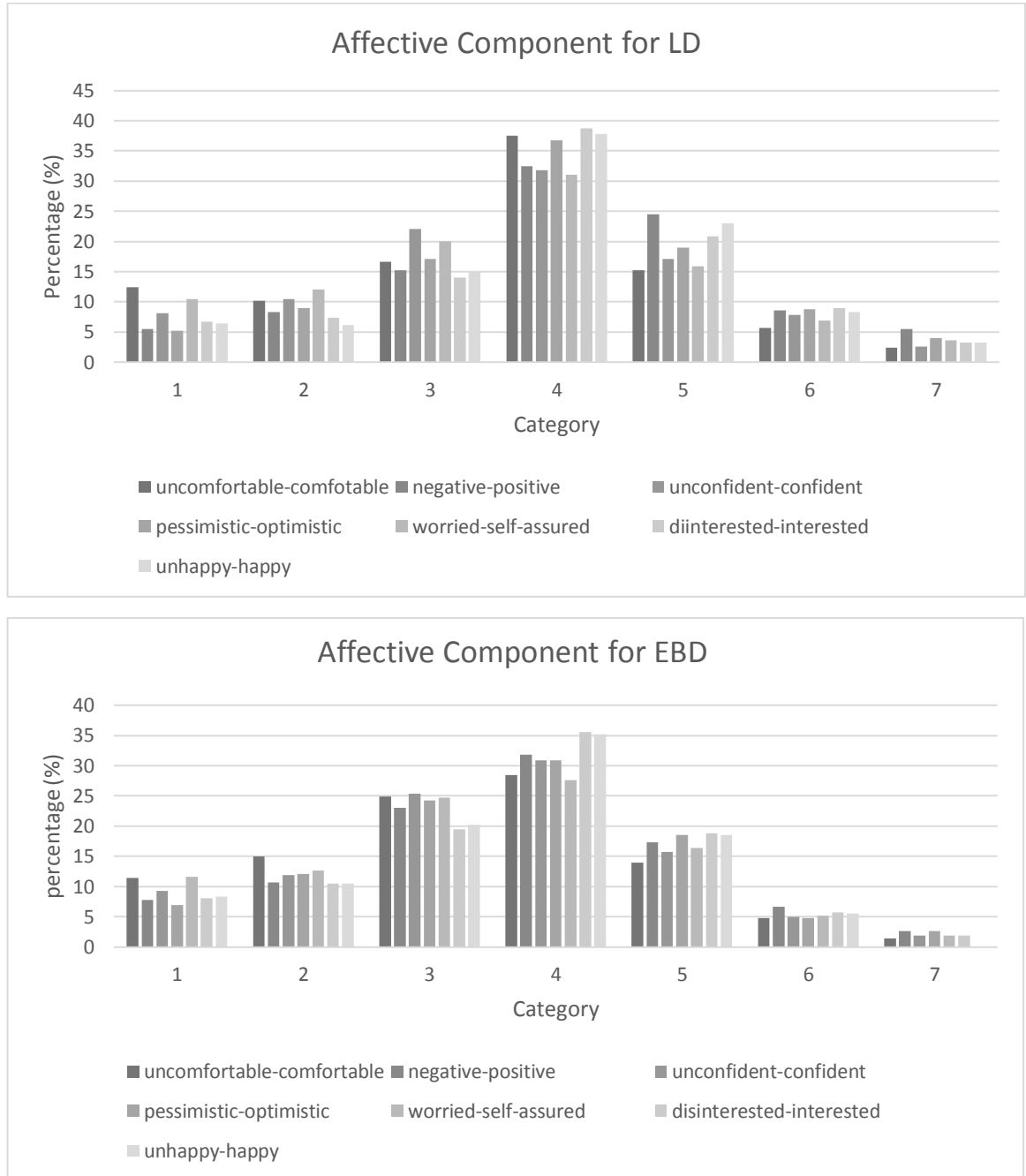
Based on Figure 24, the responses for item or Q1, 3, 5, 11 and 12, the respondents seemed to agree to totally agree with these statements.

### 5.3.3 Descriptive Statistics of preschool teachers' affective component

The respondents were asked to report their feelings in relation to Inclusive Education (14 items in affective component). This is a semantic differential scale consisting of bipolar adjectives to measure the respondents' emotional reactions when they had to deal with newly included SEN children. For the two situations (severe learning difficulties and severe emotional and behavioural difficulties), the scale consisted of 14 items and 14 adjectives such as negative-positive, pessimistic – optimistic and worried- self-assured. The mean and standard deviation of the 14 items are presented in Figure 25.

5.3.3.1 *The respondents seemed to be accepting both the children with SEN (LD) and (EBD) in their classroom.*

**Figure 25.** The overall responses on the children with SEN (LD) and (EBD)



5.3.3.2 *The summary descriptive statistics of preschool teachers' affective component*

**Table 19.** Overall responses on emotional reaction scale for LD

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Uncomfortable</b>	12.4%	10.2%	16.6%	37.5%	12.2%	5.7%	2.4%	<b>Comfortable</b>
<b>Negative</b>	5.5%	8.3%	15.2%	32.5%	24.5%	8.6%	5.5%	<b>Positive</b>
<b>Unconfident</b>	8.1%	10.5%	22.1%	31.8%	17.1%	7.8%	2.6%	<b>Confident</b>
<b>Pessimistic</b>	5.2%	9.0%	17.1%	36.8%	19.0%	8.8%	4.0%	<b>Optimistic</b>
<b>Worried</b>	10.5%	12.1%	20.0%	31.1%	15.9%	6.9%	3.6%	<b>Self-assured</b>
<b>Disinterested</b>	6.7%	7.4%	14.0%	38.7%	20.9%	9.0%	3.3%	<b>Interested</b>
<b>Unhappy</b>	6.4%	6.2%	15.0%	37.8%	23.0%	8.3%	3.3%	<b>Happy</b>

**Table 20.** Overall responses on emotional reaction scale for EBD

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Uncomfortable</b>	11.4%	15.0%	24.9%	28.5%	14.0%	4.8%	1.4%	<b>Comfortable</b>
<b>Negative</b>	9.3%	11.9%	25.4%	30.9%	15.7%	5.0%	1.9%	<b>Positive</b>
<b>Unconfident</b>	7.8%	10.7%	23.0%	31.8%	17.3%	6.7%	2.6%	<b>Confident</b>
<b>Pessimistic</b>	6.9%	12.1%	24.2%	30.9%	18.5%	4.8%	2.6%	<b>Optimistic</b>
<b>Worried</b>	11.6%	12.6%	24.7%	27.6%	16.4%	5.2%	1.9%	<b>Self-assured</b>
<b>Disinterested</b>	8.1%	10.5%	19.5%	35.6%	18.8%	5.7%	1.9%	<b>Interested</b>
<b>Unhappy</b>	8.3%	10.5%	20.2%	35.2%	18.5%	5.5%	1.9%	<b>Happy</b>

Overall, the respondents seemed to be accepting both the children with SEN (LD) and (EBD) in their classroom (see Table 19 and 20). Considering the range of the scales from 1 to 7, the frequency of 4 appeared the most likely to be chosen.

**Table 21.** Mean and standard deviation of preschool teachers' affective component

Item	n	M	SD
<b>Affective1</b> If a new student who was described as a <i>severe learning difficulty</i> (a child with DS, autism CP etc.) was about to join your class tomorrow you would feel:			
uncomfortable – comfortable	401	3.59	1.46
negative- positive	401	4.09	1.43
unconfident - confident	401	3.74	1.43
pessimistic - optimistic	401	3.99	1.39
worried- self assured	401	3.65	1.51
disinterested - interested	401	3.99	1.39
unhappy - happy	401	4.02	1.36
<b>Affective2</b> If a new student who was described as having <i>EBD</i> (ADHD etc.) was about to join your class tomorrow you would feel:			
uncomfortable – comfortable	401	3.38	1.40
negative - positive	401	3.70	1.39
unconfident - confident	401	3.55	1.38
pessimistic - optimistic	401	3.66	1.36
worried - self assured	401	3.48	1.45
disinterested - interested	401	3.71	1.37
unhappy - happy	401	3.69	1.36

1 to 7 rating scale

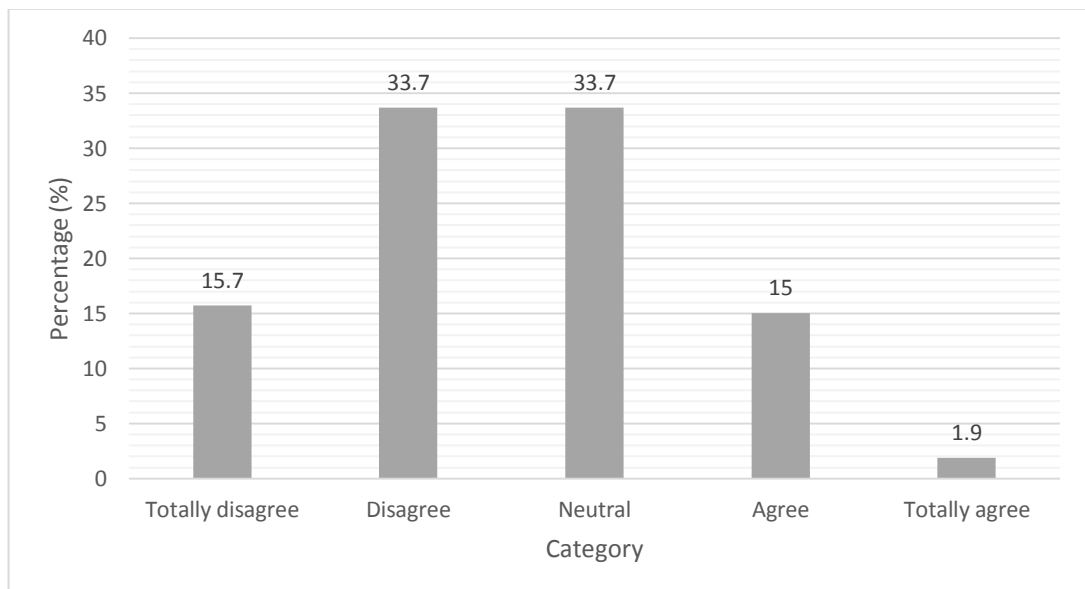
Based on Table 21, for the first affective scale (LD) the mean values of the preschool teachers on the affective 1 component are ranged from 3.59 to 4.09. 'Uncomfortable-comfortable' is rated the lowest (M= 3.59, SD = 1.46) followed by 'worried- self- assured' (M= 3.65, SD = 1.51). On the contrary, 'negative-positive' is rated the highest (M = 4.09, SD = 1.43). Meanwhile, for the second affective scale (EBD) the mean values of the preschool teachers on the affective 2 component are ranged from 3.38 to 3.71. 'Uncomfortable-comfortable' is rated the lowest (M= 3.38, SD = 1.40) followed by 'worried- self- assured' (M= 3.48, SD = 1.45). On the contrary, 'disinterested-interested' is rated the highest (M = 3.71, SD = 1.37) followed by 'negative-positive' (M = 3.70, SD = 1.39). The standard deviations show that the two affective component scales had similar levels of variability.

### 5.3.4 Descriptive statistics of preschool teachers' behavioural component

The respondents were asked to report their intentions in relation to IE (eight items in behavioural component). The Likert scale consisted of eight items measuring teachers' intentions towards IE. All of the eight items in the behavioural component scale are independently analysed across the sample (421 respondents).

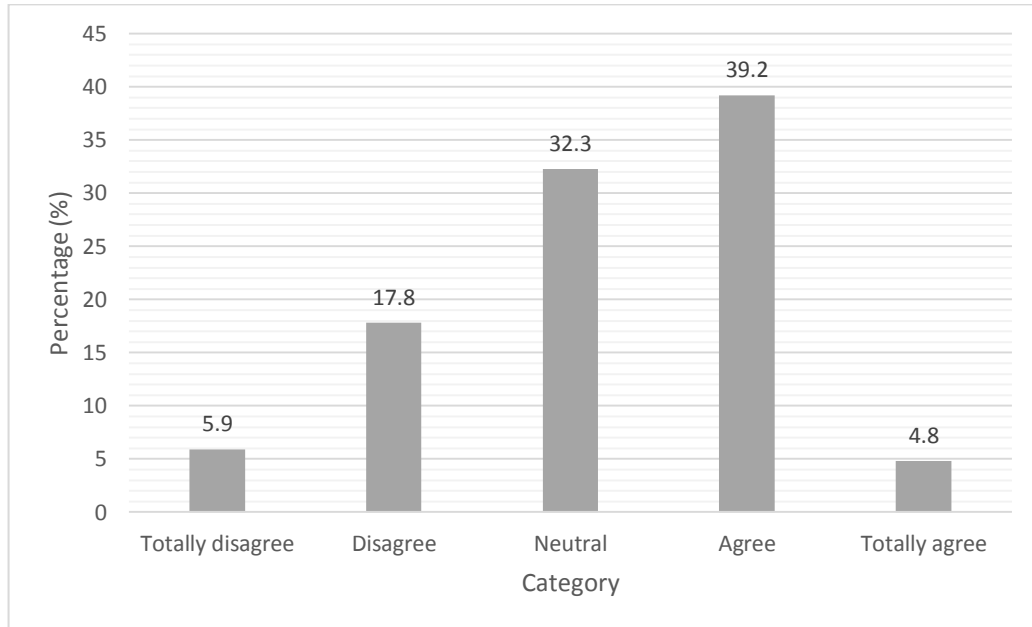
#### 5.3.4.1 *16.9% of the teachers agreed to the idea of including the children with SEN in the mainstream classroom.*

**Figure 26.** I will be supportive towards the idea of including children with SEN in my classroom



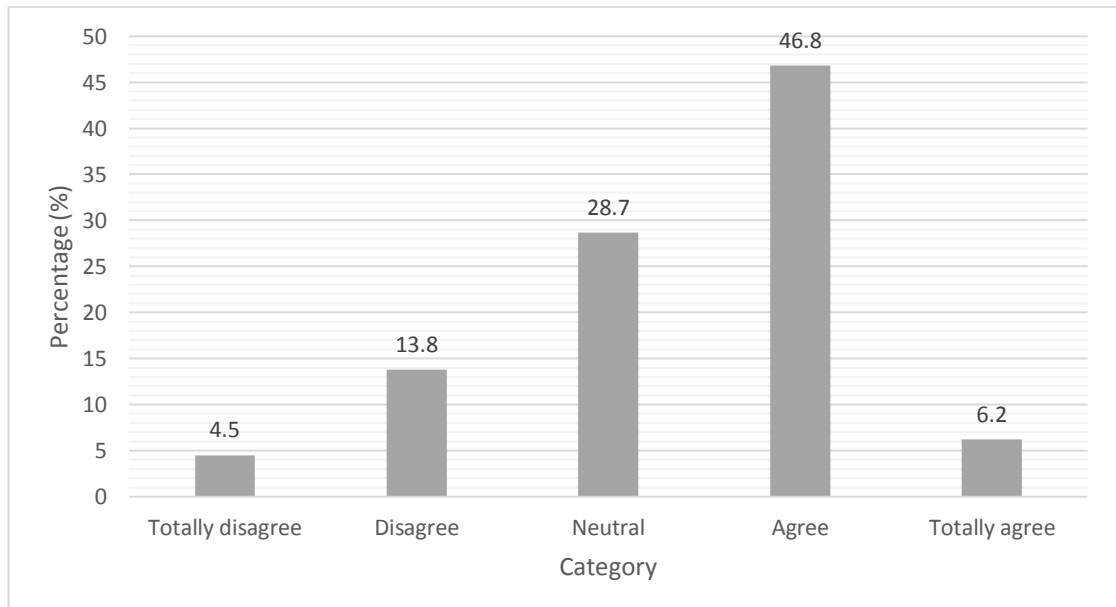
5.3.4.2 *45% of the respondents are willing to engage in in-service training on teaching children with SEN.*

**Figure 27.** I will be willing to engage in in-service training on teaching children with SEN



5.3.4.3 *53% of the respondents will engage in developing the appropriate skills to teach children with SEN.*

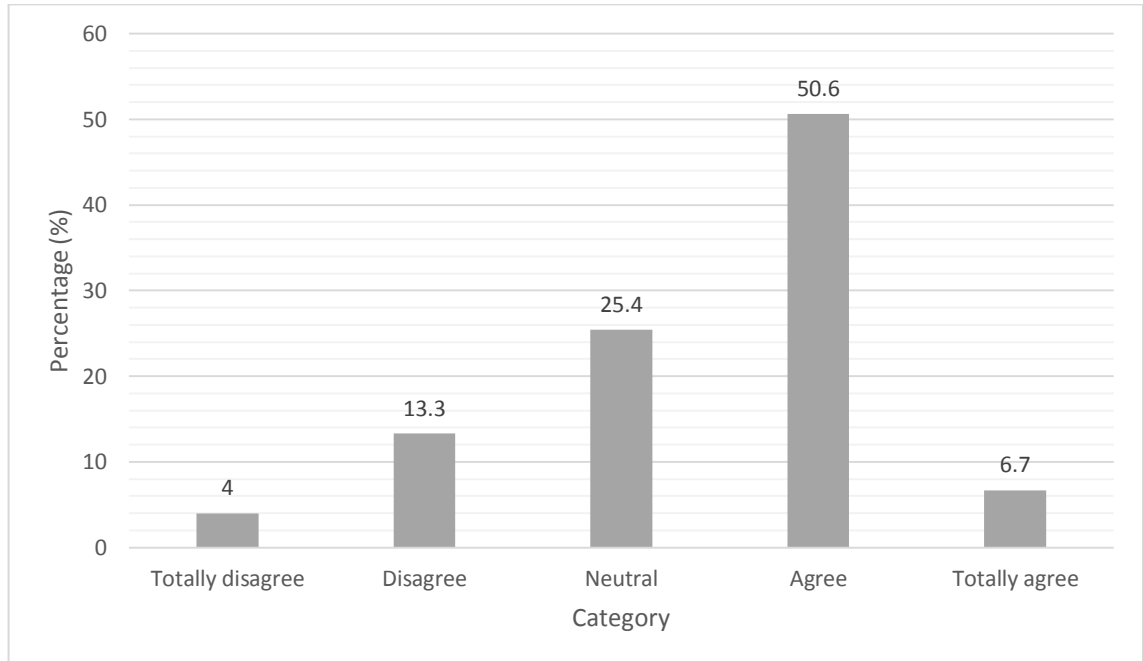
**Figure 28.** I will engage in developing appropriate skills to teach children with SEN





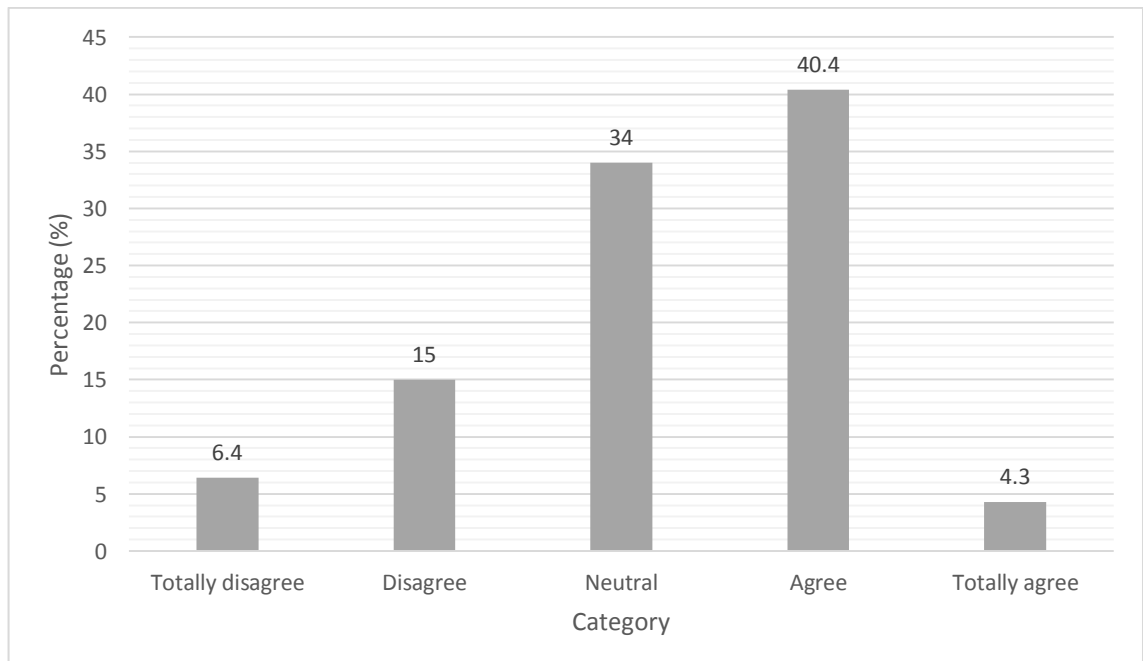
5.3.4.4 *57.3% of the respondents will engage in developing skills for managing behaviour of children with SEN.*

**Figure 29.** I will engage in developing skills for managing behaviour of children with SEN



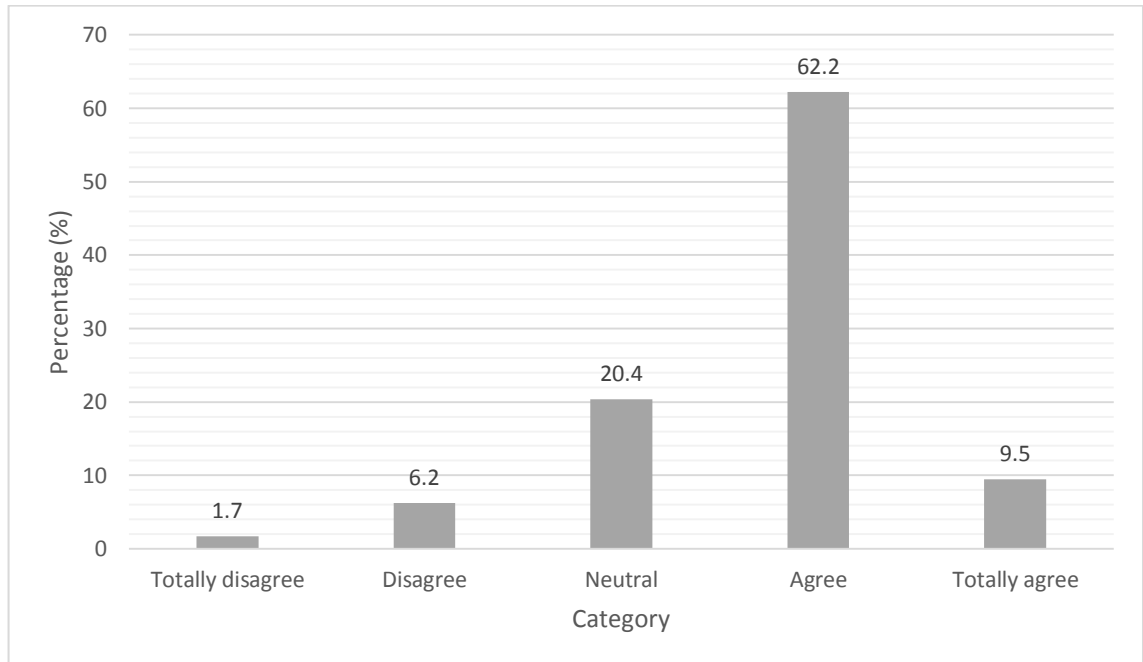
5.3.4.5 *44.7% of the respondents will accept responsibility for teaching children with SEN within a whole-school policy.*

**Figure 30.** I will accept responsibility for teaching children with SEN within a whole-school policy



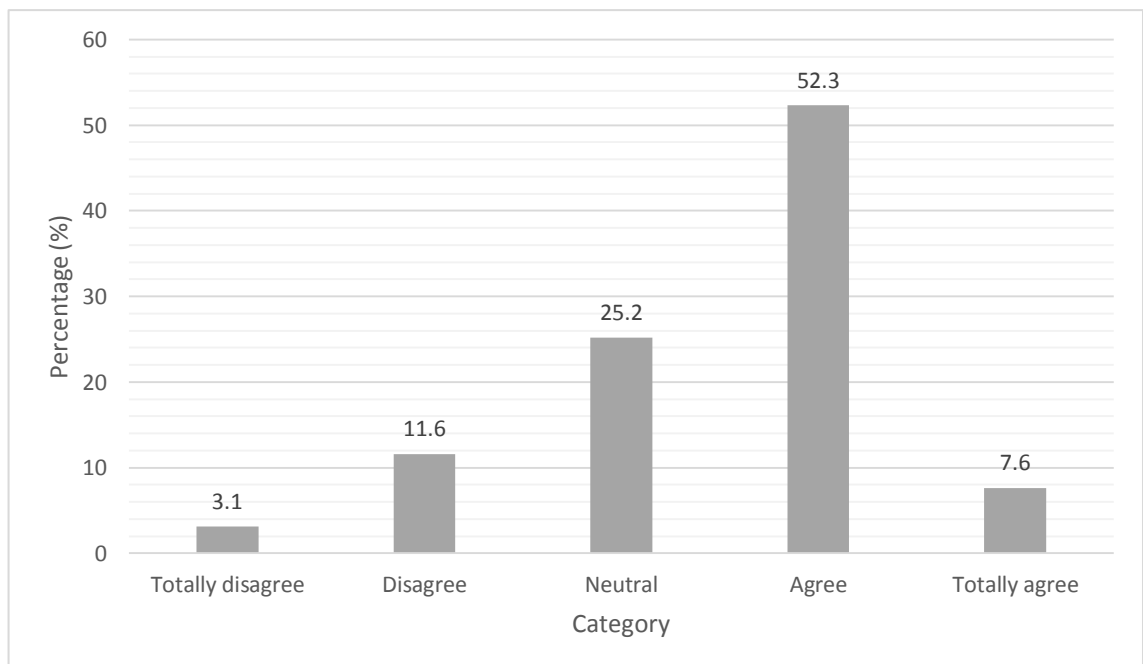
5.3.4.6 *71.7% of the respondents will continuously assess myself to inform my teaching practice.*

**Figure 31.** I will continuously assess myself to inform my teaching practice



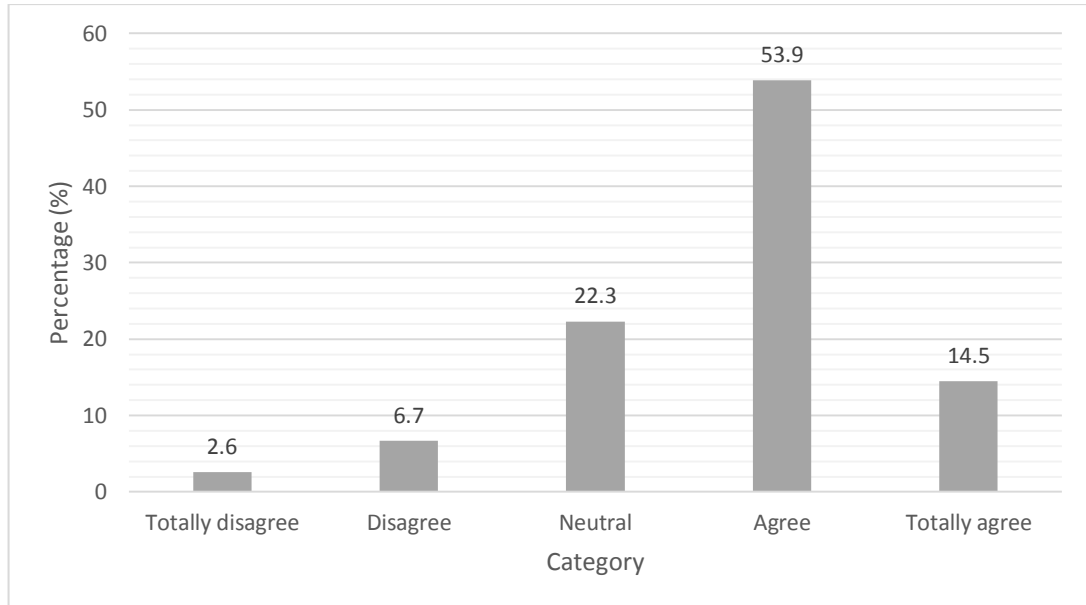
5.3.4.7 *59.9% of the respondents will change their teaching processes to accommodate children with SEN in their classroom.*

**Figure 32.** I will change my teaching processes to accommodate children with SEN in my classroom



5.3.4.8 *68.4% of the respondents will co-operate with the parents of the children with SEN for the benefit of their children.*

**Figure 33.** I will co-operate with the parents of the children with SEN for the benefit of their children



5.3.4.9 *The summary descriptive statistics of preschool teachers' behavioural component*

**Table 22.** Mean and standard deviation of preschool teachers' behavioural component

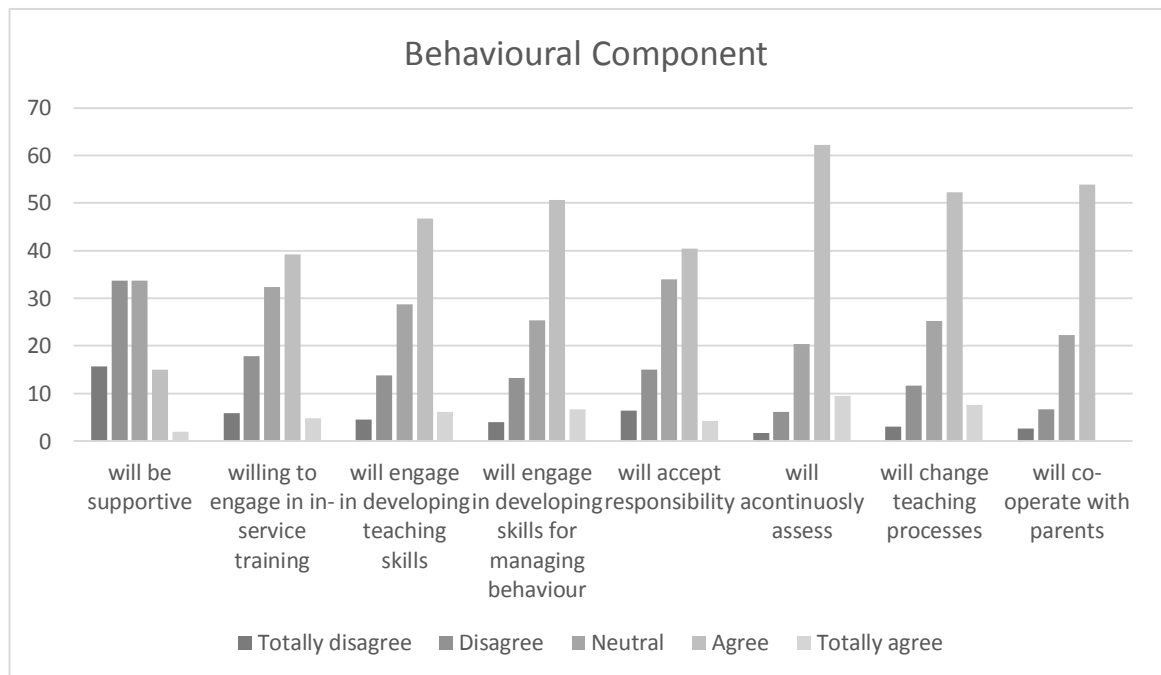
Item	n	M	SD
1. I will be supportive towards the idea of including children with SEN in my classroom.	401	2.54	0.99
2. I will be willing to engage in in-service training on teaching children with SEN.	401	3.19	0.98
3. I will engage in developing the appropriate skills to teach children with SEN.	401	3.36	0.95
4. I will engage in developing skills for managing behaviour of children with SEN.	401	3.43	0.94
5. I will accept responsibility for teaching children with SEN within a whole-school policy.	401	3.21	0.96
6. I will continuously assess myself to inform my teaching practice.	401	3.70	0.78
7. I will change my teaching processes to accommodate children with SEN in my classroom.	401	3.49	0.89
8. I will co-operate with the parents of the children with SEN for the benefit of their children.	401	3.71	0.87

*1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neutral, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 0- don't know*

Based on Table 22 the mean values of the preschool teachers on the behavioural component are ranged from 2.54 to 3.71. Interestingly, question number one 'I will be supportive towards

the idea of including children with SEN in my classroom' is rated the lowest ( $M= 2.54$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ). In contrast, question number eight 'I will co-operate with the parents of the children with SEN for the benefit of their children' is rated as the highest ( $M= 3.71$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ) followed by question number six 'I will continuously assess myself to inform my teaching practice' ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ). The standard deviations show that the behaviour component scale had different levels of variability. The histograms revealed that the distributions were normal (see figure 34). However, it is very interesting to note that majority of the preschool teachers in this study generally answered *agree scale (4)* for all the eight items in the behavioural component and almost neither nobody answered strongly agree (5) nor strongly disagree(1) for all the eight items.

**Figure 34.** Overall responses across the items in the behavioural component



In summary, in the behavioural component, overall, the respondents are willing to embrace IE in terms of two dimensions (see Figure 34). The first dimension is related to their teaching whereby in order to implement IE, these teachers are willing to be trained, developed teaching skills, developed classroom management skills, changed their teaching processes and assessed their teaching practice. The second dimension is related to school environment, they are willing to be responsible within the school policy and co-operate with the parents for the benefits of the children with SEN. However, interestingly, for the statement "I will be supportive towards the idea of including children with SEN in my classroom", these teachers seemed

reluctant as 142 out of 421 of them disagree with this statement and 142 of them are neither agree nor disagree with this statement. Only 63 of them agree and 8 of them totally agree with this statement. This may due to the hindrances: they were not exposed with children with SEN, never worked along with the expertise, not having sufficient training, lack of facilities as well as not having knowledge on SEN; which may lead to the reason they responded in such a way.

## 5.4 Differences between two affective scales

In order to investigate the difference between the mean score of the respondents on the two affective scales, a paired sample t-test was carried out. The affective 1 (LD) scale is to measure the respondents' emotional reactions towards children who have severe LD and the affective 2 (EBD) scale is to measure the respondents' emotional reactions towards children who have EBD.

### 5.4.1 The types of SEN influence the preschool teachers' emotional reaction has been the cause of concern and stress on the teachers when dealing with the children with SEN in the mainstream classroom. The analysis revealed that children with EBD were seen as causing more concern and stress to preschool teachers than children with LD.

**Table 23.** Paired sample t-test between Affective 1 (LD) and Affective 2 (EBD) scales

Scale	N	Mean	Std. Dev	t-Value	Sig.
Affective 1 (LD)	421	3.8697	1.26044	6.869	.000
Affective 2 (EBD)	421	3.5979	1.26778		

A paired-samples t-test indicates that there was a significant difference between the mean scores in the two measures,  $t = 6.87$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , mean of affective 1(LD) scale  $M = 3.87$ ,  $SD = 1.26$  and mean for affective 2 (EBD) scale  $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ . Therefore, the result in Table 22 shows that types of SEN influence the preschool teachers' emotional reaction has been the cause of concern and stress on the teachers when dealing with the children with SEN in the mainstream classroom. The analysis revealed that children with EBD were seen as causing more concern and stress to preschool teachers than children with LD.

## 5.5 Differences between attitude components

There are several steps of test which have been conducted in the cognitive, affective and behavioural component of attitude. The first step is the t- test for independent sample was conducted to test the differences between the variables. What follows are the explanation of the differences of variables namely: sex, SEN experience, training, current SEN and SEIP support; across the cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural component.

The analysis shows that there are significant differences between; 1) Behaviour component and SEN experience; 2) Behaviour component and SEIP support; 3) Cognitive component and SEIP support; and 4) Cognitive component and teaching experience.

### 5.5.1 Independent sample t-test to compare cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural scores for SEN experience

**Table 24.** Independent sample t-test to compare cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural scores for SEN experience

SEN experience	N	Scale	Mean	Std. Dev	t-Value	Sig.
Yes No	71 350	Cognitive	3.4008 3.3514	.40973 .42628	.895	.371
		Affective 1	4.0785 3.8273	1.31814 1.24610	1.533	.126
		Affective 2	3.7364 3.5698	1.31678 1.25769	1.010	.313
		Behavioural	3.5440 3.2871	.72027 .75787	2.625	.009*

\* $p < .05$

Next, another independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the cognitive component scores for SEN experience. Table 24 shows that there was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ ) and no ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = 0.42$ ); ( $t = 0.895$ ,  $p = 0.371$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0019$ ).

Next, independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the affective 1 (LD) component scores for SEN experience. The result shows that there was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) and no ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ); ( $t = 1.533$ ,  $p = 0.126$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0056$ ).

The independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the affective 2 (EBD) component scores for SEN experience. There was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) and no ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ); ( $t = 1.010$ ,  $p = 0.313$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0024$ ).

Finally the independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the behavioural component scores for SEN experience. There was a significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ) and no ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ); ( $t = 2.625$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ). Although it reached the significant level, the magnitude of the differences in the means was small (eta squared = 0.0162 ).

### 5.5.2 Independent sample t-test to compare cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural scores for SEIP support

**Table 25.** Independent sample t-test to compare cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural scores for SEIP support

SEIP support	N	Scale	Mean	Std. Dev	t-Value	Sig.
Yes No	122 298	Cognitive	3.4241 3.3340	.39827 .43182	1.985	.048*
		Affective 1	3.9988 3.8159	1.40386 1.19739	1.350	.178
		Affective 2	3.6686 3.5686	1.41651 1.20519	.733	.464
		Behavioural	3.4631 3.2752	.71918 .76747	2.320	.021*

\* $p < .05$

An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the cognitive component scores for SEIP. Table 25 shows that there was a significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = 0.40$ ) and no ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ); ( $t = 1.985$ ,  $p = 0.048$ ). Although it has reached its significant level, the magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (eta squared = 0.0093).

Next, independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the affective 1 (LD) component scores for SEIP. The result shows that there was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.99$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ) and no ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ); ( $t = 1.350$ ,  $p = 0.178$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (eta squared = 0.0043).

The independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the affective 2 (EBD) component scores for SEIP. There was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ) and no ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ); ( $t = 0.733$ ,  $p = 0.464$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (eta squared = 0.0013).

Finally the independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the behavioural component scores for SEIP. There was a significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ) and no ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ); ( $t = 2.320$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was small (eta squared = 0.0127).

### 5.5.3 Independent sample t-test to compare cognitive scores for teachers with less than two years teaching experience and teachers with 2-5 years teaching experience

**Table 26.** Independent sample t-test to compare cognitive scores for teachers with less than two years teaching experience and teachers with 2-5 years teaching experience

Scale	Teaching experience	N	Mean	Std. Dev	t-Value	Sig.
Cognitive	Less than 2 years	20	3.2083	.36450	-2.165	.033*
	2-5 years	63	3.4420	.43628		

\* $p < .05$

Another independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the cognitive component scores for teaching experience. Table 26 shows that there was a significant difference in score for less than 2 years teaching experience ( $M = 3.20$ ,  $SD = 0.36$ ) and 2-5 years of teaching experience ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ); ( $t = -2.17$ ,  $p = 0.033$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was small ( $\eta^2 = 0.012$ ).

### 5.5.4 Independent sample t-test to compare cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural scores for male and female teachers

**Table 27.** Independent sample t-test to compare cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural scores for male and female teachers

Sex	N	Scale	Mean	Std. Dev	t-Value	Sig.		
Male Female	16 405	Cognitive	3.4115 3.3577	.25904 .42874	.497	.619		
		Affective 1	3.7321 3.8751	1.44549 1.25430			-1.445	.657
		Affective 2	3.9643 3.5834	1.13749 1.27175				
		Behavioural	3.5234 3.3228	.56128 .76320			1.040	.299

An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the cognitive component scores for males and females. Table 27 shows that there was no significant difference in score for males ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = 0.26$ ) and females ( $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ); ( $t = 0.497$ ,  $p = 0.619$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0006$ ). The means indicate that males and females in terms of their cognitive component are above the mean score which is slightly towards the positive end.

Next, independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the affective 1 (LD) component scores for males and females. The result shows that there was no significant difference in



score for males ( $M = 3.73$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ) and females ( $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ); ( $t = -.445$ ,  $p = 0.657$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0005$ ).

The independent sample  $t$ -test was conducted to compare the affective 2 (EBD) component scores for males and females. There was no significant difference in score for males ( $M = 3.96$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ) and females ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ); ( $t = 1.179$ ,  $p = 0.239$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0033$ ).

Finally the independent sample  $t$ -test was conducted to compare the behavioural component scores for males and females. Table 19 shows that there was no significant difference in score for males ( $M = 3.96$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ) and females ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ); ( $t = 1.179$ ,  $p = 0.239$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0026$ ).

### 5.5.5 Independent sample t-test to compare cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural scores for training

**Table 28.** Independent sample t-test to compare cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural scores for training

Training	N	Scale	Mean	Std. Dev	t-Value	Sig.
Yes No	27 394	Cognitive	3.3911	.31747	.398	.691
			3.3576	.43000		
		Affective 1	4.1693	1.22573	1.278	.202
			3.8492	1.26170		
		Affective 2	3.7566	1.35109	.672	.502
			3.5870	1.26296		
		Behavioural	3.4907	.72135	1.138	.256
			3.3195	.75899		

An independent sample  $t$ -test was conducted to compare the cognitive component scores for training. Table 28 shows that there was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = 0.31$ ) and no ( $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ); ( $t = 0.398$ ,  $p = 0.691$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0004$ ).

Next, independent sample  $t$ -test was conducted to compare the affective 1 (LD) component scores for training. The result shows that there was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ) and no ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ); ( $t = 1.278$ ,  $p = 0.202$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0039$ ).

The independent sample  $t$ -test was conducted to compare the affective 2 (EBD) component scores for training. There was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ) and no ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ); ( $t = 0.672$ ,  $p = 0.502$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0011$ ).

Finally the independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the behavioural component scores for training. There was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.49$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ) and no ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ); ( $t = 1.138$ ,  $p = 0.256$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0031$ ).

### 5.5.6 Independent sample *t*-test to compare cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural scores for current SEN

**Table 29.** Independent sample *t*-test to compare cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural scores for current SEN

Current SEN	N	Scale	Mean	Std. Dev	t-Value	Sig.
Yes No	79 342	Cognitive	3.3584 3.3601	.46544 .41390	-.032	.975
		Affective 1	3.8192 3.8814	1.35231 1.24006	-.395	.693
		Affective 2	3.5660 3.6053	.14051 .06888	-.248	.804
		Behavioural	3.3275 3.3311	.09723 .03955	-.038	.970

An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the cognitive component scores for the current SEN. Table 29 shows that there was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = 0.47$ ) and no ( $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ ); ( $t = -0.32$ ,  $p = 0.975$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.000002$ ).

Next, independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the affective 1 (LD) component scores for the current SEN. The result shows that there was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ) and no ( $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ); ( $t = -0.395$ ,  $p = 0.693$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0004$ ).

The independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the affective 2 (EBD) component scores for the current SEN. There was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 0.14$ ) and no ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 0.07$ ); ( $t = -0.248$ ,  $p = 0.804$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.0001$ ).

Finally the independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the behavioural component scores for the current SEN. There was no significant difference in score for yes ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ) and no ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = 0.40$ ); ( $t = -0.38$ ,  $p = 0.970$ ). The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small ( $\eta^2 = 0.000003$ ).

## 5.6 Variations between subgroups

Next, six one way MANOVAs were calculated to test the differences in the cognitive, affective and behavioural component of attitude between groups identified in terms of: age, location, race, qualification, teaching experience and types of SEN. Post-hoc test were used to find out where these differences lie. Overall, the analysis shows that there were no significant results for all of the variables.

### 5.6.1 Differences amongst preschool teachers' age across cognitive, affective 1(LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural component

**Table 30.** Differences amongst preschool teachers' age across cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural component

		<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>	Between Groups	.316	3	.105	.585	.625
	Within Groups	74.999	417	.180		
	Total	75.315	420			
<b>Affective 1 (LD)</b>	Between Groups	5.343	3	1.781	1.122	.340
	Within Groups	661.917	417	1.587		
	Total	667.260	420			
<b>Affective 2 (EBD)</b>	Between Groups	5.754	3	1.918	1.195	.311
	Within Groups	669.298	417	1.605		
	Total	675.052	420			
<b>Behavioural</b>	Between Groups	1.759	3	.586	1.024	.382
	Within Groups	238.906	417	.573		
	Total	240.665	420			

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the preschool teachers' age on their cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective2 (EBD) and behavioural component.

Table 30 shows that there was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' age in relation to their cognitive component at the  $p, .05$  level ( $F(3,417)= .585, p=.625$ ). The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .004 (using the Cohen (1988) convention) is considered very small.

There was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' age in relation to their affective1 (LD) component at the  $p<.05$  level ( $F(3,417)= 1.122, p=.340$ ). The effect size was .008 is considered very small.

There was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' age in relation to their affective2 (EBD) component at the  $p<.05$  level ( $F(3,417)= 1.195, p=.311$ ). The effect size was .009 is considered very small.

There was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' age in relation to their behavioural component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(3,417) = 1.024$ ,  $p = .382$ ). The effect size was .007 is considered very small.

### 5.6.2 Differences amongst preschool teachers' location across cognitive, affective 1(LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural component

**Table 31.** Differences amongst preschool teachers' location across cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural component

		<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>	Between Groups	.198	2	.099	.552	.576
	Within Groups	75.117	418	.180		
	Total	75.315	420			
<b>Affective 1 (LD)</b>	Between Groups	1.931	2	.966	.607	.546
	Within Groups	665.329	418	1.592		
	Total	667.260	420			
<b>Affective 2 (EBD)</b>	Between Groups	7.414	2	3.707	2.321	0.99
	Within Groups	667.638	418	1.597		
	Total	675.052	420			
<b>Behavioural</b>	Between Groups	.264	2	.132	.230	.795
	Within Groups	240.401	418	.575		
	Total	240.665	420			

Table 31 shows that there was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' location in relation to their cognitive component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(2,418) = .552$ ,  $p = .576$ ). The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .002 (using the Cohen (1988) convention) is considered very small.

There was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' location in relation to their affective1 (LD) component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(2,418) = .607$ ,  $p = .546$ ). The effect size was .002 is considered very small.

There was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' location in relation to their affective2 (EBD) component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(2,418) = 2.321$ ,  $p = .99$ ). The effect size was .010 is considered small.

There was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' location in relation to their behavioural component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(2,418) = .230$ ,  $p = .795$ ). The effect size was .001 is considered very small.

### 5.6.3 Differences amongst preschool teachers' qualification across cognitive, affective 1(LD), affective2 (EBD) and behavioural component

**Table 32.** Differences amongst preschool teachers' qualification across cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural component

		<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>	Between Groups	.194	4	.048	.269	.898
	Within Groups	75.121	416	.181		
	Total	75.315	420			
<b>Affective 1 (LD)</b>	Between Groups	2.615	4	.654	.409	.802
	Within Groups	664.645	416	1.598		
	Total	667.260	420			
<b>Affective 2 (EBD)</b>	Between Groups	3.343	4	.836	.518	.723
	Within Groups	671.709	416	1.615		
	Total	675.052	420			
<b>Behavioural</b>	Between Groups	2.266	4	.566	.988	.414
	Within Groups	238.399	416	.573		
	Total	240.665	420			

Table 32 shows that there was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' qualification in relation to their cognitive component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(4,416) = .269, p = .898$ ). The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .002 (using the Cohen (1988) convention) is considered very small.

There was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' qualification in relation to their affective1 (LD) component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(4,416) = .409, p = .802$ ). The effect size was .004 is considered very small.

There was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' qualification in relation to their affective2 (EBD) component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(4,416) = .518, p = .723$ ). The effect size was .005 is considered very small.

There was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' qualification in relation to their behavioural component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(4,416) = .988, p = .414$ ). The effect size was .009 is considered very small.

#### 5.6.4 Differences amongst preschool teachers' teaching experience across cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural component

**Table 33.** Differences amongst preschool teachers' teaching experience across cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural component

		<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>	Between Groups	.928	5	.186	1.036	.396
	Within Groups	74.387	415	.179		
	Total	75.315	420			
<b>Affective 1 (LD)</b>	Between Groups	2.322	5	.464	.290	.919
	Within Groups	664.938	415	1.602		
	Total	667.260	420			
<b>Affective 2 (EBD)</b>	Between Groups	4.617	5	.923	.572	.722
	Within Groups	670.435	415	1.616		
	Total	675.052	420			
<b>Behavioural</b>	Between Groups	2.525	5	.505	.880	.494
	Within Groups	238.140	415	.574		
	Total	240.665	420			

Table 33 shows that there was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' teaching experience in relation to their cognitive component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(5,415) = 1.036$ ,  $p = .396$ ). The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .012 (using the Cohen (1988) convention) is considered small.

There was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' teaching experience in relation to their affective1 (LD) component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(5,415) = .290$ ,  $p = .919$ ). The effect size was .003 is considered very small.

There was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' teaching experience in relation to their affective2 (EBD) component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(5,415) = .572$ ,  $p = .722$ ). The effect size was .007 is considered very small.

There was no significant difference among the preschool teachers' teaching experience in relation to their behavioural component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(5,415) = .880$ ,  $p = .494$ ). The effect size was .010 is considered small.

### 5.6.5 Differences amongst the types of SEN across the preschool teachers' cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural component

**Table 34.** Differences amongst the types of SEN across the preschool teachers' cognitive, affective 1 (LD), affective 2 (EBD) and behavioural component

		<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>	Between Groups	1.696	6	.283	1.590	.149
	Within Groups	73.619	414	.178		
	Total	75.315	420			
<b>Affective 1 (LD)</b>	Between Groups	5.334	6	.889	.556	.765
	Within Groups	661.926	414	1.599		
	Total	667.260	420			
<b>Affective 2 (EBD)</b>	Between Groups	6.946	6	1,158	.717	.636
	Within Groups	668.106	414	1.614		
	Total	675.052	420			
<b>Behavioural</b>	Between Groups	4.820	6	.803	1.410	.209
	Within Groups	235.845	414	.570		
	Total	240.665	420			

Table 34 shows that there was no significant difference among the types of SEN in relation to their cognitive component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(6,414) = 1.590$ ,  $p = .149$ ). The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .022 (using the Cohen (1988) convention) is considered small.

There was no significant difference among the types of SEN in relation to their affective1 (LD) component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(6,414) = .556$ ,  $p = .765$ ). The effect size was .007 is considered very small.

There was no significant difference among the types of SEN in relation to their affective2 (EBD) component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(6,414) = .717$ ,  $p = .636$ ). The effect size was .010 is considered very small.

There was no significant difference among the types of SEN in relation to their behavioural component at the  $p < .05$  level ( $F(6,414) = 1.410$ ,  $p = .209$ ). The effect size was .020 is considered small.

## 5.7 Interactions between subgroups and constructs

Following to this, a two-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to discover the impact of two independent variables on one dependent variable. According to Field (2014), this two-way independent ANOVA compares several means when there are two independent variables and different entities have been used in all experimental conditions. In other words,

this design allows to simultaneously test for each effect of each of independent variables on the dependent variables and also identifies any interaction effect. The effect size provides an indication of the magnitude of the differences in the means. The guidelines proposed by Cohen (1988) for interpreting the effect size values are: 0.01= small effect; 0.06= moderate effect and 0.14= large effect. The analysis showed that the overall model tests were non-significant which suggests that there is almost no predictive power in the model. Therefore, post hoc tests were not performed so they were not reported.

### **5.7.1 The impact of age and teaching experience on affective 1 (LD) scale**

Subjects were divided into four groups by age: Group 1:20-30 years; Group 2: 31-40 years; Group 3: 41-50 years and Group 4: 51-60 years. There was a statistically significant main effect for age group ( $F=3.312$ ,  $p=.020$ ), however the effect size was small (partial eta squared=0.024). The main effect for teaching experience ( $F=1.777$ ,  $p=0.116$ ) and the interaction effect ( $F=1.028$ ,  $p=0.414$ ) were not statistically significant.

### **5.7.2 The impact of age and teaching experience on affective 2 (EBD) scale**

Subjects were divided into four groups by age: Group 1:20-30 years; Group 2: 31-40 years; Group 3: 41-50 years and Group 4: 51-60 years. There was a statistically significant main effect for age group ( $F=3.187$ ,  $p=.024$ ), however the effect size was small (partial eta squared=0.023). The main effect for teaching experience ( $F=1.504$ ,  $p=0.188$ ) and the interaction effect ( $F=1.390$ ,  $p=0.199$ ) were not statistically significant.

### **5.7.3 The impact of age and types of SEN on behavioural scale**

Subjects were divided into four groups by age: Group 1:20-30 years; Group 2: 31-40 years; Group 3: 41-50 years and Group 4: 51-60 years. There was a statistically significant main effect for age group ( $F=2.680$ ,  $p=.047$ ), however the effect size was small (partial eta squared=0.020). The main effect for types of SEN ( $F=1.282$ ,  $p=0.264$ ) and the interaction effect ( $F=1.464$ ,  $p=0.169$ ) were not statistically significant.

### **5.7.4 The impact of sex and location on affective 1 (LD) scale**

Subjects were divided into three groups by location: Group 1: urban; Group 2: suburban and Group 3: rural areas. There was no statistically significant main effect for sex group ( $F=1.359$ ,  $p=.244$ ). Meanwhile, the main effect for teaching experience was significant ( $F=4.453$ ,  $p=0.012$ ) however the effect size was small (partial eta squared= 0.021). Interestingly, the



interaction effect ( $F=4.519$ ,  $p=0.011$ ) were statistically significant however, the effect size was small (partial eta squared= 0.021).

### **5.7.5 The impact of sex and location on affective 2 (EBD) scale**

Subjects were divided into three groups by location: Group 1: urban; Group 2: suburban and Group 3: rural areas. There was a statistically significant main effect for sex group ( $F=40461$ ,  $p=.035$ ) however, the effect size was small (partial eta squared=0.011). Meanwhile, the main effect for location was not significant ( $F=1.241$ ,  $p=0.290$ ). Similarly, the interaction effect ( $F=2.319$ ,  $p=0.100$ ) were also not statistically significant.

### **5.7.6 The impact of sex and training on affective 1 (LD) scale**

Subjects were divided into two groups by sex: Group 1: male and Group 2: female. There was no statistically significant main effect for sex group ( $F=2.061$ ,  $p=.152$ ). Interestingly, the main effect for training was statistically significant ( $F=4.977$ ,  $p=0.026$ ) however, the effect size was small (partial eta squared=.012). The interaction effect ( $F=3.561$ ,  $p=0.060$ ) were not statistically significant.

### **5.7.7 The impact of sex and training on affective 2 (EBD) scale**

Subjects were divided into two groups by sex: Group 1: male and Group 2: female. There was a statistically significant main effect for sex group ( $F=5.072$ ,  $p=0.025$ ) and the effect size was small (partial eta squared=0.012). Interestingly, the main effect for training was also statistically significant ( $F=4.131$ ,  $p=0.043$ ) however, the effect size was small (partial eta squared=.010). The interaction effect ( $F=3.684$ ,  $p=0.056$ ) were not statistically significant.

### **5.7.8 The impact of location and types of SEN on affective 2 (EBD) scale**

Subjects were divided into three groups by location: Group 1: urban; Group 2: suburban and Group 3: rural areas. There was a statistically significant main effect for location ( $F=3.741$ ,  $p=.025$ ) however the effect size was small (partial eta squared=0.018). Meanwhile, the main effect for types of SEN was not significant ( $F=1.391$ ,  $p=0.217$ ). Interestingly, the interaction effect ( $F=2.735$ ,  $p=0.013$ ) were statistically significant but the effect size was small (partial eta squared=0.039).

### **5.7.9 The impact of qualification and teaching experience on cognitive scale**

Subjects were divided into five groups by qualification: Group 1: certificate; Group 2: diploma; Group 3: post diploma; Group 4: degree and Group 5: others. There was no statistically significant main effect for qualification group ( $F=0.510$ ,  $p=0.728$ ) as well as the main effect for

teaching experience ( $F=0.440$ ,  $p=0.821$ ). Although the interaction effect ( $F=1.166$ ,  $p=0.283$ ) were not statistically significant, the effect size was almost moderate (partial eta squared= 0.054).

#### **5.7.10 The impact of qualifications and teaching experience on behavioural scale**

Subjects were divided into five groups by qualification: Group 1: certificate; Group 2: diploma; Group 3: post diploma; Group 4: degree and Group 5: others. There was no statistically significant main effect for qualification group ( $F=0.736$ ,  $p=.568$ ) as well as the main effect for teaching experience ( $F=0.539$ ,  $p=0.747$ ). Although the interaction effect ( $F=0.886$ ,  $p=0.601$ ) were not statistically significant, the effect size was almost moderate (partial eta squared= 0.041).

#### **5.7.11 The impact of qualification and training on affective 1 (LD) scale**

Subjects were divided into five groups by qualification: Group 1: certificate; Group 2: diploma; Group 3: post diploma; Group 4: degree and Group 5: others. There was no statistically significant main effect for qualification group ( $F=0.823$ ,  $p=.511$ ). The main effect for training was significant ( $F=3.962$ ,  $p=0.047$ ) however, the effect size was small (partial eta squared= 0.010). Meanwhile, the interaction effect ( $F=0.731$ ,  $p=0.571$ ) were not statistically significant.

#### **5.7.12 The impact of qualification and types of SEN on affective1 (LD) scale**

Subjects were divided into five groups by qualification: Group 1: certificate; Group 2: diploma; Group 3: post diploma; Group 4: degree and Group 5: others. There was no statistically significant main effect for qualification group ( $F=1.391$ ,  $p= 0.236$ ) as well as the main effect for types of SEN ( $F=0.273$ ,  $p=0.949$ ). However, the interaction effect ( $F=2.204$ ,  $p=0.011$ ) were statistically significant with moderate effect size (partial eta squared= 0.062).

#### **5.7.13 The impact of qualification and types of SEN on affective 2 (EBD) scale**

Subjects were divided into five groups by qualification: Group 1: certificate; Group 2: diploma; Group 3: post diploma; Group 4: degree and Group 5: others. There was no statistically significant main effect for qualification group ( $F=1.466$ ,  $p= 0.212$ ) as well as the main effect for types of SEN ( $F=0.413$ ,  $p=0.870$ ). However, the interaction effect ( $F=2.204$ ,  $p=0.011$ ) were statistically significant with almost moderate effect size (partial eta squared= 0.049).

#### **5.7.14 The impact of teaching experience and types of SEN on behavioural scale**

Subjects were divided into six groups by experience: Group 1: less than 2 years; Group 2: 2-5 years; Group 3: 6-10 years; Group 4: 11-15 years; Group 5: 16-20 years and Group 6: more than 20 years. There was no statistically significant main effect for teaching experience group ( $F=1.677$ ,  $p=0.139$ ) as well as the main effect for types of SEN ( $F=0.238$ ,  $p=0.964$ ). However, the interaction effect ( $F=1.187$ ,  $p=0.282$ ) were statistically significant with almost moderate effect size (partial eta squared= 0.040).

#### **5.7.15 The impact of SEN experience and SEIP support on affective 2 (EBD) scale**

Subjects were divided into two groups by SEN experience: Group 1: yes and Group 2: no. There was no statistically significant main effect for teaching experience group ( $F=2.597$ ,  $p=0.108$ ) as well as the main effect for SEIP support ( $F=1.747$ ,  $p=0.176$ ). Although the interaction effect ( $F=4.578$ ,  $p=0.033$ ) were statistically significant, the effect size was small (partial eta squared= 0.011).

#### **5.7.16 The impact of SEN experience and SEIP support on behavioural scale**

Subjects were divided into two groups by SEN experience: Group 1: yes and Group 2: no. There was a statistically significant main effect for SEN experience group ( $F=4.697$ ,  $p=0.031$ ) however the effect size was small (partial eta squared= 0.011). The main effect for SEIP support ( $F=0.941$ ,  $p=0.391$ ) was not significant as well as the interaction effect ( $F=0.388$ ,  $p=0.534$ ).

#### **5.7.17 The impact of SEN experience and types of SEN on behavioural scale**

Subjects were divided into two groups by SEN experience: Group 1: yes and Group 2: no. There was a statistically significant main effect for SEN experience group ( $F=4.113$ ,  $p=0.043$ ) however the effect size was small (partial eta squared= 0.010). The main effect for types of SEN ( $F=1.002$ ,  $p=0.424$ ) was not significant as well as the interaction effect ( $F=0.901$ ,  $p=0.441$ ).

#### **5.7.18 The impact of types of SEN and SEIP support on behavioural scale**

Subjects were divided into seven groups by SEN experience: Group 1: visual; Group 2: Auditory; Group 3: speech; Group 4: physical; Group 5: LD; Group 6: Combination and Group

6: none. There was no statistically significant main effect for types of SEN group ( $F=0.392$ ,  $p=0.854$ ). The main effect for SEIP support ( $F=4.022$ ,  $p=0.046$ ) was significant however the effect size was small (partial eta Squared= 0.010. Meanwhile, the interaction effect ( $F=0.823$ ,  $p=0.481$ ) was not significant.

## 5.8 Relationships between constructs

Several correlation tests have been conducted to explore the relationship between two variables. The analysis revealed that there were an association between: Behaviour and cognitive component; Behaviour and affective 1 component; Behaviour and affective 2 component; Cognitive and affective 1 component; Cognitive and affective 2 component; Cognitive and behaviour component; Affective 1 and affective 2 component; attitude components and demographic information; attitude components and teaching information; teachers' demographic information and their teaching background; qualification, experience, SEN experience, training, types of SEN and SEIP.

### 5.8.1 The relationships between the cognitive, affective and behavioural component of attitude

In order to answer this question, a correlation test was conducted and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 35.

**Table 35.** Relationships between cognitive, affective and behavioural component of attitude

Attitude Component	Cognitive	Affective 1	Affective 2	Behaviour
Cognitive		.263	.237	.429
Affective 1	.263		.794	.504
Affective 2	.237	.794		.456
Behaviour	.429	.504	.456	

*All correlations were significant at the level .01 level. Pearson's correlations were conducted on all components*

Table 35 shows the relationship between the cognitive, affective 1, affective 2 and behaviour components. The correlation between cognitive component and affective 1 component was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. There was a weak positive relationship between cognitive component and affective 1 component ( $r = 0.263$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The correlation between cognitive component and affective 2 component was also investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. There was a weak positive relationship between cognitive component and affective 2 component ( $r = 0.37$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, there was a moderate positive relationship between cognitive component and behaviour component ( $r = 0.429$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

The correlation between affective 1 component and cognitive component was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. There was a weak positive relationship between affective 1 component and cognitive component ( $r=0.237$ ,  $n=421$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Nevertheless there was a strong positive relationship between affective 1 component and affective 2 component ( $r=0.794$ ,  $n=421$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Meanwhile, there was a moderate positive relationship between affective 1 component and behaviour component ( $r=0.504$ ,  $n=421$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

The correlation between affective 2 component and cognitive component was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. There was a weak positive relationship between affective 1 component and cognitive component ( $r=0.263$ ,  $n=421$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The correlation between affective 2 component and behaviour component was also investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. The result shows that there was a moderate positive relationship between affective 2 component and behaviour component ( $r=0.456$ ,  $n=421$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

The correlation between behaviour component and cognitive component was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. There was a moderate positive relationship between behaviour component and cognitive component ( $r=0.429$ ,  $n=421$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The correlation between behaviour component and affective 1 was also investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. The result shows that there was a moderate positive relationship between behaviour component and affective 1 component ( $r=0.504$ ,  $n=421$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

## 5.8.2 The relationships between attitude components and demographic information

To answer this question, a correlation test was conducted and the analysis is presented in Table 36.

**Table 36.** Relationships between attitude components and demographic information

Demographic Information	Cognitive	Affective 1	Affective 2	Behaviour
Age	.0090	-.070	-.042	-.068
Sex	-.024	.022	-.058	-.051
Location	.035	-.050	-.017	.025
Race	.114*	.006	.037	.86

\*= $p<.05$ , (a) = Pearson's correlation

Table 36 shows the relationship between the attitude component and demographic information. The correlation between race and cognitive component was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a weak positive relationship between race and cognitive component ( $r=0.114$ ,  $n=421$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

### 5.8.3 The relationships between attitude components and teaching information

For this question, a correlation test was conducted and Table 37 will demonstrate the result of the analysis.

**Table 37.** Relationships between attitude components and teaching information

Teaching Information	Cognitive	Affective 1	Affective 2	Behaviour
Qualification	-.019	-.013	-.021	-.051
Experience	-.008	-.020	-.012	-.023
SEN Experience	-.044	-.075	-.049	-.127**
Training	-.019	-.062	-.033	-.055
Current SEN	.002	.019	.012	.002
Types of SEN	-.025	.032	.007	-.034
SEIP	-.095	-.052	-.029	-.089

\*= $p < .01$ , (b) = Spearman rho's correlation

Table 37 shows the relationship between the attitude component and teaching information. The correlation between SEN experience and behaviour component was investigated using Spearman rho's correlation. There was a weak negative relationship between SEN experience and behaviour component ( $r = 0.127$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

### 5.8.4 The relationships between teachers' demographic information and their teaching information

For this question, a correlation test was conducted and Table 38 will demonstrate the result of the analysis.

**Table 38.** Correlation between teachers' demographic information and their teaching information

Teachers' demographic information	Qualification	Teaching experience	SEN experience	Current SEN	Training	Types SEN	SEIP
Age	-.289	.723	.130	.125			
Location	-1.57		.101	.125	.138		
Race	.126	-.233	-.108			-.128	.151

The correlation between teachers' demographic information and their teaching background is presented in Table 38. Weak but significant relationships were identified between qualification and teachers' demographic information. A strong significant relationship was found between teaching experience and age ( $r = 0.723$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Whereas, teachers' SEN experience has a weak significant relationship on teachers' demographic information. Current SEN, training and SEIP were all positively correlated with teachers' demographic information. Finally, types of SEN has a weak negative relationship but significant in relation to teachers' demographic information.

### 5.8.5 The relationships between qualification, teaching experience, SEN experience, training, types of SEN and SEIP

To answer this question, a correlation test was conducted and the result is revealed in Table 39.

**Table 39.** Correlation between qualification, teaching experience, SEN experience, training, types of SEN and SEIP

Teaching background	Teaching experience	SEN experience	Current SEN	Training	Types SEN	SEIP
Qualification	-.178					
Teaching experience		.107		-.104		
SEN experience			.303	.348	.147	
Types of SEN			.702			-.135

The correlation between qualification, experience, SEN experience, training, types of SEN and SEIP is presented in Table 39. Weak but significant negative relationships were identified between qualification and teaching experience ( $r = -0.178$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and between training and teaching experience ( $r = -0.104$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, a weak significant positive relationship was found between SEN experience and teaching experience ( $r = 0.107$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Interestingly, teachers' SEN experience has a moderate significant relationship on current SEN ( $r = 0.303$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and training ( $r = 0.348$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, a weak positive relationship was identified between SEN experience and types of SEN ( $r = 0.147$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Meanwhile, there was a strong significant relationship between types of SEN and current SEN ( $r = 0.702$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Lastly, type of SEN and SEIP ( $r = -0.135$ ,  $n = 421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was found to have a weak yet significant negative relationship.

## 5.9 Summary Findings of the Questionnaire Data

The key findings from the quantitative data provided multidimensional views on IE. The first key finding is that the respondents in this study generally prepared in terms of cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitude towards the introduction of IE in Malaysia. The descriptive analysis showed that 97.9% of the respondents reported that the children with SEN are best served through special class. They also reported that the children with SEN would probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom than in a mainstream classroom (82.2%). On the other hand only 33.5% of the respondents reported that the challenge of being in a mainstream classroom would promote the academic growth of the child

with SEN and only 34.7% of them believed that the inclusion of children with SEN could be beneficial for regular children. However, they believed that IE would foster understanding and acceptance of differences (75.8%) as well as promote social independence (50.6%).

Meanwhile 69.4% of the respondents reported that the children with SEN should be given every opportunity to function in the general classroom setting where possible and they also believed that the presence of the children with SEN will promote acceptance of differences on the part of other children (62.5%). Nevertheless, 30.6% of the respondents reported that isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of a child with SEN, 18.1% of the respondents also reported that the contact mainstream class children have with included children may be harmful. Thus only 25.4% of the respondents reported that inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the child with SEN and 41.3% of the respondents reported that the child with SEN will be socially isolated by other children.

As for the affective component, the respondents seemed to be accepting both the children with SEN (LD) and (EBD) in their classroom. Considering the range of the scales from 1 to 7, the frequency of 4 appeared the most likely to be chosen. This happened perhaps due to the fact that these teachers do not have a choice to reject any children to enter their classroom. Despite the hindrances as stated earlier, these teachers seem to be willing to receive any kind of children in their classroom and will serve them within their capacity.

Finally, in the behavioural component, the respondents are willing to embrace IE in terms of two dimensions. The first dimension is related to their teaching whereby in order to implement IE, these teachers are willing to be trained, developed teaching skills, developed classroom management skills, changed their teaching processes and assessed their teaching practice. The second dimension is related to school environment, they are willing to be responsible within the school policy and co-operate with the parents for the benefits of the children with SEN. However, interestingly, for the statement "I will be supportive towards the idea of including children with SEN in my classroom", these teachers seemed reluctant as 142 out of 421 of them disagree with this statement and 142 of them are neither agree nor disagree with this statement. Only 63 of them agree and 8 of them totally agree with this statement. This may be due to the hindrances: they are not exposed with children with SEN, never worked along with the expertise, not having sufficient training, lack of facilities as well as not having knowledge on SEN; which may lead to the reason they responded in such a way.

The next key finding is that the types of SEN influence the preschool teachers' emotional reaction has been the cause of concern and stress on the teachers when dealing with the SEN children in the mainstream classroom. The analysis revealed that children with EBD were seen



as causing more concern and stress to preschool teachers than learning difficulties. Next, interesting findings has been found that there are significant differences between; 1) Behaviour component and SEN experience; 2) Behaviour component and SEIP support; 3) Cognitive component and SEIP support; and 4) Cognitive component and teaching experience. Six one way MANOVAs were calculated to test the differences in the cognitive, affective and behavioural component of attitude between groups identified in terms of: age, location, race, qualification, teaching experience and types of SEN which revealed that there were no significant results for all of the variables.

Two-way between-groups analysis of variance test were conducted to discover the impact of two independent variables on one dependent variable showed that the overall model tests are non-significant which suggests that there is almost no predictive power in the model. Finally, the last important findings is that there were an association between: Behaviour and cognitive component; Behaviour and affective 1 component; Behaviour and affective 2 component; Cognitive and affective 1 component; Cognitive and affective 2 component; Cognitive and behaviour component; Affective 1 and affective 2 component; attitude components and demographic information; attitude components and teaching information; teachers' demographic information and their teaching background; qualification, experience, SEN experience, training, types of SEN and SEIP. Although the correlational analysis cannot possibly establish causation, it does reflect a tendency of the preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE at the preschool level. Table 40 presents a summary of all key findings based on the quantitative data responding directly to Research Question 1 'What is the attitude of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE?'

**Table 40.** A summary of all key findings based on the quantitative data analysis

No	Key findings
1	The respondents are generally prepared in terms of cognitive, affective and behavioural component of attitude.
2	The types of SEN influenced the respondents' emotional reactions which has been the cause of concern and stress (children with EBD were seen causing more concern and stress than children with LD).
3	There are significant differences between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• behavioural component and SEN experience</li> <li>• behavioural component and SEIP support</li> <li>• cognitive component and SEIP support</li> <li>• cognitive component and teaching experience</li> </ul>
4	There are no significant differences in cognitive, affective and behavioural component of attitude between groups identified in terms of age, location, race, qualification, teaching experience and types of SEN.

<b>5</b>	There are a moderate correlation between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• behaviour and cognitive component</li><li>• cognitive and affective component</li><li>• attitude component and teachers' demographic information</li><li>• attitude component and teachers' teaching background information</li></ul>
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As for the open-ended items, the results and key points that will be presented in the following chapter (Chapter Six). The data will be analysed using thematic analysis. Indeed, the data in the open-ended questions provided the opportunity for the respondents to raise issues which were not covered in the attitude scales. The summaries of the main findings which relate to Research Question 2 and 3 are presented on pages 158 and 195 respectively.

## **Chapter Six: Qualitative Data Analysis Report (Open-ended Questions)**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Following the quantitative analysis, the questionnaire also included four open-ended questions which were utilised in order to better understand and complement analysis of the survey data. It also offered further opportunities for the respondents to raise any issues regarding IE. The findings from the open-ended responses were to capture the participants' insights on the introduction of IE at the preschool level. Based on the theoretical framework which has been developed by the researcher, the three-component attitude model (Eagly & Chaiken (1993) and Triandis (1971) and the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner (1979)) provides analytical frameworks to interpret the data. Thus this framework helps to explore participants' view on IE based on the data gathered in the open-ended questions. In this study, four open-ended questions were analysed. Nvivo was used to help to organise and sort the data sets and extract salient thematic patterns taken from 421 respondents who participated in the survey.

In section 6.2, Thematic analysis of the open-ended items will be described. In section 6.3, will discover the themes emerged which potentially could influence participants responses more positive towards IE. In section 6.4, Proposed changes in the classroom environment will be presented. Followed by section 6.5, Proposed changes in the school and section 6.6, Proposed changes in society. Finally, in section 6.7 Summary findings for all open ended items will be discussed.

### **6.2 Thematic Analysis of the Open-ended Items**

For the purpose of this study, thematic analysis is employed in order to analyse the open-ended questions. According to Cohen et al., (2011), coding enables the researcher to identify similar information. Thematic analysis is undertaken for the written feedback produced by the respondents in the open-ended questions. Although the written text was rather short and concise, the large number of responses needed to be organised systematically. After the coding process, the patterns revealed helped the researcher in constructing the categories for the emerging themes. (see section 4.8.3)

## 6.3 Factors Which Could Make Participants Responses More Positive

The first open-ended question was posed immediately to the participants after the affective scale. They were asked: *What extra things would you need to make your responses to the above questions more positive?* 95% of the respondents responded to the open-ended questions. Following this, many issues were raised by the teachers which indirectly demonstrated the barriers which hindered them from implementing IE.

Based on the data gathered in the first open-ended question, Table 40 summarises the coding scheme which help to categorise the teachers' comments and displays several sample comments based on those categories. The thematic analysis was applied to the open-ended data collected to elicit issues that were evident in the data. The themes emerged help to understand the respondent's attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysia. The categories are labelled as: knowledge, teachers' attributes, support, professional development and placement.

### 6.3.1 Knowledge

The application of knowledge in this category is referring to the exposure and ways of finding out the information about SEN as well as the ability to understand the SEN and to manage the children with SEN in the teaching and learning process with the support of skills and training. The respondents also seemed to have their concern on the lack of knowledge most particularly in terms of managing SEN children in the classrooms as reflected in some of their comments:

*'by getting the knowledge on how to handle the SEN children so that teaching and learning process will run smoothly'*

*'by getting exposure on how to handle and face the SEN children'*

Within this theme, there are some evidence which demonstrated that the respondents were lack of information and understanding about SEN as they commented ways they could find information about SEN in order to understand the children with SEN,

*'by surfing the internet to look for information about the SEN children'*

*'by getting to know the background problem of the SEN children'*

### 6.3.2 Support

Support seemed to be one of the respondents' main concern as they reported that they needed more support from SEN teachers or specialists as well as teaching assistants. The respondents also required more support in teaching classes with children with SEN. In this

case, the children with EBD and severe LD were considered as more demanding and challenging for teachers. The respondents commented,

*'by improving my teaching practice through discussion and guidance from SE teachers'*

*'by getting special teacher assistant to manage the children with SEN'*

The role of parents, school administrators and teaching materials (resources) were also stressed in their written feedbacks as they reported,

*'by getting support and co-operation amongst parents'*

*'by getting special teacher assistant to manage the children with SEN'*

*'by preparing more suitable teaching and learning activities and teaching materials for the children with SEN'*

### **6.3.3 Professional Development**

The respondents also demanded for more training and courses particularly in managing children with SEN. Pedagogical skills seemed to be their main concerns because without the knowledge and skills, they would not feel ready or prepare to accept IE. Hence training and courses related to children with SEN were mentioned several times in the respondents' written feedback. These are some of the comments,

*'by undertaking trainings in managing the SEN children and learning how to handle them'*

*'by undergoing short courses to deeply understand about the SEN children'*

### **6.3.4 The concept of IE**

It is clear that the respondents were lack of knowledge, support and professional development. Furthermore, there were also evidence that the respondents did not really fully grasp the concept of IE.

This can be seen as barriers in which the respondents responded in such a way. In other words, the respondents were not fully understand what IE really meant or perhaps they viewed IE from the perspective of the medical perspectives rather than the sociological perspectives. Therefore they seemed to suggest that the children with SEN should learn in separate classes. They felt that they were incapable to handle children with SEN reasons for how little they know about SEN and the insufficient support and guidance they had received. Clearly, they have great concerned of the children with SEN, the feeling of unpreparedness, helpless as well as the inability to cater the needs of children with SEN that is beyond their capacity have become a setback to embrace IE in the classrooms. The respondents commented,

*'by discussing with the parents and help them to send their SEN children to special education because if their child is left in the mainstream classroom because this will waste their child time and other children too'*

*'by reducing the number of children from 20 to 15-10 children only'*

### **6.3.5 Teachers' attributes**

On the other hand, there were some teachers who seemed to position IE as an opportunity for them to help the children with SEN as they seemed more positive towards IE. The teachers' attributes provide some understanding why some teachers seem to be prepared or willing to accept IE despite their lack of knowledge, training and professional development.

This theme is defined by the respondents' emotional reactions towards EBD and severe LD children. This is related to the respondents' personal attributes such as sympathy, caring, positive, understanding and empathy. Based on the number of references, the respondents' positive and understanding seemed to dominate in this category. The respondents showed their positivity, confidence and acceptance which were reflected in their written feedback,

*'by accepting them with open heart'*

*'by having mentally and emotionally prepared'*

The respondents also seemed to be aware of the situation (the introduction of IE) as they reported that they might have to adapt with changes in their teaching which reflected their dedication on accepting IE.

*'by giving them the opportunity to the SEN children and accepting them might improve the situation'*

*'by learning to understand the SEN children'*

### **6.3.6 Summary findings for open-ended question 1**

The findings argue that for the IE to be effective, teachers need to be equipped with knowledge, skills and training or professional development. This will enable teachers to teach children with SEN whilst mentally, physically and emotionally preparing themselves before embarking IE. The teachers' attributes influenced in the acceptance of the children with SEN in mainstream classrooms. Alternatively, the 'heart' or being passionate in teaching somehow motivated the respondents to be more positive in embracing and implementing IE at the preschool level. However, in an essence, viewing children with SEN and IE from the medical perspective is what shaped the respondents' attitude.

For the respondents, catering the needs of the children with SEN required specialists or trained teaching assistants to assist in managing the children with SEN. They also requested for training and short courses. These pedagogical concerns affected the number of children with SEN to be included in the mainstream classroom (not be more than five children with SEN). Although the teachers' attributes showed positive responses, to some extent, some of the respondents felt that the children with SEN should learn in separate environment so that they could benefit more in terms of resources, facilities and funding (see Table 41).

**Table 41.** Coding scheme to categorize teachers' comments about extra things to make them more positive

<b>Teachers' attributes (41)</b>
Category label/ Criteria
Sympathy refers to reactions of distress (1) Caring refers to the act of kindness and concern for others (1) Positive refers to constructive, confident (18) Understanding refers to awareness or tolerance (16) Empathy refers to experience of understanding other person's conditions (5)
<b>Knowledge (46)</b>
Category label/ Criteria
Information about SEN refers to exposure about SEN by doing some readings or searching for information about SEN (12) Understanding SEN refers to the understanding the background of SEN children and finding ways on how to approach them (10) Managing SEN refers to managing the SEN children in terms of knowledge & skills, more time slots (24)
<b>Support (37)</b>
Category label /Criteria
Parents refers to parents (6) School administrations refers to school administrations (3) SEN teachers/specialists refers to SEN teachers/specialists (12) Teachers assistant refers to teachers assistant (12) Sources Refers to teaching materials/spaces (4)
<b>Professional development (31)</b>
Category label Criteria
Training refers to teaching skills on how to teach and manage the children with SEN (19) Courses refers to short courses in pedagogy (12)
<b>Placement (16)</b>
Category label /Criteria
Separate special classes refers to separate class for the children with SEN (14) Number of children refers to children – teacher ratio per class (2)

## 6.4 Proposed Changes in the Classroom Environment

The respondents were asked to give suggestions on things that need to be made or considered before implementing IE at the preschool level. From the teachers' view, there were

many aspects in the data that highlighted changes which need to be considered in the preschool classrooms environment before children with SEN are included in the mainstream classrooms. Similarly, the data gathered in the second open ended question are summarised using the coding scheme. The categories are labelled as: classroom arrangement/infrastructure, class size, facilities, support, trainings pedagogy and social relationship.

#### **6.4.1 Classroom arrangement/infrastructure**

Based on the data, this theme refers to specific choices of furniture and classroom layout as well as the safety of the facilities, equipment and spaces. All of these aspects were essential elements in ensuring conducive and comfortable classroom environment which need to be friendly, lively and colourful. This theme can be reflected in the respondents' comments,

*'provide specific equipment such as chair'*

*'ensure that the classroom is gated for easy control'*

*'ensure that any equipment or materials will not harm the children with SEN'*

*'conducive and suitable environment for the children with SEN'*

*'colourful and lively classroom'*

The respondents stressed mostly on the classroom arrangement such as specific tables and chairs and physical restructuring of the school building to accommodate the children with SEN such as special toilet, pathway, sink etc. They were also concerned on the safety of the children with SEN particularly in the choice of the equipment and spaces-related. Thus the conduciveness of the classroom environment was one of the aspects that seemed to be highlighted by the respondents before implementing IE at the preschool level.

#### **6.4.2 Class size**

Another issue is the class size. This theme is defined by the ideal number of children in a classroom. Normally there will be 25 children per preschool classroom, however, if IE were to be implemented, the number of children should be only 10-15 children per classroom (based on the responses). This is because according to some of the responses, the children should get equal attention from their teacher. The respondents felt that the current number of children in the preschool classrooms would not allow them to give extra attention to the children with SEN. Some of the comments were,

*'reduce the number of children so that teacher could give more attention'*



*'reduce the number of children so that teacher assistant could give more attention the children with SEN'*

### **6.4.3 Support**

In relation to the number of children per classroom, the respondents reported that they needed support from teacher assistants as well as the support from parents and schools specifically SEN teachers or specialists and parents. The respondents seemed to emphasise on placing more teaching assistants or SEN teaching assistants in order to help them in the teaching and learning process if IE to be implemented in the mainstream preschool classrooms. These are some of the comments given by the respondents,

*'increase the number of teacher assistant'*

*'SEN teacher should come to preschool classroom if IE to be implemented at the preschool level'*

*'discussion between the school and parents/carer'*

### **6.4.4 Training**

Based on the data gathered, it is clear that the respondents were aware of the importance of training and courses in handling or managing the children with SEN in the classrooms. They also felt that they should be given exposure and knowledge about the children with SEN before implementing IE at the preschool level. Thus the knowledge and exposure about SEN will help them to be ready in accepting the children with SEN in their classroom. Some of the respondents reported,

*'the differences of development and the background of the children with SEN'*

*'teachers should be given exposure about them'*

*'teachers are all ready in terms of knowledge and emotional'*

Additionally, the respondents also emphasised on having qualified and skilful teachers in teaching and managing children with SEN before considering IE at the preschool level. The respondents commented,

*'teachers must have qualification to teach children with SEN'*

*'teachers should be given skills on how to handle children with SEN'*

### 6.4.5 Pedagogy

This theme can be defined as suitable lesson plans and syllabus, time slots and preparations as well as appropriate activities for the children with SEN. Based on the data, the most highlighted aspect was the specific, sufficient and suitability of teaching aids. The respondents also suggested SEN oriented syllabus as well as suitable lesson plans which can be related to the appropriateness of the activities chosen in order to cater the needs of the children with SEN. Consequently this will affect the classroom preparation and time table. The respondents reported,

*'change the lesson plan for the children with SEN'*

*'appropriate teaching aids and activities for the children with SEN'*

*'classroom preparation, timetable'*

*'suitable equipment/ special equipment for the children with SEN'*

### 6.4.6 Facilities

The evidence from the data would suggest that facilities was the most highlighted theme concerning the things that need to be focused before implementing IE at the preschool level. According to the responses, facilities can be divided into two aspects that is special equipment or learning facilities such as special toys or learning tools and basic (physical) facilities which refers to safe and suitable facilities such as special toilets, ramp etc. These are some of the comments,

*'provide more physical aids and suitable tools which are suit for the level of children'*

*'appropriate equipment and facilities according to the needs of the children with SEN'*

*'special toilet for the children with SEN'*

*'provide more appropriate facilities for the children with SEN'*

### 6.4.7 Social relationship

Another interesting themes that emerged from the data is about the social relationship. This theme is defined by opportunities to socialise among the school community which involved changes in the behaviour and thinking of the school community as well as the children with SEN. The respondents also felt that the children with SEN should be able to manage themselves before accepting them in the classrooms. Within this theme, it is apparent that the respondents seemed to value good communication in order to maintain good social relationship. This can be reflected through their comments,

*'give opportunity to communicate and be friend amongst the children with SEN and typically developed children'*

*'tell other children about children with SEN. Teacher must know and attend to the children with SEN'*

Interestingly, there is evidence of conflicting ideas on the concept of IE. Some respondents perceived children of SEN as someone who need to adapt or accommodate to the school community but not otherwise. Clearly, this suggests that the teachers in this study do not fully understand the concept of IE. These are some of the respondents' comments,

*'inculcate moral values (tolerance, love) amongst the other children'*

*'the children with SEN should be able to adapt themselves to the environment'*

#### **6.4.8 Summary findings for open-ended question 2**

The evidence seemed to suggest that physical infrastructure as well as basic facilities should be the main priority in the implementation of IE. The respondents seemed to relate classroom environment to accommodation of the children with SEN. Following this interpretation, the respondents seemed to believe that class size, facilities as well as support were essential requirement in the implementation of IE. The respondents also seemed repeatedly to have concerns in the teaching pedagogy as they demanded more training in order to become more prepared. Looking deeper into the responses from the respondents in this study, it seemed that they were confused with the concept of inclusive and integration. Ironically, the concept of IE which was in the policy) seems to focus on the functionality of the children with SEN before being included in the mainstream classroom (See 2.5). In other words, based on the policy, the children with SEN need to be physically, cognitively and emotionally ready before being accepted in the mainstream classroom. This could be because the concept of integration is widely accepted and practised in most of the schools in Malaysia (specifically schools with SEIP which provide the concept of integration more than inclusion) as described in 2.4.4. This finding confirmed that the concept of IE in Malaysia is still a new concept particularly at the preschool level (see Table 42).

**Table 42.** Coding scheme to categorize teachers' comments about changes in the classroom environment

<b>Classroom arrangement/infrastructure</b>
Category label/ Criteria
Furniture and arrangement refers to specific choice of furniture, classroom layout(11)
Safety refers to safe facilities, equipment and spaces (53)
Classroom environment refers to conducive, comfortable and appropriate (friendly, lively & colourful) (60)
<b>Class size</b>
Category label /Criteria
Number of children refers to reduce the number of children per classroom. Teacher-children ratio (32)
<b>Support</b>
Category label /Criteria
Teacher assistant refers to teacher assistants (12)
School refers to school administration, teachers, SEN teachers/specialists (4)
Parents refers to parents/carers (2)
<b>Training</b>
Category label /Criteria
Knowledge/exposure refers to exposure about children with SEN (13)
Motivation/readiness refers to readiness to accept children with SEN (5)
Skills/qualification refers to qualified and skilful teachers in teaching & managing children with SEN (4)
<b>Pedagogy</b>
Category label /Criteria
Lesson plans & syllabus refers to suitable lesson plans and syllabus for children with SEN (6)
Teaching & Learning process refers to appropriate activities for the children with SEN (7)
Timetable refers to time slot and preparations (1)
Teaching materials refers to suitable/specific/sufficient teaching aids (46)
<b>Facilities</b>
Category label /Criteria
Special equipment/learning facilities refers to appropriate special equipment (31)
Basic facilities refers to safe & suitable basic/physical facilities (57)
<b>Social relationship</b>
Category label /Criteria
Opportunity/communication refers to opportunity to socialise (7)
Observation/assessment refers to changes in behaviour and cognitive (7)
Adaptability/self- management refers to ability to adapt/ self-management (7)
Values/acceptance/exposure refers to inculcating values, giving exposure for acceptance (12)

## 6.5 Proposed Changes in the School

The following open-ended question is the changes in the school. Similar to the previous question, the respondents were asked to give suggestions on things that need to be made or considered in the school. Two main changes were highlighted by teachers in this study to be considered by MOE namely the facilities and support.

### 6.5.1 Facilities

Based on the respondents' comments, the respondents perceived facilities and support as the most important aspects that need to be changed before implementing IE at the preschool level. However, there are many aspects underlying both of these themes. The respondents highlighted few aspects within the facilities category namely physical facilities and school environment. The themes emerged should be viewed as an interpretation of understanding on the facilities and support. The impact of these themes may inform the policy makers about things that need to be addressed based on the respondents' perspectives or the 'voice' from the respondents. (see Table 42)

The data from the open-ended question significantly showed that basic facilities need to be given extra attention by providing appropriate and sufficient equipment or learning tools for the children with SEN. Three of the respondents commented,

*'suitable equipment for the children with SEN'*

*'improve the facilities for example canteen, toilets so that they are more friendly user'*

*'suitable signage and symbols for the use of the children with SEN'*

In terms of school environment, it can be defined by spaces or locations. Two of the respondents expressed,

*'appropriate location so that they will not disturb other classes'*

*'conducive school and flexible for the children with SEN'*

Again, the respondents highlighted facilities as one of the many changes that need to be considered and the school is responsible for catering the physical needs of the children with SEN. Consequently, in this case, the respondents were more concern on the physical needs of the children with SEN.

## 6.5.2 Support

This theme can be explored in different underlying categories which revealed the extent of support that affected the respondents' attitudes. The support pointed out by the respondents appeared to be the support from: school administrations, mainstream teachers, all school members, typically developing children and parents.

The support from the school administration refers to knowledge or experience to be provided for all teachers in schools. In particular, school administrations (principals) should provide trained SEN teachers in order to support mainstream preschool teachers in the inclusive classrooms. The respondents also expressed that the school administration should be more sensible and concern as well as positive in giving support to all teachers. Thus the co-operation from the school administration should be deliberated in order to support the mainstream preschool teachers. This will ensure the success of the implementation of IE at the preschool level as some of the respondents commented,

*'provide SEN related information to all school staffs'*

*'placement for special education teachers in the preschool'*

*'helping each other amongst all children. Improve the awareness about the individual differences.'*

*'positive attitude from the school administrations'*

*'co-operation from the school administrators to be ready to face the parents of the children with SEN'*

The respondents also reported that they needed support from SE teachers in terms of sharing their skills or knowledge as well as collaborating so that mainstream teachers would be able to understand and accept the children with SEN in their inclusive classroom. In other words they needed support in terms of their teaching and learning process (pedagogy) to facilitate the children with SEN. Some respondents reported,

*'briefing and trainings should be given to teachers about SEN related so that they will have some insight and help the children with SEN'*

*'encourage typically developed children to accept the children with SEN, be friendly and take care of them'*

*'discussion amongst the mainstream teachers and SEN teachers'*

*'different curriculum, T&L activities and teaching materials'*

Based on the data gathered, the respondents also needed support from all school staffs by being more understanding and friendly as well as co-operating with each other. Some of the respondents reported,

*'inculcate equality and empathy amongst school staffs about the children with SEN'*

*'talks about the children with SEN so that normal children can accept them and give co-operation'*

*'improve the existing information about SEN'*

The respondent also commented that the typically developing children and their parents need to give their support for IE as well. This could be done by providing knowledge about the children with SEN and inculcating good moral values such as being respectful and empathy so that they can accept the children with SEN.

*'inculcate equality and empathy amongst school staffs about the children with SEN'*

*'talks about the children with SEN so that normal children can accept them and give co-operation'*

*'improve the existing information about SEN'*

### **6.5.3 Summary findings for open-ended question 3**

Based on the responses, the concept of SEN and meeting the needs of the children with SEN were seen highly emphasised by the respondents. In accommodation to IE, physical facilities as well as the lay out or space of the school were the concern of the respondents. They seemed to believe that in order to implement IE, the basic facilities particularly for the children with SEN should be addressed. This finding reveals that the respondents were concerned on the well-being of the children with SEN. It is also interesting to note that the support that the respondents needed within the mesosystem were influenced by their interactions with school administrators (principals), school member, other mainstream teachers parents and even with the typically developing children. This seemed to suggest that the respondents demand shared responsibility of all agencies by not placing the responsibility of implementing IE solely on their shoulders. This could be because preschool teachers in Malaysia were responsible in ensuring all children to master the basic 4M skills which is reading, writing, speaking and mathematics at the end of the preschool year which already a heavy burden for some of the preschool teachers (see Table 43).

**Table 43.** Coding scheme to categorize teachers' comments about changes in the school

<b>Facilities</b>
Category label /Criteria
Physical facilities refers to: equipment or learning tools (26) basic facilities (85)
School environment refers: to school environment which includes spaces or location (49)
<b>Support</b>
Category label/Criteria
School administrations refers to: knowledge/experience (28) skilful/trained/SEN teachers (21) concern/sensitive (17) positive (7) co-operation (14)
Mainstream teachers refers to: skills/knowledge/experienced (22) understanding/acceptance (18) co-operation (10) teaching-learning (18)
All school members refers to: understanding/friendly (23) co-operation (7) knowledge/awareness (12)
Typically developed children Refers to: values (14) knowledge/exposure (12)
Parents Refers to: co-operation (3) knowledge (2)

## 6.6 Proposed Changes in Society

The last open ended question deal with changes in embracing IE that need to be considered in society. Through this question, many respondents pointed out suggestions that would help to change society's perception about SEN and IE. Although it could be impossible to change society, shaping their attitudes seemed to be achievable though it may take some time. Thus, it is worth to examine the respondents' comments as they could shape society's attitudes and perceptions on disabilities generally and IE specifically. Based on the data gathered, three



main themes seemed to be highlighted by the respondents namely: awareness or exposure, acceptance and support.

### **6.6.1 Awareness**

Awareness is referring to the knowledge or information about SEN. Some of the respondents highlighted direct contact and experience with the children with SEN and the support given may help in shaping the societal acceptance towards children with SEN.

*give moral support and guidance so that they can accept children with SEN.'*

*'provide programmes which will involve the society and the children with SEN.'*

*'co-operation from all parties- parents, teachers & society.'*

*'be near with the children with SEN.'*

### **6.6.2 Acceptance**

The second theme that has been identified is the acceptance which considered values such as being caring, empathy, open minded and positive. Society's involvement in terms of moral and financial support through networking or job opportunities or social activities and effective communication may assist in shaping the attitudes towards IE. Some of the comments,

*'accepting the children with SEN and believe that they have their own strengths.'*

*'parents and society should have more empathy/sensitive with the changes and the development of the children with SEN so that their level of achievement could be improved.'*

*'positive acceptance and ready to help teachers/school through financial/ skills.'*

*'acceptance from the society and parents about having children with SEN together with their children in the same classroom.'*

### **6.6.3 Knowledge**

It is evident that based on the data gathered majority of the respondents commented that the society need to be given knowledge and exposure in terms of the types and the characteristics of SEN so that they could be more aware of individual differences. Three of the respondents commented,

*'change the negative perceptions because there are parents who do not want their children to socialise with children with SEN. The parents of the children with SEN also do not want their children to be placed in the mainstream classroom because they are worried of social and adaptation problems.'*

*'society especially the parents need to be educated not to be negative to have SEN children. Based on past experience, some identified children with SEN are not placed in the integration classroom because their parents are embarrassed of them.'*

*'exposure and awareness about the children with SEN because some parents cannot accept their children having SEN and difficult to get treatment from doctors.'*

#### **6.6.4 Summary findings for open-ended question 4**

According to the comments given, the respondents felt that society need to change the negative perceptions towards the children with SEN. Therefore the respondents felt that through exposure and awareness, information and knowledge, society's attitude towards SEN and IE could be shaped. Moreover, the respondents also felt that society need to be more sensitive and caring towards the children with SEN. Consequently, the involvement by society through social engagement or experience with contact will help them to accept the children with SEN more openly and positively. In shaping the attitudes of society might be superficial because all the desired changes will not happen in a short period of time. More involvement from other agencies such as the Ministry of Communication and Multimedia, MOH, MWFCDD and DNUI should be taken into considerations. Despite practising different religions and culture, the caring society culture amongst the races in Malaysia which undoubtedly cultivated since many years, may ease the process of shaping the attitudes towards the children with SEN and IE (see Table 44).

**Table 44.** Coding scheme to categorize teachers' comments about changes in society

<b>Awareness/exposure</b>
Category label / Criteria
Knowledge/information: refers to awareness of the existence of the children with SEN by giving exposure and knowledge (105)
<b>Acceptance</b>
Category label /Criteria
Values: rRefers to being caring, empathy, open minded and positive in order to accept the children with SEN (50)
Involvement Refers to accepting the children with SEN as well as the parents involvement in the community (42)
<b>Support</b>
Category label/ Criteria
Moral & financial support: refers to support from the society through networking/job opportunities/activities (48)
Co-operation: refers to co-operation from good communication and discussion (35)

## 6.7 Summary Findings for All Open-ended Items

The findings demonstrated that including children with SEN in mainstream classrooms involved welcoming and supporting them within their schools. By identifying and addressing barriers in the environment, organisation within teaching and learning and in the communication; attitudes of teachers, parents, schools and society could be shaped. Thus these barriers need to be addressed through structural changes (classroom layout, building infrastructure), training, accessible materials and communications, sufficient support and facilities. In addition, the modification of learning programmes, pedagogy, curricula and assessment need to be taken into account so that the attitudes of teachers towards of IE can be shaped and be more positive.

In essence, four main issues can be identified: 1) the different interpretation of IE; 2) the confusion of the concept between integration and inclusion; 3) the teachers' concern on the implementation of IE and 4) shaping the attitudes of society about IE and SEN. Although, the respondents seemed to be generally prepared in implementing IE at the preschool level, the underlying understanding of IE remain the barriers which may influence their attitude towards IE. The silent resistance which portrayed through the responses indicated that the dissemination of information by the policy makers were still lacking and that the understanding of the concept of IE is still insufficient. As a result, different interpretation in understanding IE may result in different approaches and practices.

All of these issues will be further explored in the semi-structured interview session to unpack the attitudes and to gain deeper understanding of the respondents' attitudes towards IE. The following chapter (Chapter Seven) will present the findings generated from the semi-structured interview. Theoretical framework which is the combination of attitude model and ecological system theory will also be utilised.

## **Chapter Seven: Qualitative Data Analysis Report (Semi-structured Interview)**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter is the continuation of the analysis findings in Chapter Six. The open-ended analysis identified four main issues arose based on the data set which include: 1) the different interpretation of IE; 2) the confusion of the concept between integration and inclusion; 3) the teachers' concern on the implementation of IE and 4) shaping the attitudes of society about IE and SEN. Therefore this chapter will shed light from the 18 volunteered participants' attitudes towards the introduction of IE at the preschool level. As previously described in Chapter Four, thematic analysis will be utilised in the process of unpacking the massive and robust qualitative data generated in the interview data. Simultaneously, the adoption of the theoretical framework will guide the whole analysis of this chapter.

In section 7.2, the themes emerged in the attitude components namely cognitive, affective and behavioural that the three-component model of attitude will be explored. Following that, section 7.3 will discuss the themes emerged within the ecological system theory which encircled the teachers' interactions within the system. The themes emerged will be presented according to each layer namely; microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. In section 7.4, the proposed changes in the classroom environment, in the school and in society will be further explored. In section 7.5, the summary of the qualitative analysis generated from the interviews will be presented followed by section 7.6, the summary of findings for both quantitative and qualitative data will be presented.

### **7.2 The Participants' General Attitudes towards IE based on the Three-Component Model of Attitude**

In addressing the research questions based on the quantitative data analysis, the general attitudes of the participants seemed generally prepared in embracing IE. However, in the open-ended data analysis four main themes were identified as the barriers of the implementation of IE. The different interpretation of IE, the confusion of the concept between integration and inclusion, the concern on the implementation of IE and the attitudes of society about IE and SEN were highlighted. Thus in order to understand deeper about these issues, the data generated from the semi-structured interview would provide further explanation on the attitudes

which could lead to other emerging themes. The theoretical framework could help to yield the factors behind the attitudes. The summary of the analysis is captured in the diagram. (See figure 35)

## 7.2.1 The cognitive component of attitude

In this section, the analysis showed that the participants perceived IE within two dimensions which are the beliefs of IE and the practice of IE. The themes that emerged within the beliefs dimensions are early identification, IE conceptualisation and extra attention. Meanwhile, training, catering for different needs and LINUS have been identified within the practice dimension. Therefore these two dimensions are interrelated and reflected in the cognitive component.

### 7.2.1.1 Early identification

This category refers to the understanding of IE as perceived by the participants. In this case, the teachers' beliefs on the idea of being able to detect any difficulties faced by the children. The children who were detected as having difficulties in terms of academic or social behaviour would be given educational support. Preschools were seen as the place to 'filter' or diagnose children with SEN, therefore teachers felt that the task of 'filtering' the children with SEN requires knowledge and skills which are then considered as burdensome to some of the teachers.

<b>Extract 1: P5 beliefs on IE- P5 interview extract.</b>
<i>"I heard about IE during my studies. Generally, as far as I'm concern, this school has been a foundation for me to look or to detect children who are having problems. So far, after 2-3 months, we would see if any children who are having any difficulties." (L2)</i>
<b>Extract 2: P13 beliefs on IE- P13 interview extract.</b>
<i>"When we accept children (4+ &amp; 5+), usually we don't know whether they have any problems or not. We just accept them but after teaching them 2-3 weeks we will notice something is wrong. This shows that as a preschool teacher, we must know all the characteristics of SEN because preschool is a place to detect children with SEN" (L13)</i>

### 7.2.1.2 The concept of IE

This category refers to the understanding of IE and the concept of IE as perceived by the teachers. In this case, it is related to having children with SEN in mainstream classrooms. Some teachers believed that children with SEN were better served if they were included in the mainstream classrooms. However, there were teachers who also believed that the children with SEN would be getting quality education if they were separated and be placed in the special classrooms.

<b>Extract 3: P2 beliefs on IE- P2 interview extract.</b>
<i>“Education in Malaysia is education for all so we cannot refuse any children to learn because it is their right whether they are normal or having SEN. However, we need to consider the suitability of the placement. I mean the children with SEN will be better served if they are placed at special schools.” (L6)</i>
<b>Extract 4: P6 beliefs on IE- P6 interview extract.</b>
<i>“SEN? For me, children with SEN are special, I mean, they cannot be taught as a whole class approach, must be one to one. They won’t be able to catch up.” (L6)</i>
<b>Extract 5: P13 beliefs on IE- P11 interview extract.</b>
<i>“IE is an opportunity for children with SEN e.g hyperactive, Down Syndromes, autism. They are included in our mainstream classrooms and they have the same right as typically developing children to receive preschool education.” (L6)</i>
<b>Extract 6: P13 beliefs on IE- P11 interview extract.</b>
<i>“IE is the continuation of SE whereby children with SEN will be included in the mainstream classroom, learning together with the mainstream children. Of course teachers and children in the mainstream classroom need to learn to be more open minded and hopefully they can help the children with SEN.” (L6)</i>

### 7.2.1.3 Extra attention

This category refers to the extra attention given by the teacher to the children with SEN. It involves sympathy and extra focus by spending more time on the children with SEN. Due to other workload, giving extra attention to the children with SEN may require more responsibility to the preschool teachers.

<b>Extract 7: P3 beliefs on IE- P3 interview extract</b>
<i>“From what I understand, among the preschool children, there would be one child with SEN. Some teachers would give extra attention to that particular child, some teachers will just ignore him/her. But we could find ways to help if we can identify the children with SEN.”(L8)</i>
<b>Extract 8: P7 beliefs on IE- P7 interview extract</b>
<i>“Perhaps I would feel more sympathy towards them. I would give more attention to the children with SEN because other children are already good. We must help the one who is weak.” (L10)</i>
<b>Extract 9: P1 beliefs on IE- P1 interview extract</b>
<i>“They need personal attention and in this school, there is no time for personal attention.” (L6)</i>

#### 7.2.1.4 Training

This category refers to teachers' concern on the training or courses that they should receive before implementing IE at the preschool level. Teachers were seen to be in need of getting knowledge and skills in order to manage inclusive classrooms. Teachers also concerned having early exposure on children with SEN as well as classroom management in mainstream classrooms.

<b>Extract 10: P2 concern on training – P2 interview extract</b>
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<i>"We need detailed courses on how to manage children with SEN because we don't have the skills. Perhaps the approach would be different. Therefore, we should get guidelines in terms of pedagogy particularly in handling children of SEN together with the mainstream children."</i> (L10)
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<b>Extract 11: P15 concern on training – P15 interview extract</b>
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<i>"The government must have budget for the training, give the preschool teachers early exposure because not all of them know about children with SEN. They don't understand what SEN is, how to adapt? Therefore training or courses are important"</i> (L10)
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#### 7.2.1.5 Catering for different needs

This category refers to different needs which have to be catered for the children with SEN which influenced the beliefs towards the children with SEN. Some teachers were concerned on catering different needs for different types of SEN.

<b>Extract 12: P2 concern on catering different needs- P2 interview extract</b>
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<i>"For the physical disability, we should provide locations or suitable furniture for them, as for the children with mental disability, we should have more skills or strengths, mentally and physically in order to handle any unexpected behaviour."</i> (L18)
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<b>Extract 13: P13 concern on catering different needs- P13 interview extract</b>
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<i>"For the first 12 months, I exposed them with gross motor skills, fine motor skills, in terms of emotion, self-management because it is a screening period. So that we can see their strengths and weaknesses. I'm not saying that I want to categorise them but this will help my teaching technique. Because not all children are the same, they are all different."</i> (L18)
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#### 7.2.1.6 LINUS

This category refers to a special intervention programme which focusing on literacy for Year 1 children. The preschool teachers felt pressured due to high expectations from school administration as well as the MOE. This programme is considered as one of the concerns in the implementation of IE at the preschool level (see 2.2.1).

<b>Extract 14: P3 concern on LINUS – P9 interview extract</b>
<i>“0% LINUS, as a preschool teacher, I felt that it is impossible to achieve. So far we managed to achieve 80% which is the highest. If the children with SEN are included... I don't mean to ignore them. My principal once told us, as long as the children can see and write that mean the children can read, so as a teacher we have to do something. At the end of the year 0% LINUS.” (L38)</i>
<b>Extract 15: P3 concern on LINUS – P9 interview extract</b>
<i>“LINUS has become the main focus. We are no longer stimulate children to play, not on socio-emotional and physical development. They just want to know whether they can read or not.” (L38)</i>

## 7.2.2 The affective component of attitude

In the affective component, the analysis showed that the participants perceived their beliefs on IE may influence their approach on the children with SEN. In other words, teachers in this study believed that types of SEN might influence their classroom practice. Thus, the support received from parents, school administrations, other teachers and society may shape the teachers' attitudes towards IE.

### 7.2.2.1 Types of SEN

This category refers to the feelings towards the children with SEN. The extent of feelings towards the children with SEN may also influence the attitude towards IE. The reactions towards the children with SEN would determine the readiness of the teachers to readily accepting the children with SEN.

<b>Extract 16: P14 beliefs on types on SEN- P14 interview extract</b>
<i>“I think we need to see their level. If they are mild autism, perhaps they can join. If they are too critical and disruptive behaviour, I don't think so.” (L26)</i>
<b>Extract 17: P16 beliefs on types on SEN- P16 interview extract</b>
<i>“We'll have to see them...what category. This is something new, so we don't know how to handle them. So we must look at the types of SEN” (L26)</i>
<b>Extract 18: P13 beliefs on types on SEN- P13 interview extract</b>
<i>“If the child is having physical disabilities, there shouldn't be a problem. However, if the child is autistic or Down Syndromes, I think it'll be difficult for him to sit for four hours in the classroom. He must be taught on self-management first. At least for a start he can enter the mainstream classroom for half an hour. By the end of the year, when he can manage himself, he can be fully included. SE teacher would have to come and assist me while I'm teaching.” (L26)</i>



### 7.2.2.2 Social development

This category refers to the understanding of IE as an approach to develop social skills amongst all children with or without SEN. Some teachers believed that IE could promote communication skills amongst the children in the mainstream classroom. They also believed IE can prepare the children with SEN to face the real world.

**Extract 19: P2 beliefs on IE- P2 interview extract.**

*"I agree because it is a social development process because in the outside world when they grow up, they still have to mix around, no differences, no segregation. (L10)*

**Extract 20: P10 beliefs on IE- P10 interview extract.**

*"The normal children can learn how to accept the children with SEN and the children with SEN can learn how to socialise. They shouldn't be in their own group. We want them to mix around" (L10)*

### 7.2.2.3 Equal opportunities

This category refers to the understanding of IE by giving equal opportunity to the children with SEN. Some teachers believed that the children with SEN should be getting fair treatment and equal rights to education which will benefit their life in the real world.

**Extract 21: P1 beliefs on IE- P1 interview extract.**

*"I believe in equal opportunity that is why I am stressing that they need to have special place and special education because I want them to be equal. Because when we talk about equality, equal means when there is equal capacity" (L12)*

**Extract 22: P3 beliefs on IE- P3 interview extract.**

*"We want them to get the same life experience as others." (L12)*

**Extract 23: P14 beliefs on IE- P14 interview extract.**

*"It's 50-50. First, it seems unfair for the children with SEN especially when we want to teach something advanced, they would be left behind. Second, it's not fair to mainstream children because teachers would only focus more on the children with SEN. They would be bored because teacher would only focus on him" (L12)*

**Extract 24: P2 beliefs on IE- P2 interview extract.**

*"I think IE is good because it gives exposure to all of us in order to give back their rights to learn. I think IE will assist their life in the future because when they finished their education at least they can manage themselves and they can be independent without the help from their parents in the outside world later on" (L12)*

#### 7.2.2.4 Classroom experience

This category relates to the experience of having children with SEN in the classroom. The reactions towards the children with SEN (which may be based on this belief) may influence their practice in dealing with the situation. The teachers' personal experience with the contact can be a positive or negative experience.

**Extract 25: P12 classroom experience- P12 interview extract.**

*"I had a boy who was stammered. When I suggested his mom to bring him to the doctor, she refused. If his mom listened to my suggestion, perhaps the doctor could help him with speech therapy. For me, if we have a child with special needs, we have to sacrifice. Now this child is in Year one; left behind and being ignored. As his ex-teacher, sometimes I had to ignore him because I have other thing to do. I'm in dilemma."(L24)*

**Extract 26: P12 classroom experience- P12 interview extract.**

*"I had one child who couldn't control himself. He liked to roll himself in the carpet and disturbed his friends. It was difficult to control him and at the same time I had to control other children. I can see that his development was so slow. Last year I suggested his mom to bring him to the doctor. The doctor gave him prescriptions. Now I can see his progress a little bit". (L14)*

**Extract 27: P3 classroom experience- P3 interview extract.**

*"OK actually I referred a lot to other teachers because I didn't have knowledge in facing children with SEN. I asked few teachers, I also made observations on the children with SEN. From what I could see, they liked to be praised, liked to get our attention. This child was autistic and hyperactive. He could learn for only two minutes, when I gave my attention to him, only then he could do the work. But this was a problem for me because as a teacher I couldn't handle all of the children at one time without an assistant. So it was difficult, it was a challenge but I tried to find ways to solve this problem because this was my responsibility to teach all 25 children. When I have this child, I felt so challenged. I tried to ask other teachers and applied it. Thank God, when I gave him a lot of attention, he could manage. I just hope I could tell his problem to his parents but some parents could not accept it."(L24)*

**Extract 28: P4 classroom experience- P4 interview extract.**

*"First, when the child threw tantrum, I felt like hmmm how to solve this problem. Sometimes he reacted so aggressively till I nearly lost my patience, I didn't have any skills to deal with this kind of child but one thing for sure, I calmed myself down. As a Muslim, we pray and be calm. From my experience with the child, I had to follow what he wanted otherwise he would throw his tantrum. So this was not fair to other children. Some children didn't understand why I treated him differently, I mean giving him extra attention. So I had to explain to other children. Honestly it was a very difficult experience."*(L21)

**7.2.2.5 Support from parents**

This category refers to the support received from the parents which influence teachers' attitude towards IE. Some teachers claimed that if they received support from the parents, they would feel more prepared and positive. On the other hand, if they did not get any support from the parents they might feel alone and frustrated.

**Extract 29: P6 opinion on support from the parents- P6 interview extract.**

*"The problem is parents. When I tried to do extra class, the parents who were waiting outside would give me certain look. They are not supportive."*(L16)

*I think parents should co-operate with the teacher. When they are at home, the parents have to take over. But the parents in this school, totally rely on teachers 100% because they don't have time."* (L38)

**Extract 30: P5 opinion on support from the society- P5 interview extract.**

*"Actually teachers are having problems when facing with parents. Educated parents are different from uneducated parents. Educated parents have their ego, they would go directly complaint to the principal. Whereas uneducated parents, would not go directly to the principal, they tended not to look at my face for a month."*(L28)

**7.2.2.6 Teachers' preparedness**

This category refers to the feelings for the children with SEN. The extent of feelings for the children with SEN will also influence the attitude towards IE. By mentally and physically ready to accept children with SEN, teachers' preparedness will depend on; the number of children per classroom, support from teaching assistant, knowledge and pedagogical skills through training or courses, teachers' motivation and infrastructure.

**Extract 31: P4 preparedness on IE- P4 interview extract.**

*"The government has to find solutions to make sure teachers are really mentally and physically ready, make sure the teaching assistants are really ready, give exposure to*

<i>teachers. You can't simply include IE unless the teachers themselves make own effort to get knowledge. For example I, myself have to accept and find knowledge but the government is the one who supposed to give exposure, how to handle, teacher's ratio must be more than one teacher per class." (L11)</i>
<b>Extract 32: P12 preparedness on IE- P12 interview extract.</b>
<i>"Teacher's condition whether they are ready or not to accept them. There would be more work load. At the same time teachers have to prepare documentation. We don't have time to do all that records." (L11)</i>
<b>Extract 33: P5 preparedness on IE- P5 interview extract.</b>
<i>"My classroom spaces are so limited, how to place a child who is on the wheelchairs? You have to climb seven stairs to my classroom. There are no ramps. We are not trained to teach children with SEN." (L11)</i>
<b>Extract 34: P8 preparedness on IE- P8 interview extract.</b>
<i>"Teachers need to have multiple skills to teach different categories of children." (L11)</i>
<b>Extract 35: P14 preparedness on IE- P14 interview extract.</b>
<i>"Depends on the level of severity and I can't accept too many children. Perhaps one or two children who are not critical because what is the use of having SE. They know better strategies, how to handle and what sort of suitable activities. If the child with SEN is included in the mainstream preschool classroom, he could socialise with others but he would be left behind in other aspects." (L11)</i>

### 7.2.2.7 Support from society

This category refers to the support received from society which influences teachers' attitude towards IE. The support from society may help to shape teachers' attitude because the understanding and acceptance from the society may encourage them to teach the children with SEN.

<b>Extract 36: P3 opinion on support from the society- P3 interview extract.</b>
<i>"The society still don't understand the children with SEN. Our culture is still not moving toward that direction. We are lacking in terms of support from the society, they think that children with SEN are a burden."(L15)</i>
<b>Extract 37: P12 opinion on support from the society- P12 interview extract.</b>
<i>"From my point of view, our society is still less exposed about the children with SEN. They are lack of knowledge and exposure. The input from mass media play an important role in giving and exposing the information about them."(L15)</i>

### 7.2.2.8 Support from school administrations

This category refers to the support from school administrations to help to manage the inclusive classroom which suggests that the attitude is influenced by the support from school administrations. Some teachers claimed that the lack of support from the school administrations demotivated them to do more in tapping the potential of the children with SEN.

**Extract 38: Concern on the support from school administrations- P5 interview extract.**

*"My school wants to 'chase' cluster trust school status. When the school administration is focusing on that, the filing system need to be good. Actually teachers spend more time on the filing not on teaching, teaching is no longer the core business. SE is just a small problem which is a burden for them."* (L33)

**Extract 39: Concern on the support from school administrations- P10 interview extract.**

*"The school administrations are more concerned on UPSR and LINUS results."* (L33)

### 7.2.2.9 Support from other teachers

This category refers to the support from other teachers. Some teachers felt discouraged from the reactions they received by fellow colleagues regarding the children with SEN. On the other hand, there are some teachers who felt encouraged from the amount of support they received from their colleagues.

**Extract 40: Concern on the support from other teachers- P6 interview extract.**

*"I also discussed with other teachers. Some said, 'oo that boy is like that, just let him be'. When I tried to do something new, some teachers would say, 'What for? That boy is like that'. That makes me want to give up".*

**Extract 41: Concern on the support from other teachers- P15 interview extract.**

*"I like to meet teachers from SEIP programme which is next door. I always refer to them. I also like to observe the SE teachers teaching because their classes are just next to my class. I gained some knowledge. Sometimes I went to their class to learn from them."*

### 7.2.3 The behavioural component of attitude

From the analysis, the classroom practice seemed to be the main concern of the teachers in this study. This includes teaching pedagogy, teaching aids, the number of children per classroom, classroom management, teaching strategies, safety and location as well as time allocation.

### 7.2.3.1 Pedagogy

This category refers to the practice of IE as perceived by teachers in this study. In other words, the teaching strategies employed in order to cater the needs of children with SEN. This includes the curriculum, teaching techniques and skills, suitable teaching materials, classroom management as well as IEP.

<b>Extract 42: P6 interview extract</b>
<i>"For me, children with SEN can't be taught as a whole class. They need to be taught one to one. Otherwise, they would not be able to catch up." (L16)</i>
<b>Extract 43: P7 interview extract</b>
<i>"How to teach two different children? We have to use various teaching materials, different workbook, more attractive presentations, more worksheets." (L16)</i>
<b>Extract 44: P11 interview extract</b>
<i>"If we want to use the normal curriculum, we have to conduct normal lessons as usual. These children will be left behind because the system is not suitable for them. They are very slow." (L16)</i>
<b>Extract 45: P5 interview extract</b>
<i>"If SE teachers have to prepare IEP, do we preschool teachers have to prepare it as well? Now we are teaching by class, how to do it?(L16)</i>

### 7.2.3.2 Teaching aids

This category refers to the importance of teaching aids in order to manage inclusive classrooms. Teachers believed that suitable use of teaching aids would assist their teaching for the children with SEN.

<b>Extract 46: Concern on the teaching aids- P5 interview extract.</b>
<i>"Teaching materials provided must be a lot and different. Lots of puzzles, blocks, sand collage etc." (L33)</i>
<b>Extract: Concern on the teaching aids- P4 interview extract.</b>
<i>"I think the government need to think about the teaching aids to help children with SEN because for me these children need different teaching aids to attract them, something like therapy for example equipment that can develop their sensory, tactile." (L23)</i>
<b>Extract 48: Concern on teaching aids-P1 interview extract</b>
<i>"First of all, there is no personal contact and one more thing is, in terms of needs, for the mainstream children, we have books or LCD (projector) but they (children with SEN) need more...fine motor activities." (L18)</i>

### 7.2.3.3 Number of children

This category refers to the number of preschool children that need to be reduced in case children with SEN will attend the mainstream classroom. This is related to the classroom management as teachers needed to handle both preschool children together with the children with SEN which seemed challenging for the preschool teachers.

**Extract 49: P3 beliefs on the number of children- P3 interview extract**

*"I support but perhaps, in my opinion, if the child with SEN to be included in the mainstream classroom, the number of preschool children should be reduced because I am the one who is facing the situation. 25 children are already too many." (L12)*

**Extract 50: P3 beliefs on the number of children- P3 interview extract**

*"I think I can implement IE but need to reduce the number of children in the classroom. Because for me, 25 children are too many. I don't have time to focus on all of them." (L12)*

### 7.2.3.4 Classroom management

This category refers to how to manage an inclusive classroom. The success of handling the classroom may then influenced the beliefs towards the children with SEN. Teachers were concerned on the management of the inclusive classroom particularly the classroom layout, noise level and disturbances as well as unexpected behaviour which would disrupt the teaching and learning process.

**Extract 51: P2 beliefs on classroom management- P2 interview extract**

*"At least I need to be given courses related to how to manage children with SEN because I don't have the skills and expertise. My expertise is with mainstream preschool children so if the children with SEN are included in the mainstream classrooms, I hope all preschool teachers are given early exposure and undertake related courses so that teachers will become more efficient in order to handle the mainstream preschool children together with the children with SEN at the same time". (L8)*

**Extract 52: Concern on the classroom management- P4 interview extract.**

*"The biggest challenge is to manage many children and at the same time having one child with SEN. What if he is disturbing, how are we going to teach? If we can't control him, it will be difficult to handle other things. Our teaching would be disturbed if I have him in my class especially when I can't control him and I have to ignore other children because I have to attend to him."(L19)*

**Extract 53: Concern on the classroom management- P12 interview extract.**

*"The classroom layout. Hyperactive child moves a lot and this is dangerous."(L19)*

**7.2.3.5 Teaching strategies**

This category relates to different teaching strategies adopted to cater the needs of the children with SEN.

**Extract 54: P1 teaching strategy- P1 interview extract.**

*"My strategy is, I just want him to feel safe. So when I entered his class, I gave him chocolate, I gave him colouring pencils. My motive was I did not want him to disturb other children and I did not want other children to disturb him. I have only one hour to teach, so I could only teach him the best I could. Well at least within that one hour he felt safe. I gave him playdough to keep him occupied. He was creative playing with the playdough, it was just he could not articulate the words". (L16)*

**Extract 55: P1 teaching strategy- P10 interview extract.**

*"For the ADD child, I placed him next to me so that I can guide him. If he couldn't focus, I would let him play for a while. He would do whatever he liked first, then continued his work". (L16)*

**7.2.3.6 Safety and location**

This category refers to the place or building for children with SEN which is the concern of the teachers particularly the safety issues. Some teachers were concerned with the well-being of the children with SEN and many of the teachers considered the current situations as inappropriate for the children with SEN.

**Extract 56: Concern on location- P2 interview extract.**

*"For the physical disability, we should provide locations or suitable furniture for them, as for the children with mental disability, we should have more skills or strengths, mentally and physically in order to handle any unexpected behaviour." (L18)*

**Extract 57: Concern of safety- P1 interview extract.**

*"One more thing of course the safety, scared of being intimidated either by the children with SEN or other children."(L18)*

**Extract 58: Concern on the safety- P15 interview extract.**

*"The equipment and the preschool classroom environment are not suitable for the children with SEN. This is because we have a stage, learning corners. Sometimes the children with SEN can be aggressive. It's dangerous. Unlike the special preschool, they have only one table in the middle with only seven children."(L19)*

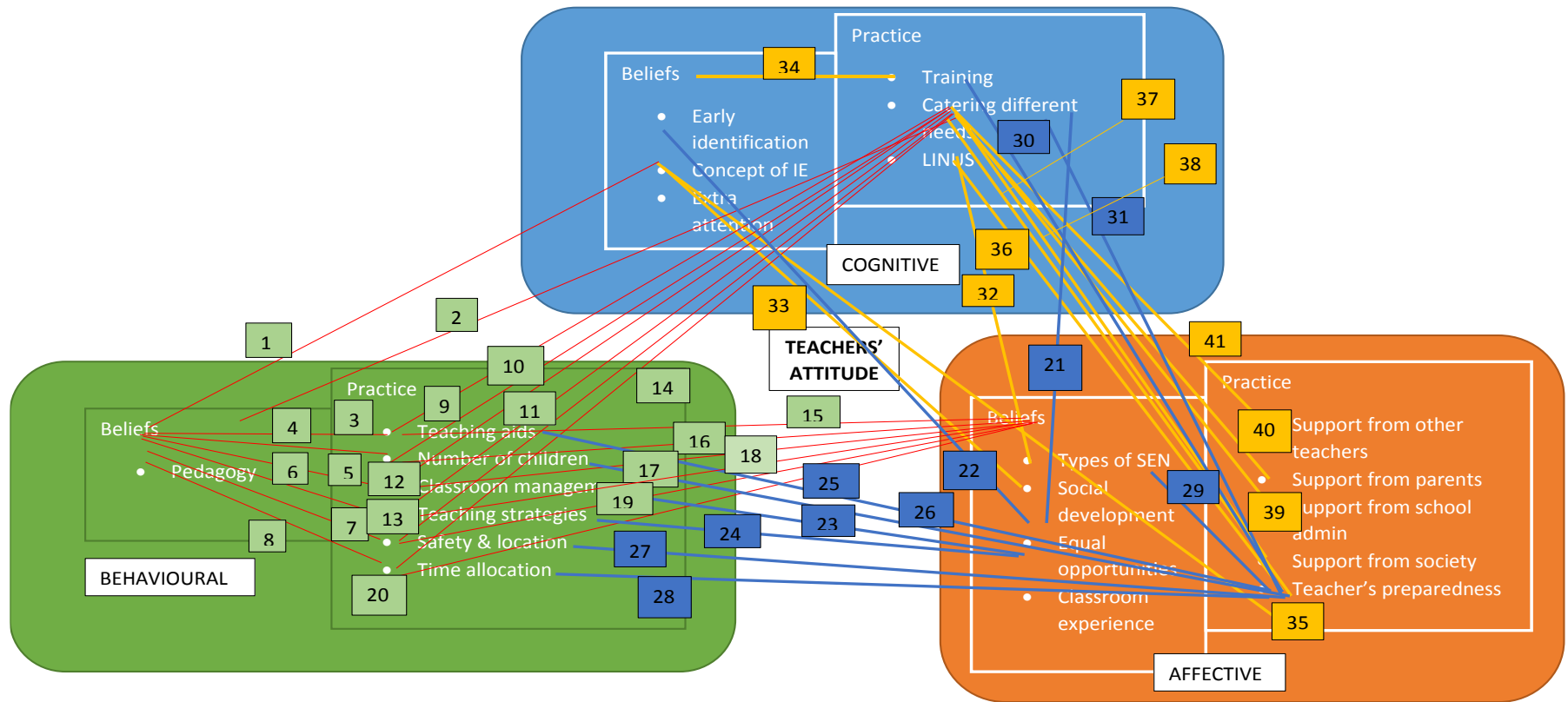


### 7.2.3.7 Time allocation

This category refers to the time allocated for teaching children with SEN as perceived by teachers in this study. Some teachers were concerned regarding to the quality time spent in order to provide maximum support for the children with SEN.

<b>Extract 59: Concern on time allocation- P1 interview extract.</b>
<i>"Make sure the time allocation is... let say 4 hours. Are the teachers willing to teach extra hours so that they (children with SEN) could catch up with other children?"(L18)</i>
<b>Extract 60: Concern on time allocation- P12 interview extract.</b>
<i>"T&amp;L timetable must be changed because the current timetable seems so full. School administrations, MOE and those who are involved with preschool must understand this situation."(L18)</i>

**Figure 35.** Summary diagram of the interaction between influences across the three attitude components following examination of the key factors



BEHAVIOURAL	AFFECTIVE	COGNITIVE
1: Extract 7, 8, 9 2: Extract 10, 11 3: Extract 43, 44, 47, 48 4: Extract 49, 50 5: Extract 44, 51, 52, 53 6: Extract 42, 45, 54, 55 7: Extract 56, 57, 58 8: Extract 59, 60 9: Extract 43, 46, 47, 48 10: Extract 49, 50 11: Extract 12, 45 12: Extract 12, 42, 51, 52 13: Extract 12 14: Extract 47, 48 15: Extract 49, 50 16: Extract 16, 17, 18 17: Extract 51, 52 18: Extract 54, 55 19: Extract 53, 56, 57 20: Extract 59	21: Extract 23 22: Extract 21, 22, 24 23: Extract 25, 26, 27, 28 24: Extract 25, 26, 27, 28 25: Extract 31 26: Extract 33 27: Extract 34 28: Extract 31, 33, 34 29: Extract 35 30: Extract 31, 33, 34 31: Extract 34	32: Extract 3 33: Extract 19, 20 34: Extract 2 35: Extract 6, 4 36: Extract 14, 15 37: Extract 33, 34 38: Extract 36, 37 39: Extract 38, 39 40: Extract 29, 30 41: Extract 40, 41

## 7.3 Factors Influencing Teachers' Attitudes

In order to explore teachers' attitudes, the ecological system theory may identify factors that potentially influence their attitudes towards the introduction of IE. The bidirectional interactions where teachers involved in the setting provided a multidimensional views of IE. The summary of findings will be illustrated in the summary diagram provided at the end of each system section. (See figure 36, 37, 38 and 39)

### 7.3.1 Microsystem

With regards to the immediate inclusive classroom, undoubtedly interactions and relationships that happened in the classroom influence teachers' attitudes towards IE. Factors such as training, personal commitment, types of SEN, infrastructure, level of severity of SEN and benefits of SEN were identified within the microsystem.

#### 7.3.1.1 Training

This category refers to courses or training received by preschool teachers. This includes knowledge, exposure, skills, relevance and duration of the courses or training as well as teachers' willingness. Many teachers expressed their needs on training specifically different teaching strategies, SEN management, knowledge and exposure on SEN, developing appropriate behaviour amongst children with SEN, differentiating the level of severity of SEN and managing inclusive classrooms.

<b>Extract 61: P5 interview extract</b>
<i>"Perhaps if I were given a proper training, I would support IE but now I already adapted myself with IE even though I did not receive training. I have to. This is my responsibility. I'm also so used to children with difficulties. If they enter my class, I would just accept them and try my best." (L10)</i>
<b>Extract 62: P7 interview extract</b>
<i>"I want to know more about them. How to get close to them, how to attract their attention. I want to know their needs and how to fulfil their needs. How to teach them. That is in terms of classroom management. In terms of psychology, what should I do, what kind of pedagogy should I use?" (L10)</i>

**Extract 63: P15 interview extract**

*“Give early exposure to teachers. We don’t understand the characteristics of the children with SEN. Give courses on their development, detailed courses, I mean. Let say courses on dyslexia followed by autism and then on slow learner etc. Not only on teaching but also on health, safety and nutrition.” (L10)*

**7.3.1.2 Personal commitment**

This category refers to preschool teachers’ personal commitment towards the children with SEN. It relates to their willingness as well as inner strengths of a person such as self-determination and motivation to be able to accept and have an empathy towards the children with SEN. Teachers have to correspond by accommodating themselves based on the needs of the children with SEN.

**Extract 64: P4 interview extract**

*“Once we handle the children with SEN without any skills or expertise, we would have two options whether we could be more positive or more negative. If we accept them in anguish, we would become negative but if we are positive, we would become more patience and appreciate what we have and be thankful that we have the experience. But one thing, as a normal human being, perhaps the negative attitude will exist.”(L30)*

**Extract 65: P10 interview extract**

*“I think it is depends on the individual. I’m a type of person who never easily give up. I’ll always try to find ways to help these children. I’ll discuss with their parents first. I’m more positive to find solutions. I’d learn even if I have to pay with my own money. Perhaps this self-motivation is because of my nephew. He is my inspirations. If only all teachers can accept them.”(L30)*

**Extract 66: P17 interview extract**

*“God willing. Inner strength, I need to prepare for my inner strength. So far, let say tomorrow I’ll be having them, God willing, I can do it.”(L30)*

**Extract 67: P1 interview extract**

*“In terms of theory, I can say that teachers finished his/her work at 1 pm and then stayed back until 3 pm to help children who identified as not being able to follow the lesson. So teachers would spend extra time and spend extra material for that children. And on top of that, teachers brought them out, stayed with them more. This is theory. But in terms of practicality, ‘can I really do it?’ because teachers are also human being, they also have their own family and emotion. If teachers were to be pushed by the policy but not in practicality... unless that teachers are really dedicated.” (L33)*

### 7.3.1.3 Types of SEN

This category refers to the types of SEN that might influence teachers' acceptance. It depends on the condition or the problem of a child with SEN. Teachers seemed to welcome children with physical disabilities compared to children with EBD because they were concerned on their ability to control these children in the classroom. Some teachers were not comfortable attending to children with LD. Thus, teachers have to be adaptable in managing the children with SEN in the mainstream classroom.

<p><b>Extract 68: P3 interview extract</b></p> <p><i>"I think Down Syndromes children are not suitable to be mixed with the mainstream children but if slow learners children, I think it's OK. Because I'm afraid that I could not control the Down Syndromes children because only Special Education teachers know how to control."</i> (L30)</p>
<p><b>Extract 69: P12 interview extract</b></p> <p><i>"If the child can follow or learn, I think it shouldn't be a problem. Why sending him to SE classroom when he only got physical disabilities, there's nothing wrong with his cognitive. However, as for the hyperactive child, perhaps the teacher might face difficulties in class control particularly when we have 25 preschool children. So, it depends on the condition of the child."</i> (L30)</p>
<p><b>Extract 70: P15 interview extract</b></p> <p><i>"If he is slow learner or autistic, perhaps we can accept him. But if he got physical disabilities, I'm afraid that he would be labelled, nobody wants to be with him especially in group activity. He would withdraw himself. So, it is depends on the child himself, depends on his condition/problem."</i> (L30)</p>
<p><b>Extract 71: P4 interview extract.</b></p> <p><i>"I think, we should look at the types of SEN. If the child is not disturbing like mild one, then he can be included with the mainstream children. I mean slow learners or dyslexic children should be OK for me."</i> (L6)</p>

### 7.3.1.4 Infrastructure needs

This category refers to general views on the implementation of IE which include the physical needs and infrastructure that need to be changed in order to ensure the effectiveness of IE. Teachers were seen to be more focused on the socio-emotional well-being of the children with SEN.

<b>Extract 72: P2 interview extract.</b>
<i>“As I told you earlier, all children need education. Education is their right, so we cannot refuse their right to learn, we need to openly accept them. However, their needs must be fulfilled or completed. In terms of policy, it needs to be adapted. Other needs and appropriate infrastructure perhaps could be provided first by the government to ensure IE can be implemented in an effective way.” (L26)</i>
<b>Extract 73: P4 interview extract.</b>
<i>“Perhaps special room to control the tantrum. This is because when he/she misbehaved, the tantrum could be seen. So, I think this is emotionally disturbing. That room is to cool him down, time out, so that he would not disrupt other children and at the same time he could calm himself down and this will not put him in danger.” (L60)</i>

### 7.3.1.5 Benefits of IE

This category refers to the beliefs on the benefits of IE. It deals with the concept of individual differences that every children with or without SEN learn differently. Some teachers perceived IE as beneficial to both parties (children with SEN and typically developing children) however, there were also teachers who thought otherwise.

<b>Extract 74: P1 interview extract</b>
<i>“I don’t think so. Even though some say that it’s good if they are mixed together but in this case, I think they should be separated, not forever. Just a duration of time until they are ready. So that we could give them more attention/focus and they would get more access to resources.” (L30)</i>
<b>Extract 75: P12 interview extract</b>
<i>“I’m in dilemma. For the normal child I forced him to learn A,B,C and for this stammered child I treated him differently. I felt unfair to the normal child. How am I going to explain this situation to him? I couldn’t say that he is disabled, I didn’t want to label him. It would make him low self-esteem.” (L30)</i>
<b>Extract 76: P4 interview extract</b>
<i>“Both parties will get benefits. In terms of social skills, the children with SEN could learn how to treat people. As for the normal children they could be stressed out with the children with SEN because of classroom disruption. On the other hand they would also learn about diversities.” (L30)</i>
<b>Extract 77: P5 interview extract</b>
<i>“Bullying will become an issue.” (L30)</i>

### 7.3.1.6 Level of severity of SEN

This category refers to the level of severity which might be acceptable by some teachers. This could be related to the immediate reactions while having the children with SEN in their mainstream classrooms. Teachers seemed concerned towards the implementation of IE and felt stressful particularly in classroom management.

**Extract 78: P4 interview extract**

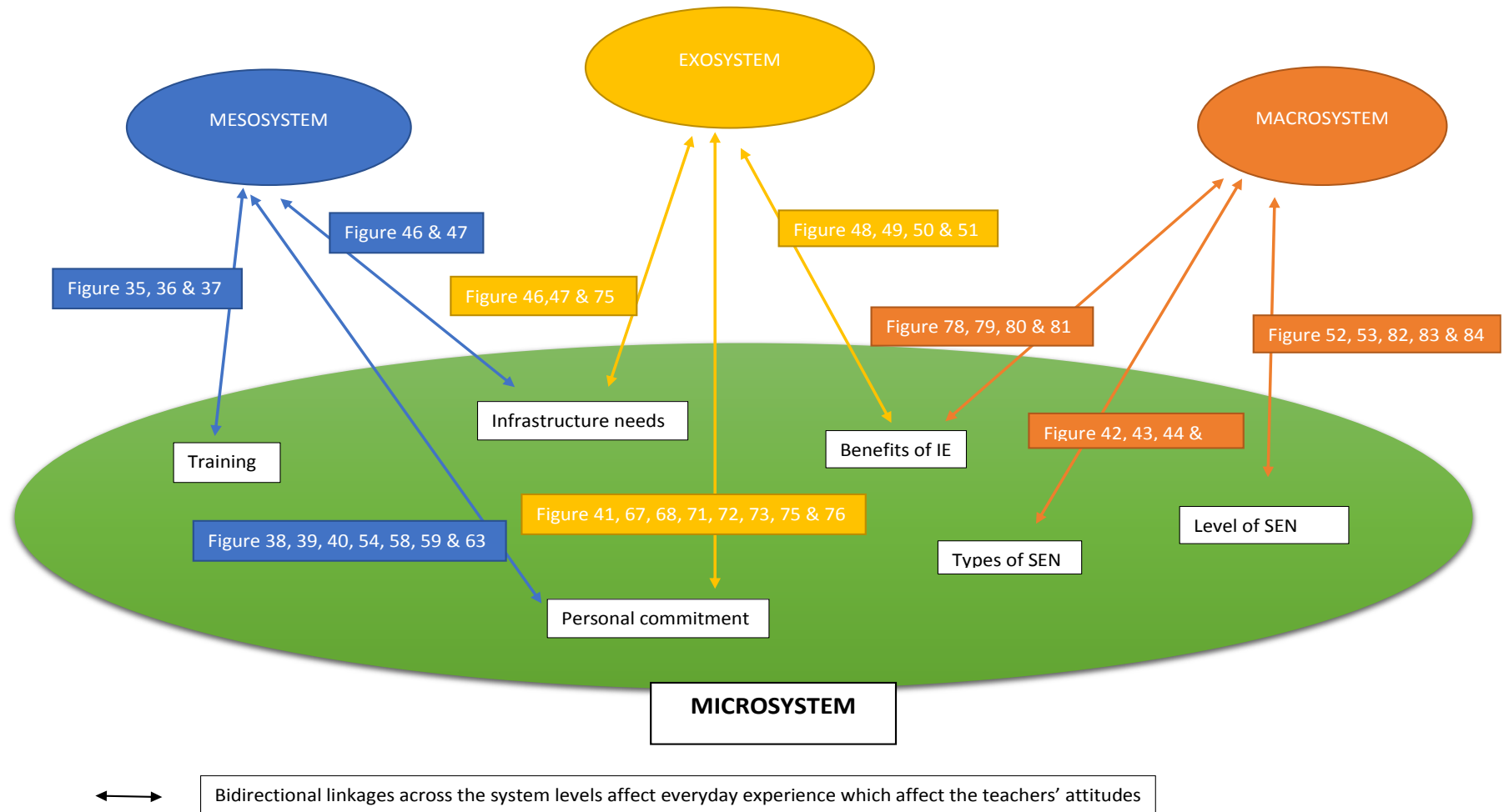
*"I think we must look at the level of severity. I mean the acceptable severity level in order to join the mainstream classrooms. There should be SEN teaching assistant to look after the children with SEN. Not all teachers can handle." (L30)*

**Extract 79: P11 interview extract**

*"If the child is moveable, it's OK. But if let say the child is causing problems and it becomes a struggle to the teacher to handle, then I'm not very supportive, depends on the severity of their special needs." (L30)*



**Figure 36.** Summary diagram of the interaction between influences across systems following examinations of the key factors present in the Microsystem



### 7.3.2 Mesosystem

In this study, the level and the amount of support received often voiced out by these teachers. The support from SE teachers, parents, specialists, principals and other teachers were seen as crucial in preparing teachers for the IE implementation.

#### 7.3.2.1 Support from SE teachers

This category refers to the collaboration with SE teachers which potentially influence the teachers' attitude. The preschool teachers may learn from the experience of SE teachers which likely opened their mind about IE. Simultaneously, preschool teachers may seek advice and help from SE teachers by allowing preschool teachers to come and observe in SE classes.

<b>Extract 80: Collaboration with Special Education teachers- P6 interview extract.</b>
<i>"Sometimes I asked SE teachers about the children with SEN. I always keep in touch with them. They are more expert than me. Very helpful. So far it increases my knowledge about children with SEN. I think the challenges the SE teachers faced are tougher than preschool teachers." (L47)</i>
<b>Extract 81: Collaboration with Special Education teachers- P7 interview extract.</b>
<i>"I always refer to Teacher A (SE teacher). I think this is good as I got to share my experience with her. It helps me to be more positive." (L47)</i>
<b>Extract 82: Collaboration with Special Education teachers- P15 interview extract.</b>
<i>"My sister is SE teacher. I become more open minded, not positive though. With the limited knowledge I have, at least I can help the child with SEN." (L47)</i>

#### 7.3.2.2 Collaborations with specialists/therapist/experts

This category refers to the collaboration with specialists or therapists which possibly influence teachers' attitude. The knowledge and experience as well as exposure from specialists, therapists and experts would support preschool teachers in inclusive classrooms.

<b>Extract 83: Collaboration with specialists or therapists- P4 interview extract.</b>
<i>"If we want to do this, we need to increase the number of specialists and related courses or we could make an initiative to attract graduates in this area at least we could provide allowances."(L25)</i>
<i>"We may think that there are no collaboration, but in actual fact there is. Perhaps schools should provide one class for therapy for the children with SEN one hour per week or call out for specialists to help such as acupuncture. The government have to think of effective implementation of IE." (L28)</i>

**Extract 84: Collaboration with experts- P10 interview extract.**

*“As I’m from the mainstream preschools, I don’t know anyone who is an expert in SEN. So, I refer to an expert from Taiwan. He is very experienced. Once a year he’ll come to Malaysia and I’ll ask him questions if I have any.” (L28)*

**7.3.2.3 Support from parents**

This category refers to the relationship between parents and preschool teachers which involves positive interactions and communication between them. This establishes the dynamic interactions between them. For example, some parents provided input or information about their children in which teachers could try ways for accommodation and modification of teaching instructions. Teachers who received the background information from the parents would feel more relaxed and confident to deal with the children with SEN. Nevertheless there were some parents who did not prefer to share about their children to teachers.

**Extract 85: Support from parents - P3 interview extract.**

*“We are living in a society, like a family, we have to help one another in this case, school administration and preschool teachers, teachers and parents. We have to socialise with them because we want to know their level, health and getting more information directly from the parents.”(L40)*

*“Teachers will be more positive and more understanding, parents won’t get mad at us because they know what we are doing and we must be open-minded with the parents. I will be more prepared. When we meet these people, we know there is a solution. We are not alone.” (L44)*

**Extract 86: Support from parents – P8 interview extract.**

*“On the first day of school, this parent already told me that her son was a little bit special, a bit hyperactive. I didn’t understand what she meant. But after he came into my class, then I understood. She asked me to write a letter of recommendation for SE class if I want. Because his mom was a teacher. Even if he didn’t do his work, I wasn’t worried because his mom admitted it. Imagine if I have to deal with difficult parents who refused to tell me. It would be difficult.” (L44)*

**7.3.2.4 Support from principals**

This category refers to the relationship between preschool teachers with school principals. The support given by school administrations or principals to preschool teachers potentially influence teachers’ attitudes towards IE. Teachers whose schools involved with SEIP would have more advantages in managing children with SEN because of the facilities, resources and SE teachers’ experience. In addition, the encouragement given by school principals regarding IE policy possibly influence preschool teachers’ attitudes towards IE.

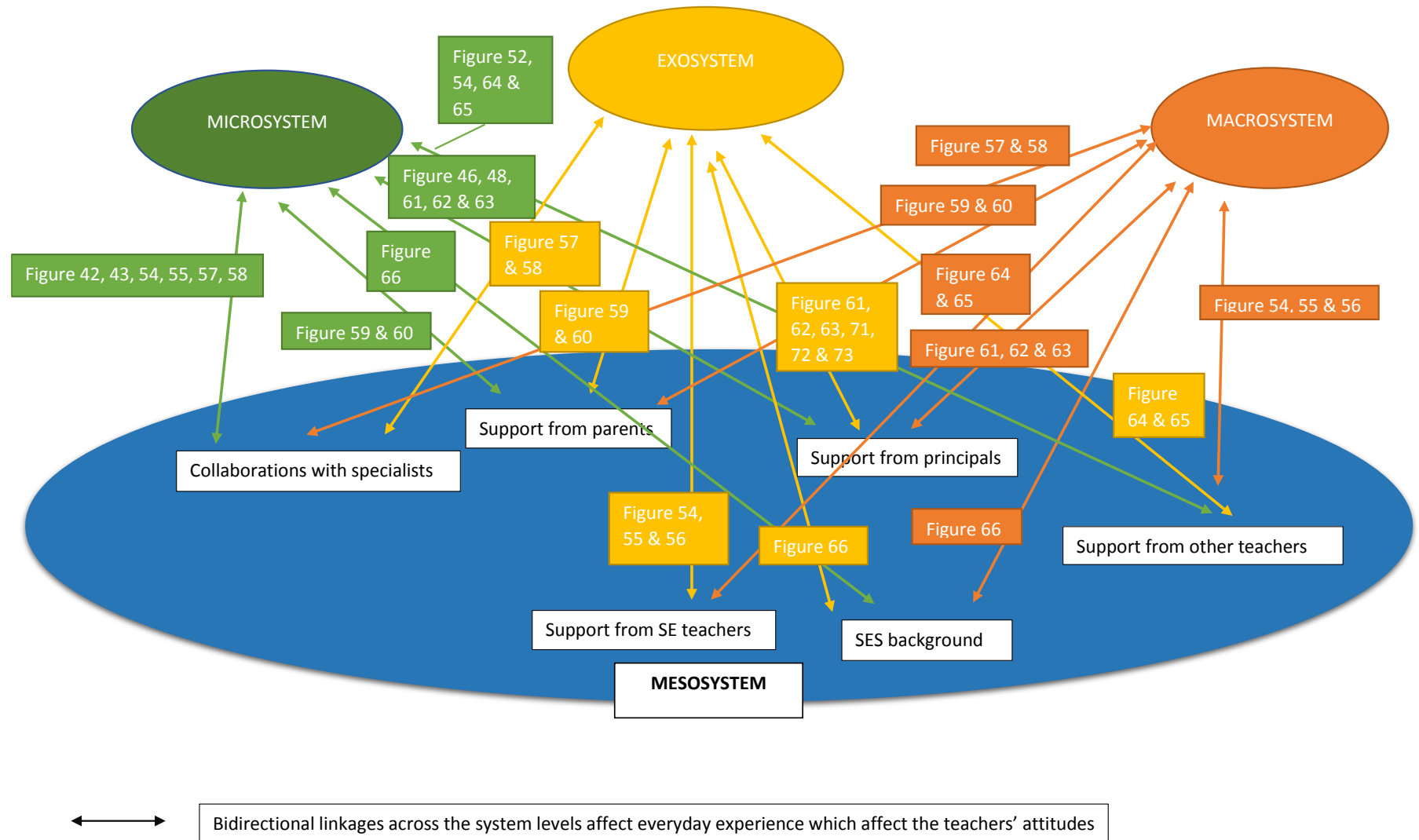
<b>Extract 89: Support from principal – P10 interview extract.</b>
<i>"I told the principal. No support. He just said, 'What? Do we have that kind of child? How is he going to Year One? Can he read? How?' He asked me back. " (L44)</i>
<b>Extract 90: Support from principal – P11 interview extract.</b>
<i>"Normally, I'll talk to my headmistress. We had a good discussion. We always talk about the way to handle the situation. Sometimes she gives suggestions. " (L44)</i>
<b>Extract 91: Support from school administration – P13 interview extract.</b>
<i>"My principal asked me to teach as usual. That's it. He never sat down and asked me about the problem or way to help. It's my own initiative to help the child. " (L44)</i>

### 7.3.2.5 Support from other teachers

This category refers to the support received from other teachers within the school context. The encouragement and support from their colleagues will influence preschool teachers' attitudes towards IE. On the other hand, negative relationships amongst teachers would create tension environment within the school context.

<b>Extract 92: Support from other teachers – P6 interview extract.</b>
<i>"I try to discuss with the experienced teachers. They said, 'O the child is like that, let him be.' When I try to do something new, the previous teacher would say, 'What for? The child will always be like that.' This makes me give up. " (L44)</i>
<b>Extract 93: Support from other teachers – P7 interview extract.</b>
<i>"They just came and looked at the child and said, 'Yes, the child is having a problem'. That's all. " (L44)</i>

**Figure 37.** Summary diagram of the interactions between influences across systems following examination of the key factors present in the Mesosystem



### 7.3.3 Exosystem

Within this system the roles of MOE, the policy of IE, school ethos and roles of teachers were identified as barriers in IE implementation which may influence the teachers' attitude towards IE. This indirectly influence the attitudes of the teachers in this study as explained in details in the following sub-sections:

#### 7.3.3.1 Roles of MOE

This category relates to the responsibility of the MOE in implementing IE at the preschool level. Some teachers were dissatisfied with the MOE approach in introducing IE at the preschool level. They claimed that they needed clear guidelines from the MOE. Teachers also expected the MOE could observe the real situation at schools and broadly expose IE to all teachers, parents and society.

<b>Extract 95: The roles of MOE- P6 interview extract</b>
<i>"Not enough exposure about IE. Not everybody knows about IE. There should be more exposure about this, not even preschool teachers, not even SE teachers unless those who have children with SEN. They don't know different categories of SEN." (L49)</i>
<b>Extract 96: The roles of MOE- P12 interview extract</b>
<i>"The problem now is that teachers have no black and white about IE, about lesson plan." (L49)</i>
<b>Extract 97: The roles of MOE- P3 interview extract</b>
<i>"The government should come down and observe the situation at schools so that they can fully understand and find solutions." (L49)</i>
<b>Extract 98: The roles of MOE- P9 interview extract</b>
<i>"The government needs to play its roles by involving more parties for examples religious academics, leaders and mass media to educate the society about SEN and IE. We as teachers, we tried our best at the school level. However, for the outside world, that is the responsibility of the government." (L49)</i>

#### 7.3.3.2 School ethos

This category refers to school ethos and goals which potentially influence teachers' attitude. Some schools were too exam oriented and desired to achieve cluster school status. Whereas there were schools which practised caring culture within the school community. All of these elements would determine the acceptance of children with SEN in the mainstream classrooms.

**Extract 99: School culture- P1 interview extract.**

*“Nowadays, school administration and teachers are working just for Key Performance Index (KPI). If in primary schools, the number of pupils achieved 7As in UPSR are being prioritised. If I told them that this one particular child who still did not know ABC, they would say “we cannot cater for all”. So every time they did workshops, they would just focusing on those who were already good but sorry to say the school would not give focus on “those children”. (L25)*

**Extract 100: School culture- P4 interview extract.**

*“Slow learners children would influence the national examination results which would affect the ‘cluster school status’. That’s why the principal seemed a bit negative towards them. This is because it’s very hard to achieve the status, maintaining the status would be much harder. So, better place the children with SEN to SE schools or other schools”. (L25)*

**Extract 101: School culture- P2 interview extract.**

*“Within the preschool education curriculum, caring culture is embedded. It’s in the syllabus. So, we practised the caring culture amongst all school children in the school. If we don’t practise it, it would be difficult to handle the children. Thus by inculcating the caring culture we would treat them as our own child and the children would treat each other as siblings. This would help our teaching and learning process.” (L25)*

**7.3.3.3 IE as a policy**

This category relates to the top down approach, in this case, the dissemination of information on IE to all preschool teachers. Some teachers claimed that they did not receive sufficient information about IE. They expected that the MOE were not only provided them the basic information about IE but also proper guidelines on the implementation IE at the preschool level.

**Extract 102: IE as a policy- P1 interview extract.**

*“Frankly, the first time I heard the word IE was when you came to do your questionnaire, before this I did not know that it existed. I know that there are children who are like this but I was not aware of this policy or the existence to include them in. As far as I am concern, this is Special Education, special school but I don’t know that IE is a policy. Only after you came to give me the questionnaire. Really? They want to do this? I have to be totally disagree on this. Nowadays the school system is very demanding.”(L35)*

**Extract 103: IE as policy- P11 interview extract.**

*"We don't have proper exposure. We are lacking at that part. Although I can be efficient by looking for the information by my own, however, we need proper training, proper guidelines and proper exposure about children with SEN. All teachers in the mainstream classrooms should have the exposure."(L35)*

**7.3.3.4 Roles as teachers**

This category relates to the responsibility of a teacher in implementing the IE policy. It includes required responsibilities that preschool teachers need in order to manage children with SEN in mainstream classrooms. IE is seen as an extra workload to the preschool teachers and their teaching assistants, therefore, some teachers felt that they should receive allowances as same as SE teachers and their teaching assistants.

**Extract 104: P4 interview's extract.**

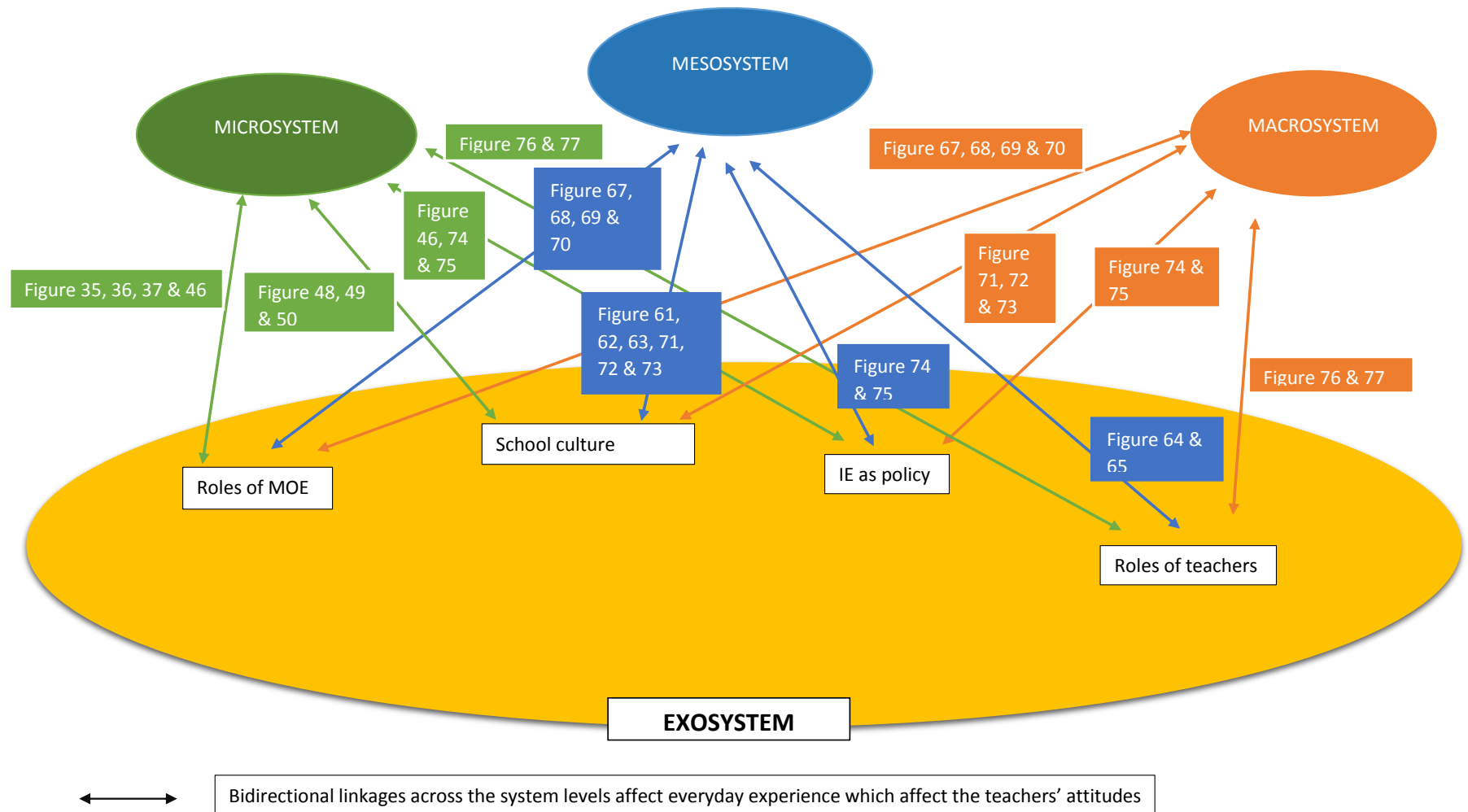
*"I will ensure that the child received his rights to education. He won't be ignored." (L56)*

**Extract 105: P4 interview's extract.**

*"The first thing is, what about the allowance? Preschool teachers and teaching assistant should get allowances because we have extra workload too." (L56)*



**Figure 38.** Summary diagram of the interactions between influences across systems following examination of the key factors present in the Exosystem



### 7.3.4 Macrosystem

The macrosystem provides a larger view on teachers' attitudes. It is noticeable that in the context of Malaysia, IE is viewed differently because of the differences in the socio-economic context, school system, perception of education and societal expectations. The differences in perceptions situation could lead to different interpretations and adaptations of IE, which could only be understood by the people operating in the particular setting. The elements of values and religious beliefs are worth to be taken into consideration particularly in Malaysia (context of the study).

#### 7.3.4.1 Values

This category relates to the influence of culture and values that possibly influence teachers' attitude towards IE. Although Malaysians are from different races and ethnics where everyone is brought up differently based on his or her own culture and set of beliefs. Despite these differences they are respectful to each other. Some teachers believed that being human, understanding, patience, passionate, sensitive, helpful and kind are important values that every preschool teachers should possess. In the context of IE, the concept of accepting all children of who they are, not what they are means that teachers are not only acknowledging individual differences but also recognising every individual's potential that need to be developed.

<b>Extract 106: Culture &amp; values- P6 interview's extract.</b>
<i>"Yes. Values influence the way we look at things. The children also look at us. All these will influence us. If we instil bad moral values, how can they respect us as their teacher? They are just children. Even though sometimes we get angry at them, we still have to educate them."</i> (L51)
<b>Extract 107: Culture &amp; values- P12 interview's extract.</b>
<i>"Even though we don't have the background knowledge, we must be caring, concerned and sensitive to situations. Think positive and always think of giving the best to them. School is their only chance."</i> (L51)

#### 7.3.4.2 Religious beliefs

This category relates to religious beliefs that one holds where all religions teach about good deeds. As Malaysia is a diverse country with different kind of religions such as Islam, Buddhist, Hindu, Christianity, Taoism and many others, they have their own relationships with their own God and their faith are so strong. Even so, they are respectful to each other. In relation to this category, it is about God's creations, fate and that everything happens for a reason. They also believed in accomplishing good deeds and the rewards in the hereafter life potentially influence how he or she perceived IE.

**Extract 108: P2 interview's extract.**

*"I think all those are the gifts from God. There is none of His creation dishonourable. So I think everyone of us are all perfect, children with SEN are also perfect. It is just how we manage and care for them for their future." (L56)*

**Extract 109: P9 interview's extract.**

*"As a preschool teacher, I believe that this is my fate, so I should be prepared. We will get the rewards in hereafter life. If we hold on to that beliefs, we would do our best and of course we would definitely accept the child with SEN. When we are positive, we can influence other to be positive too." (L56)*

**7.3.4.3 Knowledge**

This category refers to knowledge, information and explanation through mass media that help to extensively expose society about the children with SEN. Teachers believed that the academic background of a person also would potentially help him or her to be understanding towards IE. Following that, society should be more open-minded in accepting the children with SEN.

**Extract 110: P13 interview's extract.**

*"For me the level of education will determine ones thinking. Those who are exposed or read or have children with SEN would be more sensitive." (L56)*

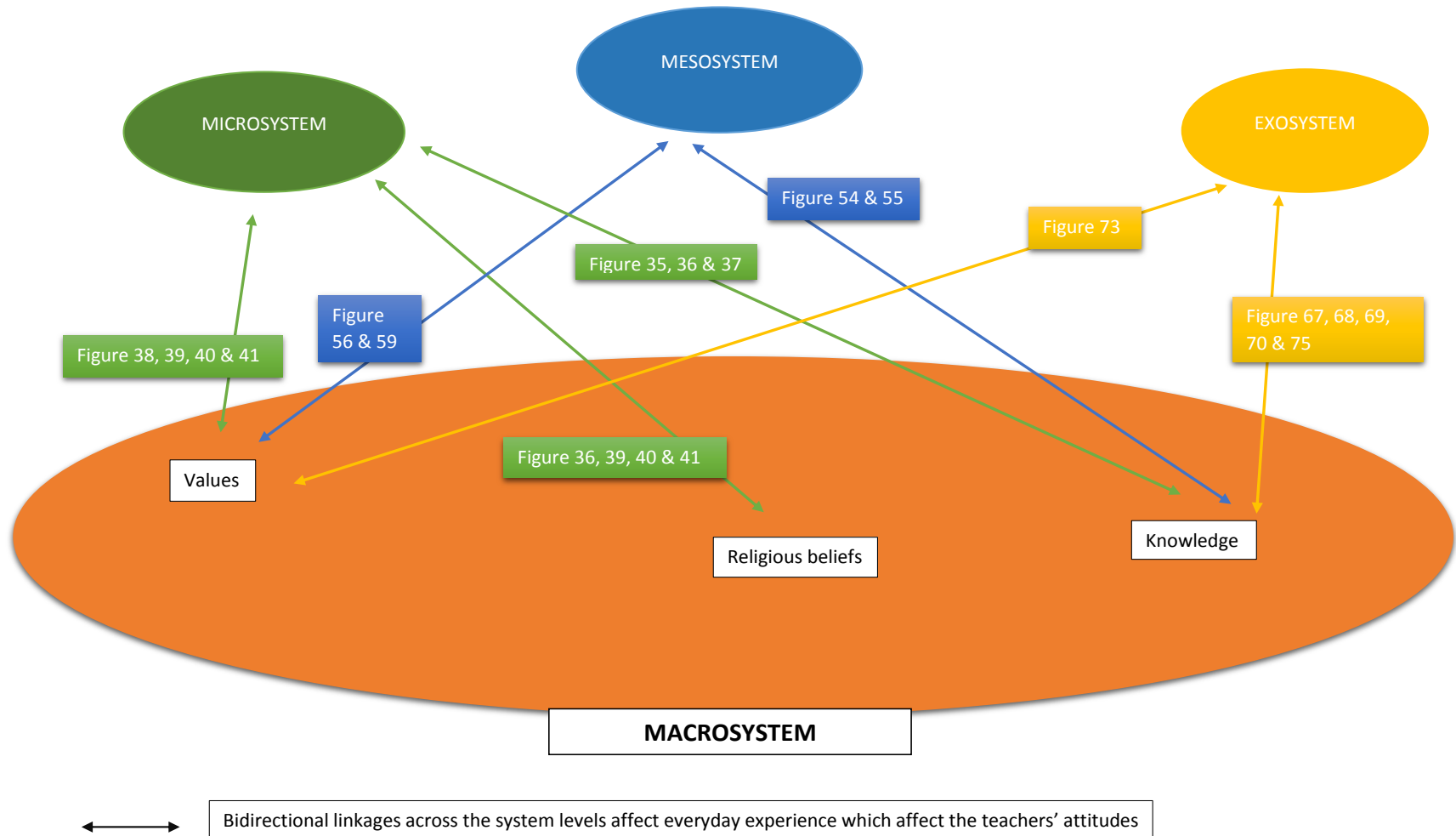
**Extract 111: P7 interview's extract.**

*"Not everybody can accept. I have heard some parents commented that it is good to send the child with SEN to SE class. They are not open minded. Some teachers also have the same feeling. Teachers' attitude need to be changed." (L56)*

**Extract 112: P4 interview's extract.**

*"One can understand children with SEN because of knowledge. That's why some teachers can accept them, and vice versa. Previously, I was a bit negative towards them but after a while I'm more positive. Just make sure, the facilities, children's ratio and teachers' knowledge are provided." (L56)*

**Figure 39.** Summary diagram of the interaction between influences across systems following examination of the key factors in the Macrosystem



## 7.4 Changes That Need To Be Taken Considerations

Following open-ended questions, similar questions were posed during the interview session. The purpose was to provide continuation on the proposed changes that were suggested prior to responses in open-ended questions. The physical infrastructure and facilities remained as the main issue. Teachers also concerned about the collaboration between agencies as well as an awareness about IE and SEN amongst society.

### 7.4.1 Infrastructure

This category relates to changes that the MOE required to focus on particularly in terms of physical facilities and physical layout of classrooms and schools. Teachers expressed their concern on the general facilities such as ramps and proper toilets as well as the suitability of the furniture in the classrooms. They also highlighted the appropriateness of partitions and windows which they considered as dangerous.

<b>Extract 113: P2 interview extract.</b>
<i>“From the physical aspect, those with physical disabilities need to be provided with suitable chair so that they wouldn’t fall down i.e. a chair with handles. We need to change according to the children’s needs.” (L42)</i>
<b>Extract 114: P3 interview extract.</b>
<i>“Our schools has so many windows and partitions. Not suitable. Once one of my children fell in between the partition and I didn’t notice him.” (L42)</i>
<b>Extract 115: P10 interview extract.</b>
<i>“The facilities in this school need to be restructured. How about those who are on the wheelchairs? The toilets are not suitable. There is lack of space in the classroom.” (L42)</i>

### 7.4.2 Collaboration

This category refers to changes in collaboration with other ministries to further strengthen the effectiveness of IE in Malaysia. The interaction between the agencies involves collaboration and co-operation amongst agencies such as the MOH, the MWFC and the Ministry of Communication and Multimedia (not just focusing on the MOE) for the betterment of children with SEN at large.

<b>Extract 116: P1 interview extract.</b>
<i>“If I am not mistaken, there is a collaboration between the Ministry of Women, Family &amp; Community Development with other ministry. I couldn’t remember. I think three ministries joint together but it does not happened in practical.” (L44)</i>

**Extract 117: P2 interview extract.**

*"I think schools are responsible to explain to parents about IE. Teachers can collaborate with the parents not only in academic aspect but also in terms of skills and personality. Don't just rely on schools, because we just with the children for a few hours only, the children spend more time with their parents." (L44)*

**Extract 118: P2 interview extract.**

*"There's no collaboration. If we want to make this happened, we need to collaborate with the specialists. Provide one hour slot of therapy per week" (L44)*

**7.4.3 Awareness on SEN**

This category refers to the awareness and sensitivity of every society member in terms of children with SEN, IE and SE. This is because many of them were unaware of the existence of the children with SEN and IE. Thus, by providing information, exposure could help to reduce stigmatisation and discrimination towards the children with SEN in general.

**Extract 119: P1 interview extract.**

*"Give them (society) awareness so that we know what to do and what to expect. They have to accept them" (L44)*

**Extract 120: P9 interview extract.**

*"As a teacher, we have to have a knowledge. Of course we learned about it during our degree courses but we need knowledge that can be applied, skills." (L44)*

**Extract 121: P17 interview extract.**

*"We need to change and sacrifice. As a teacher, I need to be aware. Exposure and understanding about the children with SEN would change the society's attitude. It starts from school, the government needs to consider the teachers' needs so that they can change their perception towards the children with SEN. If we have the knowledge, God willing, we can do this."*

**7.4.4 Classroom environment**

This category refers to changes in the classroom environment which need to be taken into account before implementing IE. The effectiveness of inclusive classroom practice potentially determined by teaching materials, resource teachers, number of children per classroom as well as other required support.

**Extract 122: P10 interview extract.**

*"I agree with IE with help of resource teachers because I don't have knowledge about SE, so I couldn't help much." (L44)*

<b>Extract 123: P6 interview extract.</b>
<i>"I think one of the biggest challenge is the number of children, reduce the number of children and provide teaching assistant." (L44)</i>
<b>Extract 124: P18 interview extract.</b>
<i>"In terms of teaching materials, we should look at the level of the children. Their teaching materials are different." (L44)</i>

## 7.5 Summary of Findings for Semi-Structured Interview Data

The analysis is divided into three parts. The first part is the attitude components and its relations to participants' beliefs and practices. The second part is the ecological system which influence teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE. Finally, the third part is the proposed changes in the classroom and school environment as well as society.

Based on the analysis, IE involves welcoming and supporting the children with SEN within their schools and also within the society. Preschool teachers are expected to profess themselves as inclusive educators and to support different learning needs for all children in their classroom including the children with SEN. Teachers' capabilities in managing these challenging situation appeared overwhelmingly beyond teachers' beliefs and practices. The analysis of respondents' responses showed that the three components including cognitive, behavioural and affective are interrelated as shown in the diagram (see Figure 35).

In the cognitive component, in terms of beliefs and practices, it involves early identification, concept of IE as well as giving extra attention. Whereas in terms of practice, it involves training and catering different needs. Surprisingly, LINUS programme seemed as a hindrance in implementing IE. Participants perceived themselves as having an extra role to play in diagnosing any SEN faced by the children. They felt responsible in identifying children with SEN and at the same time they faced dilemma to inform parents about the 'identified' children.

Following that, in terms of behavioural component, they believed that they have to adapt their teaching practice. They preferred personal teaching or one to one teaching by giving extra attention to the children with SEN. This is because they felt that children with SEN should be treated in a 'special' way with certain teaching pedagogy such as different teaching strategies, appropriateness of time allocation, teaching materials and facilities as well as safety and location. With relation to the affective component, many teachers believed that the children with SEN were the responsibility of SE teachers. Participants seemed to believe that the different types of SEN would influence their attitudes towards IE. In other words, the reactions towards

the children potentially determined their readiness in accepting these children in their classroom. They also believed that children with SEN should be getting equal opportunities by developing their social skills before facing the real world. Therefore the support from parents, society, school administration and other teachers were equally important in influencing teachers' attitudes towards IE.

The bidirectional interactions within the ecological system of a teacher were potentially influenced his/her attitude towards IE. The interactions that involved in the inclusive classroom required knowledge and skills as well as support from all parties such as other teachers, specialists, parents, school administration, policy maker and also from society at large. Thus, by giving the opportunity or the voice to teachers will help to inform the policy makers on the teachers' beliefs and needs before implementing IE at the preschool level.

Based on Figure 36, 37, 38 and 39, the focus will be emphasised on each system in order to look further details in the interaction that happened within the system. In the microsystem; training, personal commitment, infrastructure needs, benefits of IE, types and level of severity of SEN seemed to be the factors that influenced teachers' attitude towards the introduction of IE. In the mesosystem; collaborations with specialists and support from parents, principals, SE teachers and other teachers as well as SES background influenced teachers' attitudes. Therefore, exposure, knowledge, experience and support by all parties (relationship with principals, other teachers, specialists, SE teachers and parents) need to be taken into considerations before embarking IE.

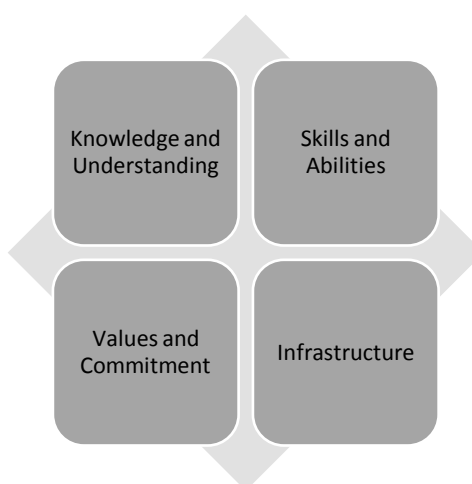
Whereas, in the exosystem; roles of the MOE, school culture, teachers as well IE as a policy influenced teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE at the preschool level. The participants were seen to be dissatisfied with the MOE approach in introducing IE at the preschool level. They claimed that they were not clear with the guidelines and that they needed sufficient information about IE. Whereas some school ethos were seen as tolerable in accepting the children with SEN. However, some schools were seen as a bit reluctant because IE policy may increase the workload of the teachers and teaching assistants.

Finally at the macrosystem level; values, religious beliefs and knowledge are the factors that might influence teachers' attitudes. In this study, values and religious beliefs play important roles in shaping teachers' attitude. Interestingly, even though Malaysia is a diverse country with different kind of religions and races, their relationships with their own God and their faith is so strong and yet they are respectful to each other. Thus culture and values of a person as well as knowledge and understanding about IE might help society to be more understanding and accepting towards the children with SEN.



Teachers in this study proposed several changes in terms of infrastructure, communication, society's awareness on SEN and classroom environment which need to be taken into considerations. However, all these might take some time to improve. By giving continuous support, exposure and knowledge as well as skills will help everybody to understand children with SEN and accepting them in the society. Ultimately, knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities, values and commitment as well as infrastructure might help in providing the framework for teacher education specifically for pre-service preschool teachers. This framework may also support in-service preschool teachers and inform the policy makers about the current situation faced by the preschool teachers. Thus, involving preschool teachers to a greater extent in policy making and more participation by all parties might help IE to be more effective and successful (see Figure 40).

**Figure 40.** Framework for supporting preschool teachers for IE



## **7.6 Summary of Findings for Quantitative and Qualitative Data in relation to RQ 1, 2 and 3.**

The study about teachers' attitudes towards IE has been well documented in the literature for example, Avramidis and Norwich (2002); Forlin et al., (2008) and Swain et al., (2012) but there remain few accounts of the content addressing the preschool teachers attitudes in particular with IE at the preschool level and this study has made a significant addition to an overlooked field.

In summary, for the quantitative analysis, the mean scores of the three-component of attitude suggested that the respondents in this study were generally prepared in terms of cognitive, affective and behavioural towards the introduction of IE in Malaysia. This means that the

cognitive, affective and behavioural were interrelated in which they could affect ones' thinking, feeling and actions towards IE.

As for the qualitative analysis, the findings for the open-ended question 1 demonstrated that teachers needed to be provided with the knowledge, skills and training or professional development that will enable them to teach children with different abilities. All these elements will prepare teachers to embark on IE particularly in their dedication and commitment (teachers' attributes) to accept children with SEN and to celebrate diversity in mainstream classrooms. Whereas the findings for the open-ended question 2, 3 and 4 demonstrated that inclusion of children with disabilities involved welcoming and supporting them within their schools by identifying and addressing barriers in the environment, organisation within teaching and learning and in the communication and attitude of teachers, parents, schools and society. Thus these barriers need to be addressed through structural changes (classroom layout, building infrastructure), class size, training, accessible materials and communications, sufficient support and facilities.

The analysis of the interview data indicated that the three components: cognitive, behavioural and affective are interrelated. In the cognitive component, in terms of beliefs, it involves early identification, understanding the concept of IE as well as giving extra attention. Whereas in terms of practice, it involves training, catering for different needs and surprisingly the LINUS programme seemed as a hindrance on the IE implementation. In terms of behavioural component, they believed that they have to adapt their teaching practice because they felt that children with SEN need to be treated in a special way with a certain teaching pedagogy including the teaching strategies, appropriateness of time allocation, teaching materials and facilities as well as safety and location. In terms of affective component, teachers seemed to believe that the different types of SEN would influence their attitudes towards IE. In other words, the reactions towards the children may determine their readiness in accepting them in their classroom.

The bidirectional interactions within the ecological system of a teacher have potentially influenced his/her attitude towards IE. The findings showed that in the microsystem, training, personal commitment, infrastructure needs, benefits of IE, types and level of severity of SEN seemed to be the factors that might influence the participants' attitude towards the introduction of IE. On the other hand, in the mesosystem, collaborations with specialists and support from parents, principals, SE teachers and other teachers may influence the participants' attitudes. Whereas, in the exosystem, roles of MOE, school culture, roles of teachers as well as roles of IE as a policy might influence the teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE at the preschool level. Finally at the macrosystem level, values, religious beliefs and knowledge are

the factors that might influence the teachers' attitudes. Values and religious beliefs play an important role in shaping the teachers' attitude.

Drawing the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data, Chapter Eight will provide a thorough discussion with the support from relevant literature review based on the key findings from the survey, open-ended questions and semi-structured interview will be highlighted and further explained based on the theoretical framework.

## **Chapter Eight: Discussion**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the significance of the main findings presented in the previous chapter and to relate them to the existing literature in the field. The aims of the research were to explore the preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE at the preschool level. A mixed-method approach to the data collection was adopted to investigate the general attitude of the preschool teachers towards IE and the factors which contribute to teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysia. In total, 421 respondents completed the questionnaire and 18 interviews were conducted.

This chapter will be divided into four main sections addressing the research questions of this study. I will discuss findings in the light of theoretical framework of attitude model and ecological system which I adopted throughout this study. These frameworks remain useful in building a bridge between the psychological and sociological aspects on the interactions which appeared to influence the teachers' attitudes towards IE. Moreover, these frameworks allow a discussion along with the results from the survey as well as the interviews. Other findings which are not fit in the framework will also be identified.

In section 8.2, Preschool teachers general attitudes within the three-component model, will explore the teachers' attitudes based on cognitive, affective and behavioural components. In section 8.3, Factors influenced the preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE, will be discussed within the ecological system. In section 8.4, Limitations of the study will deliberate the constraints which occurred throughout this study. Finally in section 8.5, Contributions of the study will highlight the impact of the study.

### **8.2 The Preschool Teachers General Attitude within the Three-Component Model**

The concept of IE can be seen as welcoming and educating all children by removing discrimination and segregation 'regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional or other conditions' (UNESCO, 1994). For IE policy, the regular schools are expected to accommodate the different needs of the children. Attitudinal barriers are often reported as the common factor which influence the success of the implementation of IE (Barnes 1999; Beattie et al., 1997; Mintz 2007). According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993) and Triandis (1971), attitudes comprise of three interrelated yet distinct components: cognitive, affective and behavioural. In this study, the data generated from both quantitative and qualitative study provide insights and

in-depth understanding of the teachers' attitudes by exploring the cognitive, affective and behavioural component of attitude.

### **8.2.1 Cognitive component of attitude**

The data relating to the cognitive component generally indicated that teachers understood the concept of IE as being able to identify children with SEN. Teachers were expected to spend extra time and give more attention to the children with SEN. However, teachers seemed doubtful in the implementation of IE. This is because they had no knowledge of SEN and IE as well as no training and experience in catering for different needs of children with SEN in the mainstream classroom. Based on the interviews, the participants reported feeling underprepared to work with the children with SEN. They believed that as preschool teachers they were responsible for detecting any special needs a child may have (see section 6.3.4 and 7.2.1.3). To some extent, teachers felt that they were the one who should be able to sense or identify that something was not typical in terms of cognitive, physical, emotional and behavioural of the children because some parents might not realise any weaknesses of their own children.

From the interview, the participants also felt that the task of differentiating classroom activity for the children was overwhelming and this responsibility went beyond their capacity as a preschool teacher. Instead, they needed more knowledge and skills or training which would demand more time and workload on them (see section 7.2.2.6). Simultaneously, this situation would create unbalanced classroom dynamic as typically developing children would feel ignored by their teachers. The teachers also expressed concerns on the appropriate types of approaches in the inclusive classroom. This data was supported by the results in the survey which indicated that 97% of the respondents thought that the children with SEN were better served in a separate or special classroom. They also believed that the children with SEN would probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom than in a mainstream classroom (82.2%). This data demonstrated that many participants did not fully understand the concept of IE because lack of exposure and knowledge about IE.

Thus the concept of IE and the shift to the implementation of IE demand many challenges for the preschool teachers. Razali et al. (2013), argued that IE in Malaysia was not yet fully implemented as it was exclusively focused on primary and secondary school levels. Wang (2008) also agreed that IE in Malaysia was still new, that teachers have been overwhelmed by the shifts towards IE as they face a new challenge in assuming new roles and responsibilities. The findings were replicated by Ali et al., (2006) and Toran et al., (2010) who suggested that teachers' over whelming responses could be resulted with the limited exposure and training in SE. This is reflected in the interview findings where the participants felt that they should receive

training or courses before implementing IE particularly in terms of knowledge and skills in managing inclusive classroom. They also felt that they should receive early exposures about the children with SEN particularly in catering different needs for different types of SEN (see section 7.2.1.1). Tangen and Beutel (2017) suggested that teachers need time and practical experience to develop their ideas about IE; which indicate that they needed to be placed in classrooms where exemplary inclusive teaching occurred to learn from experienced teachers. This issue needs to be highlighted so that MOE could be informed and prepared before implementing IE.

One interesting finding in this study was that some teachers believed that the LINUS programme might pressure them in terms of its implementation. This is because LINUS programme requires high expectations from school administration as well as the MOE. Teachers were expected to fulfil the MOE's goal as well as the school administrations' target of 0% LINUS. Some teachers also emphasised that they could not handle IE programme as they have to give priority to LINUS programme. Six out of 18 teachers mentioned that the LINUS programme might hinder the implementation of IE. Five of these teachers were from cluster schools (high performance schools) expected to achieve 0% LINUS by their school administration in order to maintain their cluster school status.

Based on the preschool context, it is better if the children with SEN to receive educational support earlier so that they will be more successful in their schooling in later years. Sucuoglu et al., (2013), suggested that early intervention should be prioritized by including inclusive strategies at the preschool level (3-6 years old) to assist children in earlier life. Thus the responsibility to detect any atypical of the children should not be addressed to preschool teachers only but also the parents, school administration as well as specialists. Exposures and knowledge about SEN are essential in creating awareness about the individual differences and catering for their needs.

### **8.2.2 Affective component of attitude**

Knowledge and experience of different types of SEN may influence the teachers' acceptance of the children with SEN in their classroom. Some teachers seemed more welcoming towards children with learning difficulties and physical disabilities than the children who might disrupt classroom management for example those with ADHD or autism. However, overall, the results in the affective component showed indifferent reactions as the teachers seemed to accept both children with SEN (LD) and (EBD) in their classroom. This happened because the teachers did not have a choice to reject any children to enter their classroom.

Whilst further exploring the data, the quantitative analysis revealed that children with EBD were seen as causing more concern and stress to preschool teachers than children with LD. This result was supported by the interview as some teachers expressed their concern dealing with different types of SEN. They expressed their worry and concern in managing and teaching in the inclusive classroom as they seemed not fully understood about the different types of SEN. The data also suggested that teachers were not ready to have children with SEN specifically ADHD, autism or Down Syndromes as they might display disruptive behaviour. Based on the data, teachers seemed to expect the children with SEN to behave as typically developing children. This data suggested that teachers had not fully grasped the concept of IE.

These findings resonate with the findings by Cooper and Jacobs's (2011) study which reported that teachers appeared to experience significant difficulties with children with EBD in the classrooms. This study is also consistent with the study by Clough and Lindsay (2003) which indicated that majority of teachers surveyed ranked the needs of children with EBD as being the most difficult to meet, followed by children with LD and visual impairments.

On the other hand, there were some teachers who believed that IE can promote communication skills amongst the children with SEN in the mainstream classroom. This can also be supported in the quantitative result as 10 % of the respondents were totally agreed and another 40.6% of the respondents agreed that IE may promote their social independence which can prepare them to face the real world. Some respondents also believed in equal opportunity by getting fair treatment and rights to education as 60.8% of the respondents agreed that children with SEN should be given every opportunity to function in the general classroom setting where possible.

This study revealed a correlation between knowledge on types of SEN and SEN experience. This means that the knowledge on SEN may determine the teachers' classroom practice. This result is consistent with the result obtained by Ling et al., (2010) who found that knowledge and experience were correlated as teachers who had more knowledge about autism and had more work experience with children with autism showed less punitive intentions than teachers who had less experience working with children with autism and had less knowledge about autism. Thus, teachers' attitudes may depend on their personal experiences with children with SEN.

Support from parents, society, and school's administrations as well as other teachers were necessary for the teachers to be more effective in the inclusive classroom. Some teachers claimed that they did not receive sufficient support particularly from their school principals. This was because the school principals were too focused on the race to gain or maintain the cluster school status, giving more emphasis to the national exam (UPSR) and LINUS results. Some teachers specifically from schools without SEIP felt discouraged by the reactions they received

from their colleagues regarding the children with SEN. For example, one of the teachers reported that her colleagues did not support her when she tried to help the children with SEN. In contrast, some teachers particularly from SEIP schools claimed that they received support from SE teachers.

Consequently, the different types of SEN may influence the teachers' reactions towards the children of SEN which may determine their readiness in accepting them in the classroom. Some teachers were able to accept the children with SEN in their classroom as they realised the concept of equal opportunities and developing social skills. According to Bernard (1990), some mainstream teachers view the philosophy of IE as an exciting challenge where the stresses are seen as life-sustaining, enjoyable and beneficial. On the other hand, the experience can be challenging enough to cause teachers to become physiologically and psychologically stressed (Whiting and Young, 1996). In this study, IE is a challenge for the teachers, however getting the support from the parents, society, school administration and other teachers may shape the teachers' attitudes towards IE.

### **8.2.3 Behavioural component of attitude**

Brown et al. (1993), define teaching pedagogy as day-to-day 'craft knowledge' of ideas, routines and situations. Knowledge and competency, lesson planning, delivery, management as well as assessment are considered elements of teaching pedagogy in Malaysia (MOE, 2014). Thus as a preschool teacher, teaching pedagogy involves those element which makes teaching preschool children very exciting and satisfying yet exhausting and demanding. However, based on the findings, the teachers felt challenged having children with SEN in their classroom. This is reflected in the interview where some of the teachers believed that there should be different strategies for different types of SEN. Therefore the teachers seemed to perceive that there should be specific pedagogy regarding children with SEN in order to implement IE.

The results in this study showed that in terms of behavioural component, the teachers believed that they would have to adapt their teaching pedagogy and that it should be more on personal teaching or one to one teaching and extra attention should be given to the children with SEN. They also believed that children with SEN need to be treated in a special way with certain teaching pedagogy particularly in terms of teaching strategies, appropriateness of time allocation, teaching materials and facilities as well as safety and location. This notion is contested by Florian and Rouse (2009) who argued that rather than identifying and targeting specific groups of children in their pedagogical decision-making, the focus should be more towards what is generally available in classrooms. In other words children are all unique and



different, therefore, teachers need to cater these different needs regardless of whether they have been identified as having SEN or not.

The findings in the quantitative analysis showed that the teachers were willing to be trained (45%), and to develop their teaching (53%) and classroom management skills (57.3%) as well as change (77.5%) and assess their teaching practice (71.7%). They were also willing to be responsible within the whole school policy (44.7%) and co-operate with the parents for the benefits of children with SEN (68.4%). This shows that the teachers were really concerned about teaching pedagogy which resonate with Avramidis, et.al. (2000) who concluded that teacher training should be viewed as a potentially influence to the teachers' commitment toward implementing a successful IE. Teachers who were not exposed with children with SEN and who had never worked along with the children with SEN would develop anxiety due to not having sufficient training, facilities and important knowledge on SEN. Hemming and Woodcock (2011) argued that the capacity to cater for the educational needs of students with diverse needs and abilities and the feeling of underprepared may also contribute to the teachers' anxiety.

In the present study, only 16.9% of the teachers agreed with the idea of including children with SEN in the mainstream classroom. This result is consistent with their concern about managing an inclusive classroom along with the demands from the school and the MOE. In the preschool context, many teachers felt that they are facing increased pressure as their role has expanded and diversified (Avramidis et. al., 2000). Thus, in this case, teachers need to be able to adapt their teaching styles in order to cater different learning needs. Leung and Mak (2010) in their study reported similar findings with teachers commenting that they urgently required training in classroom management.

Teachers also reported that they needed suitable teaching aids which may assist their teaching for the children with SEN for example equipment that can develop motor, sensory and tactile skills. They also preferred the small number of children per classroom so that it will be easier for them to manage the classroom. In Malaysian preschool context, the standard number of children per classroom is 25 children. However, teachers felt that if the children with SEN to be included, the number of children in the inclusive classroom should be less than 25 children. Some participants even demanded that they would only accept one or two children with SEN per classroom assisted by SEN teaching assistant. They were also concerned with the classroom layout which needs to be considered particularly with children with physical disabilities or children with ADHD or unexpected disruptive behaviour of any children with SEN.

A small number of teachers revealed that they were able to adapt their teaching strategies despite not having proper training; however their strategies were more on keeping the children

with SEN occupied so that they would not disturb other children in the classroom rather than targeting their learning potentials. In addition, the safety issues were highlighted as they considered that their classrooms were not user friendly and unsuitable for children with SEN. For example, there were no ramps and proper toilets for children with physical disability. The teachers also reported that their full time-table hindered them to spend extra hours on the children with SEN.

Consequently, to address the pedagogy issues teachers need to change their beliefs and practices on IE. They need to think creatively and be fully equipped with knowledge and understanding of the concept of IE, skills and abilities as well as values and commitment. This is in line with Hunt and Goetz (1997) who stated that reconceptualization of teaching roles and responsibilities will enable collaborative team work for curriculum development and instruction. In other words, to embrace IE requires more opportunity for the teachers to take part in the decision-making and allowing oneself to continue learning as well as getting the support from the parents, schools, MOE and society at large.

#### **8.2.4 Summary of teachers' attitudes within the three-component of attitude**

Clearly the three components of attitudes namely cognitive, affective and behavioural are interconnected. What the teachers think (cognitive) may influence their feelings (affective) which may consequently have some impact on their reactions (behavioural) and the three components may influence each other. In this study, the preschool teachers attitudes towards the introduction of IE is seen as generally prepared although a study conducted by Bailey et al.,(2015) stated that Malaysian teachers do not feel ready for inclusion as articulated in their survey. It is revealed that teachers' attitudes need to be understood as well as explored and their voices should be heard not only by the policy makers but also everyone in the school community and society at large. Teachers also need time to change and develop their understanding on IE. Support in terms of skills and training, resources and facilities as well as knowledge and awareness about IE and children with SEN would help to facilitate changes and strengthen the teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE.

However, there is other finding which does not readily within the attitude model. Socio-economic status of the parents or the family may affect the teachers' attitude towards IE such as, the family income and the academic background of the parents. One of the teachers in the interview who was teaching in an estate (rural) school where majority of the parents were palm oil estate workers; claimed that many of the parents in estate schools were more focusing on surviving skills rather than achievement in academic skills. This condition of life prevented them to send their child with SEN to school. Due to this condition, the teacher seemed more focus

on the social well-being of the child rather than academic skills due to children's family circumstances. This discovery was captured outside the limit of the framework. Another teacher in one of the rural areas also claimed that the location of the SE school or school with SEIP was not only very far from their home and their low economic status (poverty) also unable them to send their child with SEN to school. The data showed that there are still marginalised community who is still fighting to survive rather than considering the rights of the children with SEN (see section 7.2.1.5).

On the other hand, this was not evident in those who came from semi-urban or urban areas, middle or higher income group as well as educated parents who realised their children's rights and IE. They were seen to be more participative and supportive towards their children who have SEN at school as they work collaboratively with the school for the benefits of their children by extending the support given at school to home environment. In alignment with Hornby (2000) who stated that teachers need to be able to provide parents with the support in terms of basic counselling and guidance regarding their children's learning and behaviour. Thus teachers need to be able to refer parents who need more intensive help to appropriate sources of support that are available in their communities.

### **8.3 Factors Influenced the Preschool Teachers' Attitudes toward the Introduction of IE in Malaysian Government Preschools**

The data yielded by this study provide convincing evidence that there are various factors which have influenced teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE in Malaysia. In addressing the second and the third research question, the ecological framework developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) is employed. The data suggests that the teachers' attitude is influenced by bidirectional interactions within the ecological system namely microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem which is conceived as a set of nested structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this section, the discussion will examine factors that influence teachers' attitudes.

#### **8.3.1 Microsystem**

The interactions within the ecological system particularly in the immediate situation in which teachers interact face to face within the classroom setting provides a useful information about their attitudes towards IE. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) the principle of interconnectedness is applied not only within the settings but with linkages between settings. In other words, the microsystem can be referred as the complex interrelations within the

immediate setting. In this case the immediate setting can be referred as the inclusive classroom setting.

The consensus view from both of the quantitative and qualitative data in this study seems to be that training should be taken into considerations before implementing IE at the preschool level as many teachers stressed that they felt under prepared and anxious whilst being generally accepting of IE. This is likely due to the lack of knowledge, skills and resources in the inclusive classrooms. This presents challenges to teachers who may need to have a different level of preparation and specialised lesson plans for children with SEN

Based on the survey, the respondents were willing to embrace IE, to be trained, developed teaching skills, developed classroom management skills, changed their teaching processes and assessed their teaching practice. In line with the interview data, the participants reported that they needed the training particularly in different teaching strategies, SEN management, knowledge and exposure on SEN, developing appropriate behaviour amongst children with SEN, differentiating the level of severity of SEN and managing inclusive classrooms. These results provide confirmatory evidence that many teachers resisted IE because of their lack of training (Heiman, 2001).

Research also shows that those with prior training in SE generally have a more positive attitude towards IE than those without (de Boer et al., 2011; Forlin et al., 2008). Similarly, this is reflected in the present qualitative data whereby teachers felt more prepared to support IE if they were given a proper training particularly in classroom management and pedagogy. The teachers also requested more exposures and specific courses concerning different types of SEN. This result is in line with the study by Tsakiridou and Polyzopoulou (2014) which revealed that teachers who have attended SE courses appeared to be more willing to accept children with SEN in regular classroom.

The next key finding which can be situated within the microsystem is teachers' teaching experience. The analysis showed that teachers from schools with SEIP appeared to be more willing to accept the children with SEN in the mainstream classroom. This is because the SEIP environment provided teachers with basic knowledge on teaching children with SEN. Some teachers claimed that the SE teachers should be more respected as they need to be very patient and well-trained to deal with the children of SEN. Therefore teaching experience is also one of the factors which influence the teachers' attitude whereby the greater experience they possess, they become more comfortable to accept the children with SEN in their classroom. This finding is consistent with Avramidis and Norwich (2002); Leyser et al., (1994) who argued that teachers with more experience teaching individuals with SEN had significantly more favourable attitudes towards IE than those with little and no experience.

The experience with contact also influenced the teachers' attitudes as the data showed that teachers who had unpleasant experience managing the children with SEN may result in having negative attitude towards them which may affect the classroom practice and vice versa. The data revealed that some teachers felt challenged to teach the children with SEN as they felt that they did not have the capacity to teach them. Some teachers claimed that they would do their best to keep the children with SEN occupied as long as they did not disturb the lesson (see section 7.2.3.5). This resonates the quantitative data whereby 142 out of 421 respondents disagreed with the statement "I will be supportive towards the idea of including children with SEN in my classroom". Therefore they felt that the children with SEN would be better served in the special education classrooms as they will be getting 'proper teaching', support and resources. By getting 'proper teaching' can be interpreted that the children with SEN should be taught by teachers who are trained in SE.

As mentioned by Burke and Sutherland (2004), teachers' concerns towards inclusion are not often based on ideological arguments but instead on pragmatic concerns of how IE can be implemented. This shows that the teachers seemed to be more concerned with the practicality such as pedagogy and classroom management as well as expecting that the children with SEN would behave as 'normal' as possible in order to be included in their mainstream classroom. The term 'normal' in the context of this study can be defined as the behaviour of the children with SEN which can be managed by the teacher in the mainstream classroom.

The data also revealed that teachers who had experience with children with SEN or perhaps had their own children or a relative with SEN seemed to have more empathy towards these children. Studies by Leyser and Lessen (1985); Shimman (1990), showed that contact with children with SEN, if carefully planned and supported, results in positive changes in teachers' attitudes. This is also replicated in the study by Forlin et al. (1999) who confirmed that teachers who had a more frequent contact with the people with disabilities have a more positive attitude towards inclusion than those who experienced little contact. This suggests that the minimal or no contact experience with the children with SEN may create anxiety among these teachers as how to respond to their needs in their classroom. The feeling of the fear of the unknown undoubtedly influence the teachers' attitude towards the introduction of IE at the preschool level.

The types and levels of SEN are also reported to influence the teachers' reactions and reinforced their feelings towards children with SEN which would shape the attitudes. The quantitative data in this study showed that the children with EBD such as ADHD and autism were seen to cause more concern and stress to teachers than the children with LD. This finding is supported by the research by Ellins and Porter (2005) which claimed that the type

and severity of a child's disability impacts teachers' attitudes towards IE. This shows that teachers' attitudes may depend on the types of SEN. As demonstrated in the findings of this study, teachers are more negative towards IE of children with EBD due to teachers' self-confidence and their beliefs in their ability to deal with such children in their classrooms.

The data also highlighted that the knowledge of IE is still lacking and the benefit of IE is interpreted differently by teachers. The findings showed that only 5.5% of the teachers totally agreed and 29.6% of the teachers agreed that the inclusion of children with SEN can be beneficial for typically developing children. This is because some of these teachers perceived that IE would benefit the children with SEN and typically developing children. However, other teachers believed that the children with SEN should be separated so that they will get more access to resources and facilities which will benefit them. This can be supported from the data gathered in this study that 66.3% of the teachers are totally agreed and 31.6% agreed that the needs of children with SEN are best served through special or separate class. Agbenyega, (2011), Gyimah, (2010) and Kuyini and Desai (2007) who reported that many teachers viewed IE do not always benefit the children with SEN which also reflected from the findings in this study. This is because the lack of information on IE formed different interpretation as described by Armstrong et al., (2011) that the concept of IE can be fairly narrow (disabilities) or very broad (includes everyone). This may influence different beliefs and practice of IE which reflected in some of the teachers who viewed IE as not beneficial to the children with SEN. The teachers also seemed unsure on delivering the concept of IE as they seemed to ground IE on the medical model perspectives which stressed the impairment and ignored the impact of environmental factors (Lindsay, 2003).

Teachers were also concerned about the social well-being of the children with SEN. This may be one of the factors that influence the teachers' attitudes. Firstly, the issue of bullying which might occur; whereby 2.4% of the teachers totally agreed and 15.9% of the teachers agreed that the contact mainstream class children have with included children may be harmful for both parties. Although teachers agreed that these children should be included particularly in terms of socialising, typically developing children might feel left out and ignored as the teachers have to attend to the SEN children more frequently. This finding is echoed in the study by Alhassan (2014) who reported that children with SEN would pose a problem to effective teaching because they take a lot of time and that is unfair for typically developing children.

Secondly, based on the data gathered, the children with physical disability required infrastructure needs especially proper toilets and ramps which could be more accessible as the current school conditions seemed unfriendly to the children with SEN. This is because the findings in this study showed that teachers seemed to be concerned about the socio-emotional

of the children with SEN. The teachers stressed the need for resources and support to accommodate children with SEN in their classroom. The finding confirmed the previous research by Avramidis et al. (2000) who claimed that including children with SEN demand extra time, resources, personnel and co-operation within the school community.

Thirdly, another factor to make IE more successful is having an adequate space and equipment to the needs of all children (Odom and Wolery, 2003). This resonates the findings from this study and supported by the study by Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) who also reported that resources and personnel that were available in the classroom helped to influence their attitudes towards IE. Following this, appropriate planned activities for the children in the inclusive classroom should be met since the knowledge of the children's needs was an outward display of the teachers' attitudes towards IE (Leatherman and Niemeyer, 2005). Some of the teachers in this study even suggested to be paid extra allowance and requested for SEN teaching assistant.

Therefore, to minimize all of these concerns, knowledge about SEN and IE need to be increased so that these teachers can eliminate their negative perceptions towards the implementation of IE. In addition, resources, physical facilities and layout of the inclusive classroom should be addressed before implementing IE. Teachers should realise the diversity among children by not emphasising too much on academic performance but instead focusing on the learning process. In other words, teachers need to rethink the idea of not being capable to teach children with SEN which indicates accommodating and supporting each child in their classroom. According to UNESCO (2015), teachers are expected to be more effective if they are given the right context, with well-designed curricula and assessment strategies to improve teaching and learning.

### **8.3.2 Mesosystem**

The bidirectional interactions within the mesosystem require communication between the agencies involved in IE such as MOH and MWFC. This includes the interaction of the preschool teachers between other teachers, SE teachers, school principals, parents as well as specialists. The support in terms of expertise, motivation, facilities as well as financial and collaborations among all of agencies will influence the teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE at the preschool level. These interrelation settings where the teachers participated provide an opportunity for them to gain more experience which may not only affect their beliefs but also the practice of IE.

One of the factors that influence the teachers' attitudes is the support from SE teachers. In this case, SE teachers could offer advice and help to teachers in managing and teaching the

children with SEN. Preschool teachers could come and observe SE teachers teaching and perhaps co-teaching together. Mentoring is a useful way of providing the real teaching experience in order to create awareness about teaching children with SEN. To some extent this will not only increase their knowledge about the children with SEN but will also make them more informed about IE. Forlin and Chambers (2011) suggested that long-term support for teachers is specifically required for mentoring new teachers as well as providing continuous professional development. In alignment with the study on Australian teachers perceptions' on inclusion, Forlin et al., (2008) found that the teachers' professional competency was regarded as one the key issues in the implementation of IE and this issue is reflected in the data gathered.

The findings of this study revealed that the support from SE teachers is only limited to schools who have SEIP. Regrettably this support is not available to regular schools (without SEIP) as SE teachers only available in schools with SEIP. Thus, teachers from regular schools were unable to access and work with SE teachers unless they made their own effort to work with SE teachers from another schools. One of the participants even went abroad during school break on her own expenses to discover more about IE. There were also some teachers who sought help from friends or relatives working as SE teachers or specialists. These teachers could be labelled as 'super teacher' who made an effort beyond their capacities in order to fulfil the needs of the children with SEN by regularly communicating with parents, working collaboratively with the specialists and updating their professional skills (O'Rourke 2015).

In Malaysian context, SE teachers are trained specifically to support different types of SEN such as hearing impairment, visual impairment and learning difficulties. Implicitly, SE in Malaysia seemed to be focused on disabilities rather than abilities. Teachers who were trained to teach hearing impaired children possessed skills in sign language, meanwhile teachers who were qualified to teach visual impaired children were trained to use all visual impaired devices such as low vision magnifiers and braille equipment (Ahmad et al. 2011). Likewise, some teachers were trained to support children with LD such as dyslexia, Down Syndromes and mild autism. Nevertheless, sometimes mismatched in teaching options occurred as not all of them would be offered a placement based on their specific training.

The collaborations with specialists potentially influenced teachers' attitudes because their knowledge and experience particularly in therapy sessions can be shared with other teachers. This may enhance teachers' knowledge and help teachers to disseminate the information about SEN with parents. However, the number of specialists in Malaysia is still limited (Malaysian Education Blueprint, 2013) which currently one of the barriers for the effective IE. Based on Lee and Low (2014), the lack of allied health support services in schools has been a



major barrier to the full implementation of IE in Malaysia. Therefore in order to support IE, the government needs to increase the number of specialists by promoting specific courses in SEN for undergraduates for example speech therapy, music therapy, water therapy and play therapy.

Additionally, the support from parents is one of the key elements in the implementation of IE which potentially influenced teachers' attitudes IE. The relationship between parents and preschool teachers require strong partnership because any information should be shared as both parties need to work together in order to support the children with SEN. However, the data gathered in this study revealed that some parents did not co-operate with teachers. They would rather lay all the responsibilities to teachers to educate their children for reasons of lack of time and commitments. This creates tension among the teachers due to ineffective communication with parents that may affect teachers' attitudes towards IE. The miscommunication between parents and teachers happened when the teacher tried to explain about the child to the parents. Based on the data gathered, the parents did not seem to be co-operative which in turn, teachers felt unsupported (see section 7.2.2.5).

Another important relationship within the school community is the interaction between the school principals with teachers. The shared school vision and mission will determine the success of the school and its pupils, teachers and parents. Villa et al., (1996) indicated that the vision and the amount of support from school leaders is one of the most powerful predictors of mainstream teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion. In the context of Malaysia, some principals were trying to achieve cluster school status in order to gain higher school status and more autonomy. However, this created 'positive' pressures and stress to all teachers because they need to work hard to achieve the status. This concurs with Avramidis and Norwich (2002) who highlighted that the emphasis on subject matter (to increase grade level) is generally negatively influencing teachers' attitudes towards IE. In this study, the preschool teachers perceived IE as adding up the workload. This finding has been supported by Yuen et al. (2005) who found that many Hong Kong secondary teachers found children with SEN as additional burden and felt that they should not be included in their already stressful working environment. Likewise the LINUS programme also perceived as burdensome to some preschool teachers. Even though the screening test is done by Year 1 teachers, preschool teachers were responsible to ensure that all preschool children acquired Bahasa Malaysia, English Language and numeracy skills. The screening was not only testing the children's literacy acquisition, but also explicitly highlighted the overall performance of the preschool teachers.

Additionally, some of the principals were not really supportive towards the children with SEN which influence the teachers' attitudes towards IE. Even so, there were some principals who

were supportive to their teachers as they offered suggestions or at least words of encouragement. Nevertheless, there were also principals who neither supported nor encouraged their teachers as they asked teachers to seek out their own initiatives to help the children with SEN. In the context of Malaysia, the school principals are responsible not only to the MOE but also to children, teachers, parents and community. Thus as leaders, they need to find a balance between various groups' interests and views when dealing with school difficulties (Lindqvists et al., 2011). To some extent, the principals need to be able to work together by owning trustworthiness, active participation and being flexible in their leadership in order to support teachers. In other words, their understanding and views on IE might also help the success of IE.

Consequently, teachers' multi-dimensional interactions within the mesosystem yielded multiple reasons behind the teachers' attitudes towards IE which need to be informed and understood particularly by the policy makers. In order to shape teachers' attitudes, all of the factors stated above need to be taken into considerations. These factors may help to better understand any issues and challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of IE. The amount of support received from the people around the teachers are crucial in ensuring the success of IE implementation because every agency such as SE teachers, specialists, parents and the community should collaboratively work for the benefits of the children with SEN as well as typically developing children.

### **8.3.3 Exosystem**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) has defined an exosystem as part of the system where the developing person is not involved as an active participant but affects or is affected by what happens in the system in which events occur. In this study, the MOE as the policy maker utilised the top down approach to introduce IE at the preschool level. This is because the education system in Malaysia is centralised where the budget allocations within schools, student assessment and choice of textbooks are dictated from the MOE. The World Bank (2013) criticized this approach as one of the key constraints for improving the quality of basic education specifically pointing to a lack of autonomy and shortcomings in teacher training and recruitment. On the other hand, the Education for All National Review Report (UNESCO, 2015) reported that the administration of the entire education system under one ministry enabled the application of sector wide planning using a single budget framework, which will lead to more rational decision-making and increase harmonisation across different levels of education. Thus the top down approach has positively as well as negatively impacted on the implementation of many educational policies particularly IE which indirectly influence the teachers' attitudes.

There are many education policies in Malaysia such as 1 Student 1 Sport, MBMMBI (To uphold Bahasa Malaysia and to strengthen English Language Policy) and also programmes which are required to be implemented by schools and teachers such as NILAM (Intensive Reading Programme) and LINUS. Based on the data gathered, the preschool teachers seemed dissatisfied with the MOE's approach in introducing IE as they claimed that they needed proper guidelines. Even though IE Guidelines already existed, it was not distributed evenly amongst preschool teachers. They also insisted that the MOE could observe the real situation at schools by looking at the infrastructure and facilities as well as resources before implementing IE at the preschool level.

The teachers also addressed the barriers to be taken into considerations such as the organisation within the teaching and learning process, the modification of learning programmes, pedagogy, curricula and assessment as well as the attitudes of the teachers, parents, principals and society, structural changes, class size and training. However, one of the most fundamental tasks is the dissemination and interpretation of the policy which should be clearly defined and explained so that teachers could be helped to visualise as well as verbalise the objectives of IE. Therefore the exposure and understanding about IE and children with SEN should be the focus of IE rather than establishing a new approach in implementing IE.

School ethos in this context can be referred as the school goals and culture which potentially influence teachers' attitude. Schools which are too focused on examinations performance would put teachers in dilemma in order to cater for the needs of the children with SEN. Based on the data gathered (see section 7.2.1.1), it appeared that segregating children with SEN in the SEIP or SE classes might be the best option because they would receive better opportunity and privilege in terms of education and social benefits. This is in line with the study by Hodkinson and Devarkonda (2009) who stated that one of the major challenges in IE implementation was teachers' preparedness particularly teachers who were working in schools which adopted a policy of admission based on academic attainment. Following this, the children with SEN might face rejection from attending those particular schools as well as dealing with other issues such as bullying and labelling.

In the context of Malaysian national exams preparation namely UPSR, the schools gave more priority to the typically developing children than the children with SEN. Some would see the children with SEN, in particular children with LD as influencing the overall national examination results and this might affect the national school rank. The schools need to sustain good academic performance for three years consecutively in order to gain school autonomy. Maintaining the school status is crucial in order to receive RM 100,000.00 which is equivalent to £60,000.00 per year or the amount approved by the government (MOE, 2016). Therefore to

ensure the status and school autonomy, many felt that the children with SEN should be placed in SE classrooms where they might get better support in terms of other opportunities, skills and resources so that they would not be victimised within the mainstream education system.

On the other hand, from the data gathered, teachers who came from schools with SEIP were seen as more welcoming and positive with the children with SEN (see section 7.3.2). Even though they have neither experienced nor been in contact with the children with SEN in their own classroom, these teachers as well as typically developing children were exposed and aware of the existence of the children with SEN as they were integrated in the same school compound. The caring culture created in the schools with SEIP was largely influenced by the school ethos. The caring environment was practised amongst its members that the schools openly welcomed children's diversities. This is shown in some of the interviews where some teachers seemed to embrace children with SEN by treating both typically developing children and children with SEN to respect each other and accept each other's weaknesses and strengths. Some teachers claimed that embracing IE helped the teaching and learning process to be more effective by adapting materials and teaching strategies and simultaneously impacted both children with SEN and typically developing children. In other words, teachers' willingness and their own conceptualisation of IE appeared to overcome their lack of confidence, unpreparedness, limited resources and lack of training.

Due to many policies and programmes ran by the MOE, State Education Department, District Education Department and schools such as, school based assessment, Dual language programme, 1BestariNet, co-curricular activities, and Professional Community Learning that overlapping of instructions and too much paper work as well as lack of dissemination of information, put teachers in strenuous situations. Apart from teaching, teachers have to be responsible for several posts (minimum seven posts) per academic year such as class teacher, advisor for uniform bodies, advisor for sports, advisor for school clubs, committee members for 3K (cleanliness, cheerfulness and safety), Committee member for students welfare, Committee members for disciplinary board and Committee members for textbooks scheme. Some teachers claimed that they no longer enjoyed teaching as they have to do lots of filing, paper work and documentation which took away some of their teaching preparation time. As a result, from the data gathered, many teachers felt stressed and pressured because embracing IE as a policy might add to their workload (see section 7.3.1.5). Thus imposing fair workload distribution, creating harmonious atmosphere and fair promotion opportunity should reduce the teachers' stress level.

In addition, lack of knowledge and exposure on SEN, improper facilities and infrastructure became barriers in implementing IE. It can be deduced that the conceptualisation of IE seemed

to be linked with teachers' support towards this practice. This is confirmed by a study by Lalvani (2013) on teachers' beliefs of IE where many teachers supported IE as good practice for all students but the interpretations of 'all' seemed varied. In other words, the level of severity and types of SEN seemed to be debatable amongst teachers. Based on the data, some teachers expected from the children with SEN to be able to adapt with the mainstream classroom setting instead of them providing them inclusive setting (see section 7.3.1.3).

Based on the analysis, some of the teachers felt unable to cope with the demands and challenges as well as the expectations from different stakeholders specifically the parents of the children with SEN. Some teachers unconsciously practised IE by using differentiated learning instruction in order to cater for the different needs of the children. Interestingly, the term IE made them uncomfortable of their teaching and classroom management skills as they were uncertain with the concept of IE. Thus, IE should be clearly defined by policy makers in terms of teachers' roles, teaching skills and classroom management skills in order to ensure the success of IE at the preschool level (see section 7.2.3.1).

#### **8.3.4 Macrosystem**

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the macrosystem is the largest context where every society differs for various socioeconomic, ethnic, religious aspects which reflect contrasting belief system and lifestyles. Thus, while understanding the teachers' attitude, macrosystem would provide reasons and impact on the teachers. The interactions that happen within the system will influence each other particularly with the advancement of technology and social media. The sensitivities on certain issues manipulated by social media might impact on an individual such as the social issues i.e bullying, labelling and discrimination. This is agreed by both Lewthwaite (2011) and Stewart (2011) who indicated that the societal and cultural ideologies, practices, values, customs and laws have an impact on the individual.

Practising good moral values supports an individual and family as well as the community. Undeniably, labelling, stereotyping, racism, bigotry and many other sentiments exist everywhere therefore, the strong values and religious beliefs that one holds make us human. The data gathered demonstrates that the culture and values influenced the teachers' attitude towards the introduction of IE. This is demonstrated by teachers in this study who came from different races and religions. They universally claimed that the act of being understandable, kind, patience, passionate, helpful and tolerant seemed to be identified as the key elements of being a good human being. For example, the values of respecting the elders should be reciprocated by teachers respecting the children which reflected that understanding and practising good moral values play a powerful role in a person's life.

In the context of Malaysia, as a multi-racial country, every race have the right to practice its own religion such as Islam, Hindu, Taoist, Christianity etc. which teaches a good way of life. According to the Islamic, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity teachings, one needs to respect and support all human life and to value the potential of every individual. Interestingly, based on the data (despite the different races and religions), it can be concluded that teachers' beliefs in God appear to help them to sustain their teaching profession particularly having children with SEN in their classroom despite their realisation that they could not do much for the children with SEN. This is because they believed that whatever they have done will be rewarded by God in the hereafter life. They also believed that everything happened for a reason as well as accepting it as a fate and gift (the children with SEN) from God as none of His creation is dishonourable. This belief helps a person to be more responsible, accepting and be positive in life. Moreover, children with SEN are also part of society who have rights to participate fully and equally in all kinds of activities in life.

It is worth noted that as the majority of the teachers interviewed were Muslims, many gave their opinion based on the Islamic teaching. From the perspective of Islam, all human beings are equal as Islam promotes equality and mutual respect of human beings. Islam embraces every individual and every group with the same equality and warmth. It responds to the expectations and the needs of everyone in the same way which therefore including and supporting the people with disabilities is inevitable. Islam teaches everyone deserves love, care, and respect, regardless of his or her disabilities because what matters most is his or her heart and conduct. Therefore it is the duty and responsibility of everyone to serve the needs of others, and Islam opposes prejudice against and exclusion of any group of people. The Qur'an addresses all of humanity in this way:

*"O mankind, We created you from a single [pair] of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other [not that you may despise each other]. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is [he who is] the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted [with all things]" (49:13).*

In other words, all human beings are equal and that all human beings are created through the same process, not in a manner in which some are created better than others.

Furthermore, seeking knowledge is obligatory for both men and women as the purpose of education is an obligation to understand Islam and build a civilization and culture (Sri Wahyuningsih, 2016). Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in the hadith narrated by Muslim:

*"Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave". (HR Muslim)*

This is in line with UNESCO (2015) the Incheon Declaration stated that the new vision for education is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Thus education is the best starting point to promote a caring culture, tolerance and harmonious community. Through IE, children with SEN should be meeting all their needs in order to increase their ability to achieve academic and physical growth to their optimum potential as well as improving their overall quality of life and social status. However, Homby (2012) stated that whilst the children with SEN have a right to be included, they also have a right to receive an appropriate education which meets their specific needs. In other words, in the pursuit of reaching the 'ideal' inclusion, one question must not be overlooked as to whether that the children with SEN benefit from IE or they become more marginalised within the inclusion.

From the interview with teachers, it can be interpreted that society's knowledge about SEN and IE ultimately influence the teachers' attitudes. The support given by society towards children with SEN might shape the general attitudes towards disability through shared responsibilities. Consequently society's awareness, acceptance and involvement through networking or social activities will open doors for many opportunities and simultaneously optimise the potentials of the children with SEN. However, in reality, discrimination and stigmatization do exist, and therefore, eliminating negative perceptions towards disability in general and fully embracing IE is not an easy task and it might take time. Every agency has to take part so that the children with SEN should be getting education that they need and this is not solely the responsibility of the MOE, schools and teachers.

In addition, the teachers' willingness, determination, self-empathy and inner strengths which are influenced by their religious beliefs and moral values determine their choice in accepting and implementing IE. This is reflected by the qualitative data which revealed that the respondents also seemed to be aware of the introduction of IE as they reported that they might have to adapt with the changes in their teaching which reflected their dedication on accepting IE. This finding coincided with Booth and Dyssegaard (2008) who concluded that in education, an understanding of the values which give rise to our actions is essential if we are to do the right thing.

However, this finding contradicts with the study by Villa et al. (1996) who reported that teacher commitment often emerges at the end of the implementation cycle. A study by LeRoy and Simpson (1996) revealed that as teachers' experience with children with SEN increased, their confidence to teach these children also increased. On the contrary, a study by Tsakiridou and Polyzopoulou (2014) showed that in terms of readiness in implementing IE, the teachers rely on their experience and love for these children despite the lack of knowledge and training in

SEN. This is confirmed by this study that teachers' attributes influenced their attitudes towards IE.

In relation to the macrosystem, the values and religious beliefs as well as society at large have an impact on the teachers' attitudes. Thus by integrating and practising good values in life would build up a harmonious and just society. Although there are many different views of IE (privilege, compromise or social justice), one consensus that could be achieved from the data gathered is that majority of the teachers were willing to embark on IE provided that they acquired the knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities as well as values and commitment as portrayed in Figure 40.

### **8.3.5 Summary**

The factors influencing the teachers' attitude as discussed in this chapter have been framed within the ecology system of the teacher. Within the microsystem or inclusive classroom setting, factors such as training, level and types of SEN, experience with contact, teaching experience and knowledge about IE and SEN have indeed influenced the teachers' attitude. However, the intertwine interactions and relationship within this setting appeared to build up another issues. Issues of social-well-being of the children with SEN, physical layout of the classroom and school, space and equipment as well as resources have been raised by the teachers as barriers in effective implementation of IE. These barriers need to be addressed as they potentially may not only influence teachers' attitudes but also raise awareness to other agencies or providers such as policy makers, school administrations, parents, other teachers and specialists in order to improve the implementation of IE.

Within the mesosystem, the support from SE teachers, specialists, parents, principals and community are needed by preschool teachers. In other words, to meet the demand of the policy makers and ensure the success of IE, teachers need to be supported not only physical support, knowledge support, financial support but also moral support which may shape the teachers' attitudes. As in the exosystem, MOE as the policy maker should be able to effectively disseminate the policy by going down to the schools and able to work from bottom-up approach by involving teachers in the policy making. As for schools, heading towards inclusive schools require different approaches and changes in ethos. The Whole-school approach (Ainscow and Florek (1989) could be adopted whereby those within a school work effectively together.

Within the macrosystem, in terms of designing the IE policy, there are many different models of IE from developed countries such as US and European countries. However, Malaysia should be careful in choosing what is considered as 'the best practice' because the model might not



suit the country. Malaysia should instead mould its own IE policy by considering the socio-cultural context as well as utilising the existing facilities and resources. The IE guidelines prepared by the MOE should be well digested and systematically implemented by all teachers. Thus, professional development (pedagogical and classroom management skills, abilities and training) could be improved; information and the concept about IE and the children with SEN could be clearly defined and well informed as well as the values and commitment of every agency involved could be properly reinforced.

On the other hand, another finding which is covered within the framework has revealed that the teachers' personal attributes such as sympathetic, caring, positive, understanding and empathy are seemed to influence their attitudes towards IE. The teachers and their own attributes and characteristics are at the very centre of the model. All of these attributes may also influence the readiness to accept children with SEN in their classroom. This links to the idea that some teachers perceived IE as an opportunity to gain reward from God by giving their best service to the children with SEN. Despite lacking of knowledge and training; the teachers' dedication, passion and love for these children motivated them to fulfil the needs of the children with SEN which were reflected in their written feedback.

## **8.4 Limitations of the Research**

In evaluating this study, there are undeniably some limitations which need to be highlighted and discussed. Because of these limitations, results should be interpreted with caution. However, these limitations may provide insights for future research.

- a) Self-reported data inventory to measure preschool teachers' attitudes towards IE may have limited validity. Bias can occur whilst affecting participants' responses. For example, teachers' understanding and perceptions on the level or spectrum of 'learning difficulties' and 'emotional behavioural difficulties' may vary. Distractions may also influence any responses to the items because some participants may have felt to appear socially sensitive which conveyed more positive attitudes than what they believed. Therefore observing teachers' behaviours and reactions to the children with SEN in inclusive setting may provide better understanding of their attitudes towards IE.
- b) The sample of the data cannot be drawn for generalisation as this study only focused on one particular state in Malaysia. Some of the results are contextually based such as the LINUS programme that influences the teachers' attitudes is more relevant in the context of the Malaysian education system. It may not be applicable to other context or countries but the findings informed the policy makers about the teachers' view on the introduction of IE at the preschool level. Despite this, the study is more contextually

based, it is still relatable as it revealed some of the common factors which were in line with the literature that emerged from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data. The common results such as training, resources and support seemed to be relatable to other contexts both within and outside Malaysia.

- c) Due to the time limitation, the intended sequential mixed method design could not be executed. Instead, the concurrent mixed method design was the best choice at the point of time. Furthermore the distribution of the questionnaire by post was ineffective as the response rate was very disappointing. Therefore changing the approach by distributing the questionnaire during the teachers' workshops at the district level and collecting them back simultaneously proved to be the most effective way in getting back responses. In parallel, the interview session were set up after getting back the questionnaire based on voluntary basis. During the interview, the researcher went to 18 preschools in 10 districts rather than all preschools in one district. This has saved time and cost as the researcher could plan the interview sessions within the time limit (within three months). Moreover, the communication and public relation with the gatekeepers (i.e district education officers) seemed to be vital because getting mutual respect and understanding is one of the communication skills one needs to possess so that the data collection could be successfully done.
- d) The distribution of demographic characteristics of the respondents also limit the study. For example, in terms of gender, race and religion; majority of the respondents are female Malays and Muslims. This may become homogenized which may account for lack of differences between the groups in the sample. Furthermore, IE is still being piloted and presently it is not widely implemented at the preschool level. Although the sample size in this study is adequate for the statistical analysis, selecting participant from a larger heterogeneous sample may create even more variation in the teachers' attitudes and more statistical power and the ability to pick up effects in the data.
- e) The interviews were only limited to 18 volunteered participants out of 421 respondents (4%) which was a small proportion. Within three months of the data collection, distributing the questionnaire and at the same time setting up the interview session seemed to be challenging. As they were all preschool teachers, the interview session had to be done after the school hours. Therefore the maximum number for the interview was two sessions per day. There were also sessions which had to be done outside the school compound and during the weekend because interviewees did not have time to do it during the school days. Several interview sessions had to be cancelled and postponed because of certain reasons. Some interviews had to be done at the lake garden, public library and even in a mosque. The researcher also had to do two skype interviews and two telephone interviews because of the distance as

requested by the interviewees. Therefore the quality of some of the interviews was not as good because of the noise level from the surroundings as well as the interruptions from the environment during the interviews.

## 8.5 Contributions of the study

This research has investigated the general attitudes of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE at the preschool level. This study also looked into the factors which influence their attitudes. In this chapter, a number of key findings have been discussed based on the theoretical framework. The findings from this study shared some contributions towards welfare of the children with SEN, parents, teachers, school principals, policy makers as well as society. The contributions made by these findings are summarised as follows:

- a) The research demonstrated an overview of IE in general. It provides a clear description on the teachers' knowledge on IE and the children with SEN. Therefore it enhances understanding of the teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE. Even though there has been research on teachers' attitudes, this research has provided insights from the preschool teachers' point of view.
- b) The research also highlighted the teachers' needs and barriers which may affect the implementation of IE. For example the lack of knowledge and understanding about the children with SEN and IE, the lack of training or professional development on IE, the lack of support from the school administration, specialists and MOE, the lack of facilities and resources, the issues of number of children and safety.
- c) This research identified the factors that influence teachers' attitude towards IE. This is vital particularly to policy makers to view and understand from the teachers' perspectives by giving more thoughts before introducing any policy. This study reveals that too many programmes introduced by MOE, the state education department, the district education office as well as schools have created stress among teachers. This study also highlighted the schools' aim for getting cluster status also has impacted teachers' attitudes. For example, LINUS programme has shown to be one of the factors which influenced their attitudes towards IE.
- d) The research also highlighted different conceptualisation of IE and its interpretations which influence its practice. Although many teachers supported IE as a good practice for all children, the interpretations of 'all' seemed varied. The level of severity and types of SEN seemed to be their main concern as they did not have exposure and knowledge about the children with SEN. They expected the children with SEN to adapt with the setting of the mainstream classroom rather than to accommodate and attend

to the needs of the children with SEN. Therefore this study informs policy makers about teaching pedagogy or inclusive pedagogy which concerning mainstream teachers.

- e) Whilst the findings corroborated previous literature discussing the barriers in the implementation of IE, this research contributed an understanding of how teachers may in reality exercise a considerable degree of agency within the settings. In other words teachers in this study would find ways to help the children with SEN even though they did not have sufficient knowledge on IE and did not undergo any training. 'Unconscious' inclusive pedagogy by considering individual differences assisted the children with SEN in the mainstream classrooms. This study also provided the insights of personal commitment which helped them to embrace IE due to religious beliefs and moral values as well as caring culture practice.
- f) This study also highlighted the importance of society's awareness towards the children with SEN and IE. This is because the knowledge about IE and the children with SEN will increase the empathy, understanding and acceptance towards them. Experience with the children with SEN whether inside or outside school environment may provide more understanding toward these children. This may create more opportunities for them by giving access, equity, quality, unity and efficiency for IE implementation.
- g) Even though this research was mainly about the Malaysian context, it adds to cultural understanding of IE as a process related to structures and belief systems in a different and diverse context. By examining the teachers' attitudes towards IE, it will help to understand 'the story' behind their attitudes. Thus it contributes to the body of knowledge about IE from different perspectives which will enhance the knowledge in relation to preschool teachers' attitudes and IE.

## **Chapter Nine: Conclusion**

### **9.1 Introduction**

The research conducted was designed to generally inform the policy makers of preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE at the preschool level. This study sought to address and understand factors which influenced their attitudes towards IE. In section 9.2, the summary of the findings will be overviewed by highlighting the three-component model of attitude and ecological theory. This is followed by identifying some of the implications of the study. In section 9.3, some suggestions for future research which are based on the results of this study will be discussed in relation to the implication of the study. Finally in section 9.4 will capture the final thoughts about this study.

### **9.2 Implications of the Study**

The findings of this study seek to establish the implication on the stakeholders in the education system. The implications of this study will focus on three main levels namely; locally, nationally and internationally. Based on the framework, each agency involved in influencing the teachers' attitude will be taken into consideration.

Firstly, in terms of local or community level, this study highlights the opportunity for children with SEN in gaining access in education by being placed in the mainstream classrooms. As previously mentioned, the number of schools which having SEIP are limited. Therefore, through IE, children with SEN will have the opportunity for more accessibility and certainly will not be left behind. Their rights in getting the education from schools will not be denied particularly schools located in remote areas such as estate schools because logistically some schools with SEIP are quite far from their home. Through IE, providing the accessibility of the school will help to initiate and motivate the parents to bring their children with SEN to schools. Consequently, some parents of children with SEN will not have to worry looking for nearby regular schools which accept the children with SEN.

One of the key findings from this study pointed out that teachers were concerned about the teaching and classroom management in inclusive classrooms. Through IE, mainstream teachers will gain more knowledge and skills about children with SEN and inclusive pedagogy by attending training and professional development courses. Rose and Doveston (2015) recognised that knowledge of local interpretation is an important component of understanding how schools have developed and responded to the national policies. The barriers identified in this study such as class size, resources, the teacher's teaching experience with children with

SEN and facilities were seen as challenges in implementing IE at the preschool level. Therefore, training and professional development particularly aiming at differentiated instructions as well as approaches to teaching in the inclusive classrooms should be prioritised. This step may change the teachers' thinking about IE and may shape their attitudes towards IE.

As far as the philosophy of acceptance is concerned, Booth and Ainscow (2011) have indicated that inclusion represents educational and social improvement at many levels. Continuous support from school principals, parents and society are crucial in facilitating IE. Indeed, collaboration, involvement and partnership with parents, teachers, specialists as well as society will help in sustaining the progress of IE implementation. Awareness and knowledge about SEN and IE need to be highlighted so that acceptance and understanding towards SEN and IE could be initiated and imposed. In addition, dialogues among policy makers, specialists, disability organisations, NGOs and parents need to be established in terms of rethinking the current practice. Fullan (2007) and Waldron and McLeskey (2010) stated that engaging in new collaborative process may result in new values, beliefs, norms and preferred behaviours are the key in establishing a collaborative culture.

Secondly, at the national level, the finding has an impact on the teacher education by framing IE relating the practice of social justice and as an approach to move from the medical perspectives to sociological perspectives. According to Lalvani (2013), critical thinking should be interwoven throughout the coursework in the teacher education programmes by underlining the connection between IE and the need to confront all forms of segregation. In this case, teacher training programmes could be improved by exposing SEN and IE to all pre-service teachers in their core modules. Furthermore, during practicum, pre-service teachers should be given opportunities to teach at schools with SEIP so that they could experience teaching children with SEN. SE should not only be taught exclusively to SE pre-service teachers. Instead, all pre-service teachers should know about SE regardless of their subject options. As for the in-service teachers, training and Professional Development should be one of the approaches which can be provided in implementing effective IE. Thus the result of the findings can be used nationally not only to improve the available support and resources but also to improve the teaching and learning experience for both teachers and the children with SEN.

The study also highlights the importance of providing teachers with tools to examine and interpret IE policies and practices and to redefine what is to be modified. In other words, teachers should be given 'voices' in order to help policy makers to improve the preschool teacher training program for IE in Malaysia. Through action research, the findings may help to enhance more understanding as well as finding best practices for IE based on the classroom

context. The study also indicates that teachers were concerned with the lack of knowledge about SEN and IE, number of children per classroom, resources, teaching materials, classroom arrangement, support as well as facilities. By allowing teachers to voice out their views on IE, this study may help to inform the policy makers about the implementation of IE by considering teachers' perspectives towards IE.

Finally, the impact of this study at the international level is that other policy makers particularly from the South-east Asian region could learn from this study by revisiting or adapting IE based on the countries' own needs. Rather than replicating best practices from developed countries or other countries, it is therefore proposed that understanding the context of their own countries is the utmost priority. Indeed, stating clear guidelines in terms of policy and practice by policy makers need to be underlined and reinforced. This is because every context in terms of its politics, culture, history, funding, resources, school environment, facilities, geography and socio-economics is different and unique which sometimes can be beyond a particular country's capacity to adapt. As indicated by Miles et al. (2014), it is important to have a balance from the international rights-based perspectives of IE with the reality of the local contexts in the region. By simply setting up or building SE schools or new schools with SEIP which obviously seemed costly, time consuming and demanding; many aspects are required particularly in terms of human resources, facilities, resources and many others.

Before this study, the Malaysian literature was more focused on the attitudes of mainstream teachers at the primary school level rather than preschool level. For example, studies by Jelas et al., (2014) and Bailey et al., (2015) examined primary school teachers' perspectives of IE. The present study has filled in the gap on the study of preschool teachers' attitudes to IE particularly in the Malaysian government preschools. However, there are still gaps which remain, the study of teachers' attitudes could for example be expanded to teaching assistants' and parents' attitudes towards IE. Thus this study could facilitate and inspire more research area that could help to fill in the gap in the ECCE context and preschool education in teacher education (see section 9.3).

This study also shows that cultural understanding of inclusion is a process which is related to structures and beliefs system in different and diverse context that explains the teachers' attitudes towards IE. By utilising the combination of three-component attitude model and ecological system theory framework, I was able to obtain some potential insights into the practical knowledge of the teachers about IE which appeared informed their beliefs about the concept of IE. Therefore, it is notable that teachers felt generally prepared in implementing IE, however, in depth understanding of teachers' attitude has been yielded through semi-structured interview which addressed gaps in the implementation of IE. This is not about the

unwillingness or readiness to implement IE instead, to some extent this is about the lack of knowledge, exposure and understanding about SEN and IE which continuously remain the issues. Implementing IE was not a matter of teachers' willingness or unwillingness. However, teachers reported lack of knowledge, exposure and understanding about SEN and IE remain the issues in implementing IE. As a result, the concept of IE has been interpreted differently by mainstream teachers which caused different practices and approaches in attending the children with SEN.

### **9.3 Suggestions for Future Research**

This study has produced the overview of the preschool teachers' attitudes towards the introduction of IE at the government preschools. From the findings, several recommendations for future research may help to open doors to more research to be done in this area.

Even though teachers in this study were seen as generally prepared for IE, when exploring the qualitative data, they may seem a bit reluctant, not because they were negative but they were unable to find solutions. Thus, it seemed unfair to criticise them without fully understand the situation they were in. SE in teacher education should not be exclusively for SE teachers. Mainstream teachers should be given the opportunity to take modules in SE particularly during teacher training as all teachers may either consciously or unconsciously come across children with SEN throughout their career.

The study suggests that teacher education for IE has been seen as an essential element in developing and shaping the teachers' attitude towards IE as well as the children with SEN. Therefore the knowledge about SEN and classroom management skills and pedagogical or practical skills in the inclusive classroom are required in order to have positive attitudes and confidence towards classroom diversity. Training is one of the aspects that could be improved through professional development particularly for in-service teachers. Differentiated instructions, coping with individual differences or diversities and being able to adapt to the classroom in terms of curriculum, resources, teaching materials will enable the teachers to be more responsive as well as improving their skills, knowledge and attitudes towards the children with SEN. It will also lead them to improve their skills, knowledge and attitudes towards children with SEN. A study along the line of this research could therefore be undertaken to investigate the nature of training and evaluate the impact of the training in promoting the implementation of IE which might influence the teachers' attitudes towards IE.

This study indicates that there are different interpretations on IE amongst the teachers which suggest that research on teachers' conceptualisation of IE should be focused. This is because



most of the teachers expressed surface-level support for IE and held beliefs that children with SEN should be taught by SE teachers and majority of the teachers viewed children with SEN from the medical model perspectives on disability. Instead, those teachers who expressed strong willingness to implement IE viewed it as in relation to social justice and equity. Thus a study based on this premise should be done in order to explore the paradigm shifts in teacher education in a larger context and help to establish a conceptual foundation of IE.

As this study primarily concerned on the preschool teachers' perspectives on IE, a study should be considered by looking from stakeholders including parents or the children with SEN's perspectives particularly to explore barriers in implementing IE. By taking their views, perhaps it may increase the participation for the diverse range of children in the inclusive classrooms. Indeed, by examining the barriers from different perspective may contribute more information about large and pressing issues involved. The gained information may allow to adopt different approaches for improving the situation and giving the best quality education to all particularly to the children with SEN.

More studies are needed to understand perceptions of parents with SEN children on IE and how teachers, schools and specialists can effectively engage in encouraging the parents to send their children to inclusive classrooms. In agreement with Strogilos and Avramidis (2017), they suggested that research should focus on the specific factors, practices and programmes that 'make a difference' with particular children in a specific context. This suggests that a study on the impact on the full inclusion and half inclusion that are being practised at the primary and secondary school level should be evaluated in order to examine its effectiveness.

Taken from this study, a full qualitative research study could be undertaken to explore the preschool teachers' attitude towards IE. Other research instruments such as observation, stimulated recall interview, journal writing and focus group interviews could provide robust data and in-depth understanding of the teachers' attitudes. Case studies allow the exploration and understanding of the complex issues. Yin (2013), defines case study as 'an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and which multiple sources of evidence are used.' In other words, further study could usefully investigate and explore teachers' efficacy on the implementation of IE at the preschool level.

A study comparing the attitudes of the mainstream preschool teachers with SE preschool teachers and also comparing the pre-service teachers and in-service teachers should be undertaken. Investigating the similarities and differences in the beliefs and practices based on the context and experience will help to prepare teachers for IE by identifying pedagogical instructions as well as clear consensus on IE from the experience they gain. Thus Florian and

Linklater (2010) suggested that using inclusive pedagogy may enhance teaching and learning for all as knowing how to make best use of what they already know is crucial rather than having the necessary knowledge and skills to teach in the inclusive classrooms. This kind of study would contribute to professional development as well as training to in-service teachers in order to provide the best possible education for all children with and without SEN.

Finally, a comparative study would be a good suggestion particularly in the policy and practice of IE from neighbouring South-east Asia countries such as Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia. To some extent comparing Malaysia with countries from other regions such as United State of America, United Kingdom and Norway would be interesting and informative which will then further improve the meaningful IE experience. Notably, by considering the policy and practices from other countries will allow Malaysia to mould its own best model or practices which is suitable within the education system. Indeed, getting a big picture from different countries with different politics, social, culture and economic will allow policy makers to be more cautious in designing a plan for IE and create awareness on the reality of the provisions for children with SEN that are actually provided in schools.

#### **9.4 A Final Word**

IE has not been one of the main priorities in the education system in Malaysia and therefore has undergone a slow development and progress. Within the context of the preschool teachers, IE is still a new concept which has not been fully understood because of the lack of knowledge and exposure. Whilst teachers are expected to constantly improve the quality of their teaching and to develop and to meet the teaching challenges particularly in the inclusive classrooms, facilitating and supporting teachers in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities as well as values and commitment still need to be addressed. Thus, involving preschool teachers to a greater extent in policy making and more participation by multiple agencies might support IE to be more effective and successful.

UNESCO clarified quality education in four key factors: “teachers, textbooks and other instructional materials and facilities, teaching and learning processes, and governance” (UNESCO, 2015, p.189). By focusing on the four key factors may help to serve the needs of the children with SEN and ensure in tapping their full potentials. However, the current situation faced by the preschool teachers who act as a ‘front runners’ need to be ‘heard’ and taken seriously because inevitably the implementation of IE in reality faces many issues. Malaysian teachers do not have sufficient support structures to support the children with SEN. Thus by addressing teachers’ attitudes towards IE may enable policy makers to prioritise further professional development and consider the existing resources and facilities. The readiness to

implement IE at the preschool level requires building up self-confidence and skills as well as changing their paradigm shift towards inclusion. This may not be easy however, over the time IE would be possible. Effort in improving and enhancing the quality in SEN and IE provisions may involve in changes in policy and shifts in the concept of IE in general. The fundamental step is to recognise the children with SEN by appropriately positioning them in the education system to prepare them for the real world.

Indeed, it seems that little has changed about the study of the attitudes of Malaysian teachers towards IE over the past nine years (Ali et al., 2006; Jantan, 2007; Wah, 2010 and Bailey et al., 2015). The result from the qualitative data findings revealed the 'story' behind their attitudes need to be understood by many agencies. Finger pointing and over loading responsibilities alongside considering the existing workload of the teachers seemed unfair accusations. Thus this study has literally opened the 'chest' of what has indeed happened and most importantly understanding the teachers' attitudes and finding the best IE practice based on Malaysian context. Ultimately, IE requires collaboration and commitment not only from all teachers but also from schools, principals, SE teachers, parents, specialists and society at large for the betterment of the children with SEN. Similarly, the outcomes of this study suggest that providing extensive and appropriate training particularly in instructional and classroom management would help to increase teachers' self- confident in implementing IE.

Critical understanding in the concept of inclusion and integration are important where through training, the teachers may modify their everyday practice rather than adopting technical responses to particular needs. It is worth noting that teachers in this study may not hold negative attitudes. Instead they could not find solutions to barriers which are seen out of their control or capacity. Thus, for the preschool context, teachers should make themselves familiar with differences and SEN and make differences as a norm. Instead of looking disability or SEN as functionality, we should think of what do the children need to know and how do we use the resources and what are we supposed to do to make better learning.

Ironically, the representation of IE has made the vulnerable children become more vulnerable due to authority's different agenda. In the case of Malaysia, evidence based policy has ignored the values of education as the emphasis on education is the product (academic attainment) instead of the values of the process. The IE policy in Malaysia should not try to normalise children with SEN in preparation for the real world. Instead the policy makers should look from the perspectives of the children with SEN in order to prepare themselves in real world. By this, recognising and accepting differences should become the norm in society as a whole.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1- Consent Form

Name of researcher:

Liza Isyqi Binti Ramli

	Please write your initials next to the statement you agree with
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated (date) explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. I agree to take part in the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.	
I give permission for the interviews to be audio recorded.	
I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.  (I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.)	
I agree for the data collected to be used in the researcher's PhD thesis, future reports, conference presentations and/or poster presentations.	
I agree to take part in the above research project.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	

## **APPENDIX 2- Information Sheet**

### **Information Sheet**

#### **Attitudes of preschool teachers towards the introduction of Inclusive Education in Malaysian government preschools.**

My name is Liza Isyqi Binti Ramli. I am a PhD student from University of Leeds, United Kingdom. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

#### **The purpose of the research**

As a preschool education lecturer and ex preschool teacher, I often come across with children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in my classroom and in my trainee teachers' classroom when I am supervising them. Based on my own experience and my ex-students experience (who are now preschool teachers), the most common question when facing with children with SEN is how to help them? This is because in the initial teacher education training, preschool teachers do not get sufficient knowledge, skills and training on how to deal with children with SEN as only the SEN teachers have the opportunity to access the modules.

Therefore, I want to explore the attitude of the preschool teacher towards the introduction of Inclusive Education (IE) in Malaysia because based on my readings some teachers cannot accept children with SEN for several reasons but there are studies showed that some teachers embrace the children with SEN even though they do not know how to approach the children with SEN. Thus, I think this study is important as the Ministry of Education (MOE) is planning to expand IE at the preschool level and the results of this study would provide information about the attitude of the preschool teachers towards the introduction of IE. Based on the results, MOE could provide support to the preschool teachers in implementing the IE. This is crucial as the preschool teachers' attitude is one of the aspects that determine the success in the implementation of IE.

#### **The duration of the study**

This study will take place from March until July 2015 and will be inviting all preschool teachers in Malaysian government preschools in Selangor.

## **The phases of the study**

This study will seek your opinion on the introduction of Inclusive Education at the preschool level and therefore in order to do that you will need to complete the questionnaire and later on further discussion will be undertaken through interview session for in-depth understanding on the factors that might influence your attitudes towards Inclusive Education. The result of this study will be very useful not only to the policy makers but also to the pre-service and in-service preschool teachers as well for the success of the IE implementation in Malaysia.

### *First phase*

I would very much like this to be a positive experience for you and hope that you may want to stay in the study from March until July 2015. In the first phase of the study, you will need to complete a questionnaire which contains three parts; demographic information, 28 items and one open-ended question. This may take 15-20 minutes to complete.

### *Second phase*

The second phase of the study will be an interview session which may take about 30 minutes to one hour. The teacher who volunteered may withdraw at any time. The audio recordings of the interview during this research will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside this study will be allowed access to the original recordings.

## **Your rights**

If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason. If there are any questions or topics which you feel uncomfortable discussing then you can choose to end the interview or skip the question. Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in this study, it is hoped that this study will give an opportunity to you to voice out your opinion regarding the introduction of Inclusive Education at the preschool level. All the information that are collected during this study will be kept strictly confidential. The result will be published however you will not be identified in any report or publication. You will be given a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

Thank you very much for taking your time reading this information sheet and taking part in the study. For any inquiries do contact me at [edlir@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:edlir@leeds.ac.uk) or 0123207910.

## APPENDIX 3 - Semi-structured interview questions

### The Attitudes of Preschool Teachers towards the Introduction of IE in the Malaysian Government Preschools

1. In your opinion, how would you define (the meaning of) Inclusive Education (IE)?
  - i. In your own understanding, what is the concept of IE?
  - ii. Are you familiar with the concept?
  - iii. So, what do you think about IE?
  - iv. Do you support IE in general? Can you please elaborate on that?
  - v. Would you be able to implement IE in your preschool classroom? Would you mind to explain your reasons?
2. Please tell me about inclusive education in your school.
  - i. What kind of support does your school provide for special needs children in general?
  - ii. Do you collaborate with any special needs teachers or experienced teacher when encountering challenges teaching special needs in your classrooms?
  - iii. How does it work?
  - iv. Can you specify how you manage to overcome your challenges?
3. Do you agree or not that 'a child with special needs should be included in the same classroom as typically developing peers no matter how severe their support needs are'?
  - i. Can you explain your opinion on that?
  - ii. Do you believe in a caring society and equal opportunities?
  - iii. Would you be able to practise that in reality?
4. Do you think that children with special needs and typically developing children will benefit from inclusion?
  - i. Can you please explain that?
  - ii. Why do you say so?
5. Do you feel prepared to teach children with special need in your classroom?
  - i. Would you mind to share your thoughts on that?
  - ii. Did you have any personal experience of children with special needs before working with children with special needs? If so, do you feel able to share these details with me?
  - iii. What are other aspects that might be challenging to implement IE in your classroom?
6. What knowledge and skills do teachers require in inclusive classrooms?
  - i. Have you undergone some courses or trainings before being involved with children with special needs? If so, please tell me the details.
  - ii. What kind of teaching pedagogy have you applied in your class?
  - iii. Do you need significant in-service training in order to teach preschool children with special needs in your mainstream class? Can you tell me the most important areas of training you need and why?
7. What is the most important factor that contribute to the success of IE implementation?
  - i. Would you mind to explain further on that?
  - ii. Can you list any three important factors that might ensure the success of IE in Malaysia?
  - iii. What changes need to be made before introducing Inclusive education at the preschool level?
  - iv. What suggestions do you have to make IE successful for both teachers and the children?
8. Do you need any assistance and/or collaboration from your colleagues or principal regarding teaching children with special needs?
  - i. Should parents of children with special needs be involved with their children's education? If so, why do you think that?
  - ii. Do you have any concern about working with other staff or parents? If so, please give me more detail.
  - iii. Any other comments you would like to make?

## **APPENDIX 4 - Questionnaire**

### **Malaysian Preschools Teachers' Attitudes on Inclusive Education Scales**

The Ministry of Education in Malaysia intends to expand Inclusive Education by introducing the programme at the preschool level. The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information that will identify factors which contribute to the preschools teachers' attitude. The questionnaire is designed to be confidential and anonymous and there is no intent to identify individual teachers or teacher views. The results of this survey may aid in understanding of the factors which affect the preschool teachers' attitudes in implementing IE. Thus this study will provide some opportunities or 'voice' to the teachers to give some insights on their attitudes towards IE. Stoiber et al. (1998) state that, the voices of those directly involved in change should be heard because they provide valuable 'inside' perceptions and information.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Liza Isyqi Binti Ramli, School of Education, University of Leeds

**Malaysian Preschool Teachers' Attitudes on Inclusive Education Scales**

**PART 1 Section A- Teacher Opinions**

Please answer the following items by circling the number that most closely reflects your opinion 1= strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3= neither agree nor disagree; 4= agree; 5= strongly agree. Tick the box if your answer is 'don't know'.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. The needs of children with SEN are best served through special, separate classes.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. The challenge of being in a mainstream classroom will promote the academic growth of the child with SEN.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Inclusion offers mixed group interaction which will foster understanding and acceptance of differences.	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of a child with SEN.	1	2	3	4	5	
5. The child with SEN will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom than in a mainstream classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	
6. The contact mainstream-class children have with included children may be harmful.	1	2	3	4	5	
7. Including the child with SEN will promote his/her social independence.	1	2	3	4	5	
8. The inclusion of children with SEN can be beneficial for regular children.	1	2	3	4	5	
9. Inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the child with SEN.	1	2	3	4	5	
10. The child with SEN will be socially isolated by other children.	1	2	3	4	5	

**PART 1**

**Section A- Teacher Opinions**

Please answer the following items by circling the number that most closely reflects your opinion 1= strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3= neither agree nor disagree; 4= agree; 5= strongly agree. Tick the box if your answer is 'don't know'.

					Don't Know
	Strongly Agree				
	Agree				
	Neither Agree nor Disagree				
	Disagree				
	Strongly Disagree				
11. Children with SEN should be given every opportunity to function in the general-classroom setting, where possible.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The presence of children with SEN will promote acceptance of differences on the part of other children.	1	2	3	4	5



**PART 1****Section B – Emotional Reaction Scale**

If a new student who was described as having a severe learning difficulty (a child with autism, Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy etc), was about to join your class tomorrow, you would feel.... (please circle the number which best describes your feelings)

<b>Uncomfortable</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Comfortable</b>	
<b>Negative</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Positive</b>
<b>Unconfident</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Confident</b>
<b>Pessimistic</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Optimistic</b>
<b>Worried</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>Self-assured</b>
<b>Disinterested</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Interested</b>
<b>Unhappy</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Happy</b>

If a new student who was described as having emotional and behavioural difficulties (a child with severe disruptive behaviour, a child with ADHD, a child who has been excluded from other schools because of his/her deviant behaviour etc), was about to join your class tomorrow, you would feel...(please circle the number which best describes your feelings)

<b>Uncomfortable</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Comfortable</b>	
<b>Negative</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Positive</b>
<b>Unconfident</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Confident</b>
<b>Pessimistic</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Optimistic</b>
<b>Worried</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>Self-assured</b>
<b>Disinterested</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Interested</b>
<b>Unhappy</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Happy</b>

What extra things would you need to make your responses to the above two questions more positive?

**PART 1****Section C – Teachers' Intentions**

Please answer the following items by circling the number that most closely reflects your opinion

1= strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3= neither agree nor disagree; 4= agree; 5= strongly agree.

Tick the box if your answer is 'don't know'.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. I will be supportive towards the idea of including children with SEN in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. I will be willing to engage in in-service training on teaching children with SEN.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. I will engage in developing the appropriate skills to teach children with SEN in their classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	
4. I will engage in developing skills for managing the behaviour of children with SEN.	1	2	3	4	5	
5. I will accept responsibility for teaching children with SEN within a whole-school policy.	1	2	3	4	5	
6. I will continuously assess myself to inform my teaching practice.	1	2	3	4	5	
7. I will change my teaching processes to accommodate children with SEN in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	
8. I will co-operate with the parents of the children with SEN for the benefit of their children.	1	2	3	4	5	

**PART 1****Section C – Teachers' Intentions**

Please answer the following items by circling the number that most closely reflects your opinion

1= strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3= neither agree nor disagree; 4= agree; 5= strongly agree.

Tick the box if your answer is 'don't know'.

					Don't Know
				Strongly Agree	
				Agree	
			Neither Agree nor Disagree		
			Disagree		
		Strongly Disagree			

**PART 2****Demographic Information**

Please tick the box that most apply to you.

**PART 2:**

1. Your gender

Male

Female

2. Your age

20 - 30

41 – 50

31 – 40

51 - 60

3. Your school location

Urban

Sub urban

Rural

4. Your race

Malay

Indian

Chinese

Others

5. Your teaching qualification

	Certificate in Teaching Foundation
	Post-diploma in Teacher Training Course(Preschool Education)
	Post-degree Teacher Training Course(Preschool Education)
	Bachelor of Education (Preschool Education)
	Others (Please specify:.....)

6. General teaching experience

	Less than 2 years		11 – 15 years
	2 - 5 years		15 – 20 years
	6 – 10 years		More than 20 years

7. Do you have any teaching experience with children with SEN?

	Yes		No
--	-----	--	----

*If yes, please answer question 8*

8. How many years of teaching experience teaching children with SEN?

	Less than 2 years
	2 - 5 years
	More than 5 years

9. Do you have any training in special education?

	Yes		No
--	-----	--	----

10. Do you currently have a child or children with SEN in your classroom?

	Yes		No
--	-----	--	----

11. Please specify the number of children with SEN

Visual disabilities

Hearing disabilities

Speech disabilities

Physical disabilities

Learning disabilities

( such as Down syndrome, mild autism spectrum disorder, attention deficits  
hyperactive disorder, dyslexia)

Any combination of the disabilities or difficulties above

12. Does your school run Special Education Integration Programme (SEIP)?

Yes

No

**PART 3: Open-ended question**

What changes do you feel need to be made or considered at the preschool level before children with special needs are included in mainstream classes?

1. In the classroom environment:

2. In the school:

3. In society:

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire**

**Please tick if you are willing to become the participant for the interview. ( )**

**Please leave your contact details below:**

**Name:**

**School:**

**Mobile number:**

**Email address:**

## APPENDIX 5 - Approval from the AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Performance, Governance and Operations  
 Research & Innovation Service  
 Charles Thackrah Building  
 101 Clarendon Road  
 Leeds LS2 9LJ Tel: 0113 343 4873  
 Email: [ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk)

Liza Isyqi Binti Ramli  
 School of Education  
 University of Leeds  
 Leeds, LS2 9JT

### ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee University of Leeds

Dear Liza

**Title of study:** Attitudes of preschool teachers towards the introduction of Inclusive Education (IE) in Malaysian government preschools.  
**Ethics reference:** AREA 14-068

I am pleased to inform you that the above research application has been reviewed by the ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee and following receipt of your response to the Committee's initial comments, I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
AREA 14-068 Liza Ethical Review Form V3.doc	2	13/01/15
AREA 14-068 Liza Information Sheet.docx	2	13/01/15
AREA 14-068 Liza consent form.doc	1	15/12/14
AREA 14-068 Revised questionnaire.docx	1	13/01/15
AREA 14-068 response1.txt	1	13/01/15

Committee members made the following comments about your application:

- It would be good if the supervisor's contact details (on the info sheet) are flagged as those of your supervisor, rather than just another contact.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted at date of this approval, including changes to recruitment methodology. All changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment>.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits>.

Yours sincerely  
 Jennifer Blaikie

Senior Research Ethics Administrator, Research & Innovation Service  
 On behalf of Dr Andrew Evans, Chair, [AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee](#)