**Kholood Mohammed Aljaser**

**School Leaders' Perceptions of Differing Intellectual Abilities in the context of Inclusive School Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:**

**Transformational Leadership Theory in Disability Studies**

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## *Abstract*

This thesis explores Inclusive School Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia mainstream schools providing special educational needs programmes named الدمج (Aldamj), for students labelled with intellectual disabilities. It explores how School Leaders (SLs) conceptualise 'disability' and 'inclusion', determining whether their understanding is robust enough to support the creation of an Inclusive School Culture. It also explores how SLs operationalise leading for change according to Transformational Leadership theory, and issues they face.

Data was collected from 30 individual interviews and two focus groups with 30 School Leaders to address four research questions. Findings enabled the development of new theories that can enhance the understandings of researchers and practitioners.

Most School Leaders' definitions of disability did not align with a single perspective but were influenced by several disability models and influenced their school experiences, viewing students as either 'trainable' or 'educable'. The intersectional perspectives include the Psycho-Medical Model, Social Model, Normalisation Model, Affirmation Model and Faith Model. However, due to the predominance of Psycho-Medical and Normalisation models in most cases, a '*dual practice*' approach emerged, leading to an Exclusion School Culture.

In addition, the study found three groups defining the term Aldamj. One group provided several definitions, detailing more than mere structural changes. Based on their perspective, to define Aldamj, my study found Inclusive School Culture as a framework for the *'Least Restrictive Environment,'* emphasising the difference between Inclusion and Integration. Making Aldamj depend on school capability is referred to as Mainstream School Needs rather than Special Education Needs.

Moreover, the result contributes to a better understanding of leadership styles typically used in mainstream schools with Special Education Needs programmes, which tends to be structurally led, more than using Cultural Leadership. Although it is essential to school structural stability, School Culture needs to be reconceptualised when leading for change. Consequently, the study found a link between Inclusive School Culture aspects and Transformational Leadership theory, to achieve the *Least Restrictive Environment*. This meant that placing Disability Studies and Transformational Leadership within SEN practices could make a lot of changes in school action for inclusion.

Finally, the study documents how School Leaders experience some conflict between the education authority, parents, Special Educational Needs teachers and mainstream teachers whilst they are developing School Culture for inclusiveness.

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## List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ID | Intellectual Disabilities |
| SEN | Special Educational Needs |
| SL | School Leader |
| KSA | Kingdom of Saudi Arabia |
| MoE | Ministry of Education |
| RSEPI | Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes |
| GDSE | General Directorate of Special Education |
| PMM | Psycho-Medical Model |
| SM | Social Model |
| NM | Normalisation Model |
| AM | Affirmation Model |
| FM | Faith Model |

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# Preface

Globally, the past decades have witnessed various educational reforms (new paradigms or polices), that have changed schools' actions towards achieving their aims (Fullan, 2001). One educational reform that has become widespread in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA; Gaad, 2011; Weber, 2012) and around the world (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010) is educating all students, whatever their differences might be, in the *same* school setting. Consequently, more students labelled with Special Educational Needs (SEN), including students labelled with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) —or my preferred term, Differing Intellectual Abilities—have enrolled in neighbourhood schools[1].

In the KSA, educators use intelligence quotient (IQ) tests to categorise some students, which then labels students with ID[2]. However, my preferred term, Differing Intellectual Abilities, refers to each student being viewed as an individual with their own *abilities* which are valued, enabling all stakeholders to believe in their ability to learn[3].

In the early 20th century, educational practitioners around the world thought the most effective way of educating students labelled with SEN (including ID) was to provide them with independent provisions catering specifically to their differences (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996). However, by the late 1960s, supporters of the global disability rights movement had begun advocating equal rights and freedom from discrimination with the aim that all students should be enrolled in mainstream schools (Gaad, 2011). They continued to push forward many educational policies internationally to initiate a trend towards inclusion

[1] *Neighbourhood schools* is my preferred term referring to a school that caters for all students (including those labelled with SEN), allowing it to be named 'inclusive'. However, mainstream and SEN school is the common term used by most authors and participants in this thesis.
[2] ID definition in the KSA will be outlined in more detail in KSA Education Background, Chapter One.
[3] ID and SEN are employed as common terms used by most authors and participants referenced in this thesis.

rather than applying an integrated approach; which may cause students labelled with SEN/ID to be isolated *within* mainstream schools[4].

One example of the global policies that the movement pushed for is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) 1994 Salamanca Statement (Ainscow & César, 2006), a joint proclamation by 25 international organisations in a world conference (Lindsay, 2003). According to Ainscow and Sandill (2010), this is the most effective policy to date that recognises the need to provide education for all students in the same school setting.

Paragraph two of UNESCO's Salamanca Statement comprises of several moral imperatives, clarifying that each student is unique in their interests, emotional, intellectual, physical, social and linguistic characteristics (UNESCO, 1994). In Wang's (2009) view, the Salamanca Statement not only explicitly defines the right for all students to be included in mainstream schools, but also focuses on refusing discrimination based on specific characteristics as a moral duty. More specifically, this means that neighbourhood schools are tasked with creating a social justice in school settings that value diversity. Social justice is defined as a community belief that it is necessary to promote the intrinsic human rights of equity (Barton, 1997 and DeMatthews and Mawhinney, 2014) by valuing *differing abilities* and therefore understanding the individual's needs.

As outlined above, the KSA is eager to promote inclusion/inclusive education[5] aligning themselves with the international movement (Almosa, 1999); however, as Gaad (2011)

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[4]Further differences between integration and inclusion will be discussed in detail in the Literature Review, Chapter Two.
[5]In this thesis, these two terms could be used synonymously, where inclusion is community practice terminology viewing all people as valuable members in all sectors including the education sector, inclusive education is specifically included in a school setting.

explains, the educational reform initiatives addressing policies like the Salamanca Statement are still young with a considerable need for improvement. In Chapter One, I will clarify how the KSA has shifted towards inclusive education by implementing an array of policies and other structural changes in some mainstream schools, showing *a desire* to follow the international trend; however, this reform orientation does not reflect a *true* change in public perception. Thus, my study seeks to explore changing actions for inclusive educational practice in KSA's mainstream schools providing SEN programmes[6] for students labelled with ID.

The literature shows that inclusion is a complicated, widely debated concept with various practical manifestations (Lindsay, 2003; Angelides, 2011). Many mainstream schools have focused their changes towards *School Structures*, this includes changes to their school systems (based on educational polices), human resources, classroom layouts and materials, building organisation, and new teaching strategies (Doyle, 2001). However, these changes amount to *integration* rather than inclusion – this is similar to the KSA's educational system, which raises challenges for mainstream schools to respond to all students' diverse abilities, with some parts to be addressed.

Inclusion, as Doyle (2001) and Ainscow and César (2006) describe, requires not only structural changes, it also requires changing how people think about disability in specific cultures (e.g. School Culture). Bush and Middlewood (2013) refer to School Culture as a set of norms, values, and beliefs that build up over time and constitute to a school's personality. Then, simply enrolling students labelled with SEN/ID in neighbourhood schools does not automatically achieve inclusive education practice. Achieving inclusive education requires radical rethinking whereby mainstream schools abandon their

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[6] SEN programmes in mainstream schools refer to the term الدمج (Aldamj) in KSA, which could be integration or inclusion. This will be explained further in Chapter One; KSA's SEN System Background.

traditional view of disability and inclusion, instead adopting a perspective that prioritises inclusion within a single school setting, which has been referred to as *Inclusive School Culture*.

Praisner (2003), Theoharis (2007), Ainscow and Sandill (2010) and Cobb (2014) found that School Leaders (SL) are key contributors in promoting sustainable changes. Thus. in order to promote a sustainable School Culture for inclusiveness, they should reconceptualise their roles as influencers of school members (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004). With this in mind, SLs often face the challenging notion that changing school member's perspectives, regarding accepting their role for inclusion practices, which often led to vehement rejection. However, from a socially just perspective, inclusion is a human right not something that people can dismiss nor debate; inclusion should be applied everywhere in all instances.

In light of this, Disability Studies emerged in the early 1980s (Ferguson & Nusbaum, 2012) as part of the disability rights movement for social justice, and against the normative view of disabled people in society (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). Cameron and Moore (2014) add that Disability Studies grew alongside the notion that the disability concept was a form of social oppression; questioning the cultural practices that interfered with disabled people's quality of life.

Specifically, Disability Studies in education focus on the need to change mainstream schools, which I refer to as Mainstream Schools' Needs, instead of the traditional SEN approach that centres the focus around a student's adaptability. Sebba and Ainscow (1996) and Ainscow (1997) identify the necessity of replacing the traditional SEN models based on individual change to a whole-school model—representing an inclusive community with values, norms, commitments and visions responding to a wide-range of

abilities. This creates a type of culture that supports socially just practices and values students 'differences, where students labelled with ID are not merely *present* but empowered to participate.

However, not every SL can engage in such socially just practices (Angelides, 2011). Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) reviewed three case studies performed in the United Kingdom, United States, and Portugal which focus on creating inclusive practice. Their findings highlight great significance in choosing a specific type of leadership style to respond to diversity and inclusion for students. Of the many leadership theories I have examined in literature, Transformational Leadership stands out. This theory seeks to challenge social construction to encourage risk-taking and open dialogue, working towards encouraging shared values that make school members more receptive to change (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Overall, the idea that binds my topic together is that inclusion is not a programme like integration; it is a way of thinking. My research therefore seeks to explore, from the SLs' perspective, the Inclusive School Culture of KSA's mainstream schools that provide SEN programmes for students labelled with ID. The focus of my study reflects my experiences as a SEN teacher and trainer in several mainstream schools in Riyadh, as I will summarise below.

## 1. Research Positionality: Part of My Life's Journey

My experience in the SEN field began during my undergraduate study at King Saud University. Initially, I was studying English Translation, but it was obvious that I preferred writing about teaching strategies, students, their cognition, communication and other skills. This was evident in all of my assignments for my English modules.

I was advised by one of the tutors to inquire about the School of Education. I was aware that Early Childhood Education was a popular field; however, I was particularly fascinated in the study of SEN, which comprised of several study majors, such as ID. I knew that studying ID required a greater workload that other study majors, but my peers suggested that I had a kind nature and that I should pursue it, pointing out that students labelled with ID needed my sympathy. I agreed at the time, but in retrospect, our attitudes, including my initial sympathetic response, signified a strong culture of ableism as disability discrimination.

Moreover, I did not understand how other undergraduates could major in ID education, which was seemingly difficult and frightening. My apprehension caused me to pursue opportunities to work with students who had less challenging needs, such as hearing, visual disability or specific learning disabilities. Nevertheless, after a few weeks, I found myself being drawn towards ID and eventually enrolled onto the major.

Many of my undergraduate experiences changed my initial perceptions. For example, one lecturer took us to visit a SEN/ID school. This was my first-time meeting students labelled with ID, which made my peers and I uncomfortable during the visit. We found it difficult to speak to the students, and we worried they would become aggressive. Unfortunately, our discomfort also reflected how our thoughts and behaviours had been affected by our ableist culture.

I was wearing a blouse with a picture of a cat on it, and one of the girls labelled with ID became interested in it. She approached me, pointed at the cat, and smiling, told me about her cat, what it ate and where it slept. The conversation was engaging and enjoyable, and I began to feel ashamed about my preconceptions.

During my studies, my perception of students labelled with ID changed, and ultimately, I came to realise that even students labelled with ID, have the same needs and interests as other students.

After graduating in 2003, I started teaching in a mainstream school as a SEN teacher that had just opened SEN classrooms[7] for students labelled with ID. This was in a village approximately four hours from Riyadh; I worked there for four years. Much of my story involves the challenges I faced there, some of which are discussed below.

When I arrived, the school had low expectations of students labelled with ID; staff did not support the SEN programme and avoided taking responsibility for it. The parents of students who were labelled with ID worried that their children would not be safe amongst mainstream students. For example, one day, I saw a student labelled with Down's Syndrome surrounded by a crowd of mainstream students, who were laughing at her because they thought she was strange.

After a few months, the SL (named principal at that time) encouraged me and my colleagues to initiate the changes we sought. My view was that we could improve the SEN programme by cooperating with parents, telling them about their children's experiences and encouraging them to participate in their children's education. I created contact files for each student including letters, daily observations, improvement reports, rewards and parent comments, which served as a basis for communication and offered parents an overview of their child's work inside and outside the classroom. These files increased parents' confidence in the school.

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[7] In the United Kingdom, this is referred to as a self-contained classrooms model.

Another meaningful experience occurred after the SL became concerned that students labelled with ID had started to display inappropriate behaviours, and their curriculum was not being completed by the end of term. I convinced her that we should delay the curriculum and focus instead on helping the students settle; consequently, she gave us the freedom we needed. My colleagues and I designed a plan to improve social interaction between all students and we found that allowing certain interactions under supervision decreased the frequency of unaccepted behaviours amongst all students. During this supervision, I observed that the behaviour of students labelled with ID was always instigated by previous negative interactions with their peers.

I later recommended including two students labelled with ID in a mainstream classroom. The mainstream teacher was apprehensive, thinking they would interfere with their mainstream peers' academic performance. In addition, the SL doubted the mainstream teacher's capability of meeting their needs. Nevertheless, she allowed us to include the two students labelled with ID. This resulted in the introduction of new activities and the use of different evaluation methods, such as peer-reading activities (Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey, 2010) and games that also helped the mainstream students focus on their subjects.

My journey has not just involved being a SEN teacher. In 2006, I joined King Saud University as a lecturer's assistant and travelled to mainstream schools to train undergraduate students for the ID major. I continued to gain experience and working for the university inspired me to continue my studies. I obtained my Master's degree at Leeds University and completed my dissertation in "Profound" and Multiple Intellectual Disabilities'.

I am passionate about the subject of inclusion, and there are some parts of the KSA educational system that need to be addressed. Pursuing my PhD, I reflected on encouragement from the SL's position when I was a teacher, recognising this sparked my interest to explore the SL's perspective. Without the SL's encouragement, my colleagues and I would have found it almost impossible to implement our ideas.

When I started to work on my study, the topic was not very clear, especially regarding inclusion as such a complicated and debated topic. Initially, there were many scattered ideas and essential problems. It took long time to find an exact focus that I would be able to contribute to. I am trying to see inclusion from the perspective of the students labelled with ID and their parents. There are repetitions in most KSA studies related to these SEN programmes, focusing on exploring attitudes or simply describing the situation using quantitative data.

During my Master's programme, I came across the Disability Studies and feel that this connects with my thoughts. I was keen to learn more about it and how it could be applied in the field of SEN. With further reading I was able to make links between my ideas until I reached the current topic for my thesis.

This brings me to the significance and basis of my doctoral thesis.

## 2. Significance and Justification

*Firstly,* most research on mainstream schools that have SEN programmes in the KSA's educational system has focussed on teachers, while little attention has been paid to SLs. It is not possible to get a complete picture of inclusion in mainstream schools without including SLs in the research, viewing them as critical members of every school. A review of multiple articles by Cobb (2014) shows that, although SLs are not the sole contributors to SEN services, SL's work is especially important because they can influence those in

charge to deliver the SEN services and be inclusive. In addition to this, inclusion involves more than merely equality in classrooms, it should involve equality practised throughout the whole school led by the SL. Thus, my research fills a gap in the literature, by seeking to provide more information on educational leadership in the KSA within inclusive practices, viewing SLs as crucial agents in efforts for inclusive education.

*Secondly,* although most research on mainstream schools that have SEN programmes in the KSA's educational system have focussed on SLs, most have examined their role in mainstream schools for students with less challenging needs (see Alebraheem, 2003; Alqahtani, 2005; Darweesh, 2007; Jomaah, 2007; Aljohini, 2012; Alqorishy, 2013). My research fills a gap by exploring SLs' perspectives in a mainstream school with a SEN programme for students labelled with ID.

*Thirdly,* previous studies and others in the field of mainstream schools that have SEN programmes in the KSA's educational system have used quantitative methods to collect data about SLs' perspectives (see Alshakhs, 1986; Alsratawy, Alsaratawy, & Jrar, 1988; Abduljabbar, 1994, 1999, 2000; Abduljabbar & Almasoud, 2002; Almosa, 2008; Alquraini, 2014). My research, however, was conducted using qualitative methods to interpret specific educational contexts in greater depth.

*Fourthly,* another important issue raised by the studies on most research on mainstream schools that have SEN programmes in the KSA's educational system are linked to structural challenges (see Alebraheem, 2003; Jomaah, 2007; Darweesh, 2007; Alahmadi, 2009; Alhammad, 2017) such as: missing training programmes for SLs on strategy management, safe and secure buildings for students labelled with SEN, the need for documents to develop teachers' skills and; solve difficulties with classroom management. However, Jones (2004) points out that inclusion requires *continual* school changes, these

are actions that cannot be easily supported. Jones' view illustrates the importance of an Inclusive School Culture that empowers school staff to continue challenging ableist ideas and culture and uphold the rights of all students to be included in mainstream schools. Thus, with no published literature available in Disability Studies in the KSA, my study explores how SLs conceptualise disability and inclusion, and how it influences the school lives of students labelled with ID.

*Fifthly,* many studies in the KSA have examined SLs' attitudes towards the enrolment of students labelled with SEN in mainstream schools (see Alshakhs, 1986; Alsratawy, Alsaratawy, & Jrar, 1988; Abduljabbar, 1994, 1999, 2000; Abduljabbar & Almasoud, 2002; Almosa, 2008; Alquraini, 2014). They found that SLs frequently have positive attitudes towards inclusion, which demonstrates a *desire* to follow international trends. Nevertheless, these SLs are often dissatisfied with inclusion practices in their schools. Thus, my study explores how SLs view inclusion related to Inclusive Schools Culture, since inclusion depends on much more than attitudes alone.

*Finally,* few studies have examined Transformational Leadership theory, for inclusion, in mainstream schools with SEN services. Most of those examining Transformational Leadership have used quantitative methodologies, for example, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and some focus on leadership style comparison (see Ingram, 1997; Houser, Bell, Dickens, & Hicks, 2010; Houser, Dickens, & Hicks, 2011; Cohen, 2015; Kim, 2016). In addition, these studies were conducted in western countries, not the KSA's educational context. Thus, my study fills a gap by exploring the relationship between aspects of Inclusive School Cutler and Transformational Leadership theory in the KSA's educational system, from the SLs' perspective.

To understand and achieve the significance and justification addressed above, the research aims will be outlined in the following section.

**3. Research Aim and Objects**

In this study, to examine the changing school action for educational reform, I seek to explore the Inclusive Schools Culture within KSA mainstream schools that provide SEN programme for students labelled with ID, from the SLs' perspective. The study has the following objectives:

- To explore how the SLs conceptualise disability and Aldamj as inclusion, and how this influences the school lives of students labelled with ID (whether their understanding is robust enough to ensure an Inclusive School Culture), where students labelled with ID are not just placed but also feel included (see Figure 1);

- To explore how the SLs operationalise aspects of Inclusive School Culture when leading for change according to Transformational Leadership theory and;

- To explore the issues that the SLs face while developing an Inclusive School Culture.
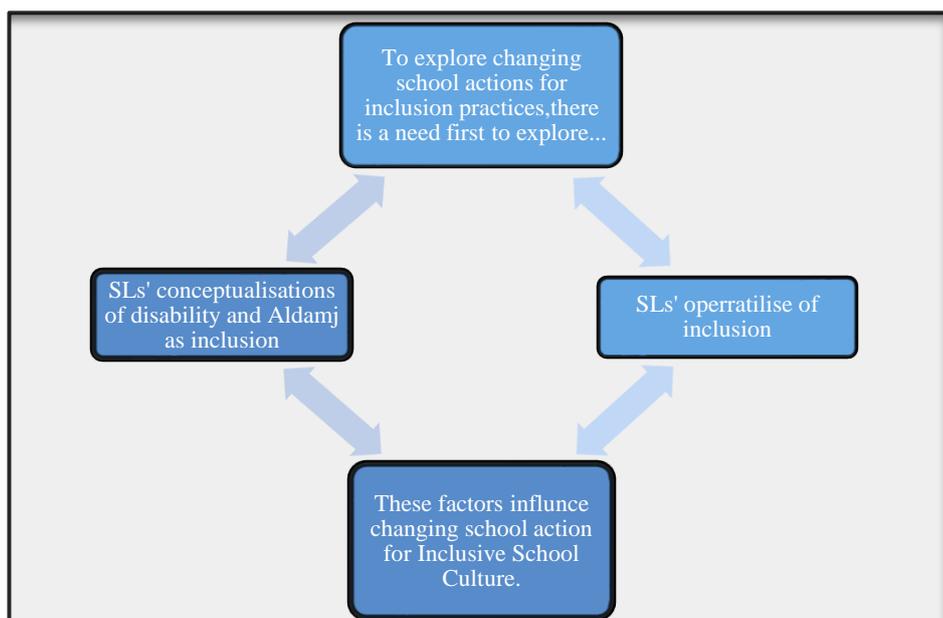


**Figure (1)** Relationships between the study aim and objectives.

## 4. Research Questions

The study aims are addressed through the following questions:

*Q1: How are the cultures of mainstream schools with SEN programmes influenced by SLs' conceptualisations of disability?*

*Q2: How do SLs conceptualise inclusion (Aldamj) as the foundation of an Inclusive School Culture?*

*Q3: What Leading for change actions are taken by the SLs to promote Inclusive School Culture development?*

This research question has 2 sub-questions. To answer the main research question, I need first to explore what form SLs use to promote inclusivity in their schools and then move to the practical side of leading for change.

> *Q3a: How do SLs conceptualise school changing actions (Culture versus School Structure) while supporting inclusive educational reforms?*
>
> *Q3b: How do SLs for leading for change employ Transformational Leadership theory to operationalise Inclusive School Culture aspects?*

*Q4: From the SLs' perspectives, what issues do they face while developing Inclusive School Culture aspects?*

The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows: Chapter One provides background on the KSA's SEN educational system. Chapter Two will review the relevant literature on Inclusive School Culture and leading for change. It also will redefine 'intellectual disabilities' by addressing the prevalent models of disability and how specific models change the way in which students labelled with SEN/ID are educated. Chapter Three will describe the study's methodology and data collection techniques, while Chapters Four to

Seven detail the study's findings and discussion. Finally, Chapter Eight will outline the study's conclusion and contributions.

*Chapter One*

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**The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:**

**Special Educational Needs Provision in Mainstream Schools and the Areas**

**Requiring Development**

**1.1. Introduction**

Education is one of the KSA's top funding priorities for the Ministry of Education (MoE), with a yearly budget of 193 billion SR (£41 billion)[1] covering the seven following areas: administration, teaching, career development, student services, extracurricular activities, buildings and maintenance (MoE, 2019). In 1970, the first Education Policy Document was established to provide education for all in appropriate environments. Consisting of nine chapters and 236 articles, it included general principles for guiding the education system (MoE, 2019).

The Mainstream, Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Higher Education sectors are under the authority of the MoE. Due to cultural-religious aspects, the KSA's educational system is segregated by gender, from age 6, (including in the administrative offices) with the same educational support offered to both male and female students. However, children aged 3-5 are mixed, because there are no males studying or working in the early year's education field.

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[1] For comparison, £1 equals 5–6 SR.

My study focuses on preschool and primary mainstream government-run (free) schools with SEN programs. In general, mainstream and SEN schooling is divided into the four following levels:

- Preschool: Children aged 3–5 years (girls and boys);

- Primary school: Six years of study starting from age 6–7;

- Secondary school: Three years of study from age 13;

- High school: The final stage of schools' educational instruction consisting of 3 years of study; students usually graduate at age 18 years.

Higher Education has contributed to the development of SEN provision in the KSA. In 1984, the School of Education at King Saud University was the only university to provide undergraduate and postgraduate certification in the fields of intellectual disabilities (ID), specific learning disabilities, hearing disability, visual disability, talents, and later, a programme on autism and behavioural disorders (Almosa, 2008). Later, other universities began to grant undergraduate degrees in the field in Riyadh city, including Emam University and Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University.

For students graduating from the School of Education, the MoE established an 'Adequacy Test' in 2013, in cooperation with the Ministry of Civil Services, for selecting skilled graduate students in education to become teachers (MoE, 2019).

In this chapter, I will focus on the development of the SEN service system, I will then outline the tasks of the educational authority, later I will review the SEN polices, the SEN programme in mainstream schools and finally, the areas requiring development.

## 1.2. Development of Special Educational Needs Services

In the KSA, society's treatment of students labelled with SEN has changed, shifting from isolating and pitying them to promoting SEN programmes in mainstream schools (Almosa, 1999). Prior to 1958, the families of students labelled with SEN were responsible for taking care of their children, sending them to SEN institutes in countries like Egypt or Jordan for most of the year (Alquraini, 2013). This was necessary because no educational support was available in the KSA due to the belief that students labelled with SEN could not be held accountable for worship, which was interpreted as meaning that such students were also unable to learn.

In 1958, SEN education was introduced by Sheikh Alghanem, a Saudi man with a visual disability who studied Braille with an Iraqi teacher visiting the KSA; he then organised private lessons to teach Braille to people with visual disabilities (Alfaiz, 2006). The group was enthusiastic, and many newspapers started to write about Braille (Almosa, 1999). After seeing how students benefitted, the MoE recognised the importance of educating individuals with visual disabilities, and the Aljabra mainstream school began offering evening classes for such students. The school provided the materials needed to teach Braille and helped the students study at their mainstream schools during the day (Aldabas, 2015).

The KSA led the Arabic world in including students with visual disabilities in mainstream schools. However, by 1960, the concept of Special Educational Needs was held in a position of respect as a *special* service right of learners. As a consequence, the MoE came to believe that students with visual disabilities should be educated in separate schools. They established the Al Noor ('Lights') Institute in Riyadh[2] for boys, and 4 years later,

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[2] Riyadh, the KSA's capital city, is the city my study is situated in, other reasons will be discussed in Research Design and Methodology, Chapter Three.

opened an institute for girls (Salloom, 1995; Almosa, 1999). Some teachers working at these institutions had visual disabilities, and the curriculum was the same as the mainstream national curriculum but in Braille; there was also an orientation and mobility training (Aldabas, 2015). In 1964, the Al Amal (Hope) Institute was founded for students with hearing disability in Riyadh (Almosa, 2008). The institute taught the national curriculum through sign language. Some teachers had hearing disability, while others were teachers who used sign language translators in their teaching (Aldabas, 2015). These institutions became the foundation for the KSA's SEN services.

Since the late 1960s, the MoE has invested significant resources in preparing SEN teachers[3] and providing increasing financial support for SEN schools. This expanding commitment resulted from the MoE's mandate to provide academic opportunities like those offered in mainstream schools for students labelled with SEN (Alahmadi, 2009). Thus, in 1962, the MoE established the Department of Special Learning as the education authority (becoming the General Directorate of Special Education [GDSE] in 1974) to oversee the education of students labelled with SEN. 'Learning' was changed to 'education' to evoke a more comprehensive concept, covering all parts of a student's life (Almosa, 1999).

Focussing on SEN services for students labelled with ID, there are different *government-run* (free) school settings in Riyadh; some are overseen by the GDSE (MoE, 2019) and some by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development (2019), depending on the student labelled with challenging ID needs. In 1971, a decade after SEN services were launched in the KSA, two institutions were established for students labelled with *mild to moderate*

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[3] SEN teachers hold a Bachelor's degree in SEN with a major in a specific area, such as ID.

*ID*; after the movement towards SEN programme in mainstream school, these schools became a prevalent setting for students labelled with *"severe" ID* and most of students labelled with *mild to moderate ID* enrolled in mainstream schools.

The two schools have the same grades as mainstream schools, from preschool to high school, serving students up to the age of 18 years; however, they have different curricula. The National SEN Curricula focus on behavioural skills, Islamic studies, social studies and daily life skills (MoE, 2019). Unfortunately, after completing their education at age 18, most students labelled with ID have no opportunity to pursue further education. Rather, with limited transition services, some resort to training for certifications in specific activities, such as canning or sewing (Aldabas, 2015), via the Ministry of Labor and Social Development (2019).

Two other schools in Riyadh were opened in the same year for students labelled with profound ID, namely, the Day Care Centre and Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centre. They were supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development. In 1978, this department began to provide a monthly stipend of 1100 SR (₤230) to the families of students labelled with profound ID (Ministry of Labour and Social Development, 2019).

Since 1999, the government has supported the *private sector* (not free) by providing licenses for SEN schools supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (Almagloth, 2000). In 1981, there were only two private SEN schools in Riyadh; by 2015, there were 35 (Ministry of Labour and Social Development, 2019). Since the Ministry of Labour and Social Development supervises the private SEN schools in Riyadh, they have supported families by paying the private schools' fees, estimated at 30 000 SR (₤6000) per year, if their students are not given a place in the government SEN school (Ministry of Labour and Social Development, 2019).

In 1996, the GDSE opened SEN programmes in mainstream schools in Riyadh for students labelled with ID, visual disability and hearing disability (Almosa, 2008; Alkhozama, 2009), as described in more detail later in this chapter. The next section will present the GDSE as an education authority.

## 1.3. The General Directorate of Special Education

The GDSE as an education authority established in 1962 under the MoE, has several departments[4] that oversee educational services, namely, the Departments of visual disability, hearing disability, ID, specific learning Disabilities and talented Students (Almosa, 1999). However, it was not until 1998 and 2014 that the Departments of Autism and Behaviour, respectively, were finally established (MoE, 2019).

### 1.3.1. *Department of Intellectual Disabilities*

The Department of ID, established in 1962, was one of the MoE's first departments (Almosa, 1999). It adopted the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities' definition of ID, which refers to a deficiency in an individual's functionality characterised by below-average mental performance determined by the intelligence quotient (IQ) tests. A score of 50-55–75 indicates mild ID, 35-40 to 50-55 indicates moderate ID, 20-25 to 35-40 indicates "severe" ID and less than 20-25 indicates "profound" ID. Mental deficits are correlated with deficiencies occurring before the age of 18 in two or more of the following abilities: communication, self-care, using community resources, self-direction and daily life, social and functional academic skills (Almosa, 1999).

According to Alnahdi (2014), the GDSE's 2011 report showed that approximately 18000 students labelled with ID received SEN services from approximately 4500 SEN teachers,

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[4] Each department has two divisions because of the separate-gender schools for girls and boys.

meaning that SEN services for students labelled with ID represent 50–60% of all SEN services in the KSA.

The GDSE's responsibilities include developing SEN curricula for students labelled with ID; conducting follow ups regarding the students' individual educational plans (IEPs)[5]; providing financial support; and employing SEN teachers, psychologists and social and speech therapists. The directorate also supports staff training, coordinates conferences, and establishes overseas SEN programmes in mainstream schools (MoE, 2019).

The GDSE has also created educational policies and an Organisation Guide for SEN schools and SEN programmes in mainstream schools (MoE, 2019), and it allocates SEN supervisors based on their experience and performance (Alkhozama, 2009). The supervisors serve as liaisons between the GDSE and schools, meeting with SEN teachers and writing reports about their performance (Regulations of Special Educational Programmes and Institutes [RSEPI], 2001). Moreover, each student labelled with SEN/ID is provided with a monthly stipend of approximately 300 SR (£60) and travel benefits (Almosa, 1999). Next, I will illustrate the SEN legislation in KSA.

## 1.4. Special Educational Needs Legislation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The KSA has five pieces of legislation related to the SEN system, as described in the following sections. I selected some elements of the legislation that I view as emphasising polices that support inclusive education.

### 1.4.1. *Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Education Policy Document (1970)*

Early advocacy to improve the quality of SEN services led to the KSA Education Policy Document in 1970 (9 Acts with Articles 188–191). It focussed on three groups of

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[5] This mandated plan includes individualised objectives tailored to each student labelled with ID needs, as well as ways and materials used to support her/him in learning effectively and reaching her/his goals.

individuals—those labelled with Mental Retardation,[6] visual disability and hearing disability. Chapter Eight, Act 5 is related to Education for the students labelled with SEN. *Article 188-189* required the MoE to provide high-quality education with SEN curricula to teach the Islamic principles to students labelled with mental retardation, appropriate behaviours and enable them to develop the skills needed to reach their potential (KSA Education Policy Document, 1970).

In addition, *Article 169* gave a special position to those working in SEN sectors. As Alkhozama (2009) states, it requested that the GDSE increase the salaries of SEN teachers and non-specialists by approximately 30% and 20%. These changes were made to encourage Saudi citizens to work in this area. After the publication of this document, the MoE began to open more SEN schools in many cities and send undergraduate students abroad under the auspices of the GDSE to earn SEN certificates (Alotybee, 1999).

**1.4.2.** *Disabilities Law (1987)*

In 1987, the first law specifically for disability was passed. It defined disability, codified as the right *to receive equal educational*, healthcare, social care and rehabilitation services (Disabilities Law, 1987). It required all public agencies to provide students labelled with SEN the services necessary for them to live independently (Alquraini, 2011). As a sign of its importance, the law was published in the MoE's (2019) official magazine.

**1.4.3.** *Special Educational Needs Strategies (1995)*

To achieve the Disabilities Law's goals, the GDSE established SEN strategies (Articles 54–57, 188–194) clarifying that students labelled with SEN *are an integral part of the educational system* (Special Educational Strategies, 1995). These strategies included 10

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[6] Children labelled with ID.

themes for the provision of SEN services for all students in mainstream and special schools, which are as follows:

- Expanding the role of SEN services and *making them integral parts of the mainstream schools*;

- *Creating environments in mainstream schools to meet the needs* of students labelled with SEN;

- Developing staff as specialists to educate students labelled with SEN;

- Developing SEN curricula for student labelled with SEN;

- Adapting modern technology to support the needs of students labelled with SEN so that *they can be included in mainstream schools*; and

- Cooperating with other agencies in the KSA and abroad to develop services for students labelled with SEN (Almosa, 1999).

### 1.4.4. *Disability Code (2000)*

The GDSE passed the Disabilities Code in 2000 to *guarantee the rights* of students labelled with SEN; its 16 articles lay out policies in all areas regarding service provision. For example, ***Article 2*** guarantees the rights to suitable work and *appropriate educational*, rehabilitative and health services. It also encourages the community to contribute to these services and guarantees the provision of special services. ***Article 3*** guarantees that students labelled with SEN can easily access their schools; this is a right related to the ability to access rehabilitation, education, medical and other public spaces *without facing discrimination.* (Disability Code, 2000).

### 1.4.5. *Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (2001)*

The 2001 RSEPI were created by professionals from the GDSE and Department of SEN at King Saud University, who reviewed the relevant American policies, including the

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990. This established the value of the *Least Restrictive Environment and the maximum extent of their abilities* in which students labelled with SEN, alongside their peers, can be educated to the maximum extent of their abilities. The 2001 RSEPI provided a guide to help school staff *organise their tasks to guarantee the rights* of students labelled with SEN *to access necessary services and consistent high services quality.* There are 101 articles across 11 chapters. Examples are given below (RSEPI, 2001).

*Section One* in RSEPI (2001) defines 76 terms relevant to teachers, administrators and other service providers, including the concepts of disability, *SEN programmes in mainstream schools*, *access to the Least Restrictive Environment*, 'normal and abnormal students', SEN teachers, consultant teachers, multidisciplinary teams, IEPs and resource rooms. *Section Two* outlines the aims of the KSA's SEN system. One article state that SEN services should focus on meeting students' *unique needs* and helping them to live independently *and integrate into society* by obtaining the necessary skills.

*Section Three* addresses the foundation of SEN services in the KSA; its 28 subsections discuss *the rights* of students labelled with SEN to *receive an appropriate education*. It emphasises that students labelled with SEN should *be educated in a mainstream education setting*, clarifying that IEP teams choose the placement of students labelled with SEN after considering the alternative *best placement options*.

*Section Seven* states that *mainstream schools are the natural environment for every student*, and to *combat stereotypes about SEN, students should grow together in inclusive environments*. Furthermore, it states that students labelled with SEN *should have access to all school facilities, participate in all indoor and outdoor activities* and receive all the

facilities necessary for their education, *just like their peers.* However, to ensure a sufficient focus on them, it stipulates that the students who are labelled with SEN should constitute no more than 20% of the school population. Next, I will explain the biggest project supporting inclusive education.

## 1.5. The Tatweer Programme Project

The MoE has many projects intended to encourage rapid development in education and meet the reform demands. One of these projects, the Tatweer programme, was established in 2013 for developing SEN programmes in mainstream schools. Through this project, the GDSE aims to achieve inclusion for all students in every grade via the following steps: (1) revising the country's education laws and clarifying the process for implementing inclusion, (2) training specialists in the international education principle of education for all students, and (3) creating a stimulating learning environment that responds to the differing needs of all students (MoE, 2019).

Albazey, who oversees the project, states that many procedures had already been put in place to achieve the project goals, such as providing training courses to teachers and administrators in mainstream schools. These courses focus on SEN-related concepts, principles that underpin SEN services, stages of development of students labelled with SEN, causes of disabilities, the most common evaluation methods, Individual Educational Plans, international teaching methods, and Modified Behavioural Programmes (MoE, 2019).

Albazey adds that the Tatweer programme is now targeting around 150 staff members throughout the KSA, including SEN and mainstream teachers and leaders, to outfit them with the knowledge to train their colleagues (MoE, 2019). More details on the SEN programme in mainstream schools will be discussed in the next section.

## 1.6. Special Educational Needs Programmes in Mainstream Schools

As explained in the preface, the last decade has witnessed radical changes in SEN services in the KSA, including the increased education of students labelled with SEN in mainstream schools (Almosa, 2010), based on the KSA education system principle that the mainstream school is a suitable place for all students (Almosa, 1999). As I am focusing on mainstream school for girls, there is no clear estimation of how many mainstream schools for girls in Riyadh have SEN programmes, one of the SEN supervisors mentioned that there are approximately 81 SEN programmes in mainstream schools in different Riyadh sectors.

These programmes are described as الدمج (Aldamj) in the KSA's educational system. Almosa (1999, 2010), a former leader of the GDSE, defines Aldamj as a SEN programme that enrols 'abnormal' students in mainstream schools, allowing them to socialise with their peers, equal access, and individualised support. Almosa (2010) also explains that these programmes allow students labelled with SEN to be taught with their peers in mainstream classrooms in the *Least Restrictive Environment*, to the maximum extent of their abilities, as mandated in the 2001 RSEPI.

The KSA, as explained above, has issued some policies supporting the international trend by stipulating that students labelled with SEN are integral to the KSA's educational system (Almosa, 1999). According to these documents, Almosa (2010) describes SEN schools as artificial, confirming the necessary enhancement of the role of mainstream schools as the natural educational environment for students labelled with SEN and their peers, where they can grow together and promote a discourse whereby students labelled with SEN should be accepted socially.

Moreover, the KSA educational system followed the latest international polices to guarantee the rights of students labelled with SEN in mainstream schools, as suggested in the Salamanca Statement (Gaad, 2011). The government has also signed other agreements, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008–2009 (Weber, 2012). This agreement includes 50 articles in different sectors, *Article 24* stipulates that students labelled with SEN should not be excluded from mainstream education based on their disability. They should support individuals' efforts in teaching, enhancing their dignity, self-esteem and ability to participate in their societies. Moreover, inclusive education should enable students labelled with SEN to participate effectively in a free society with a positive lifelong experience (United Nations, 2016).

In practice, in 1984, the first informal attempt was made to include students labelled with ID with their peers in a school in Hofouf, a city in the east of KSA (Almosa, 2010). Then, in 1989, King Saud University preschool opened to students labelled with SEN.

A more formal step was taken in 1996, when the GDSE opened SEN programmes in mainstream schools in Riyadh for students labelled with ID, visual disability, and hearing disability (Almosa, 2008; Alkhozama, 2009). Students labelled with "profound" and multiple ID remained segregated in Day Care Centres and Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centres, viewing them as not part of education sectors, but under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, even those with high need for peer communication and interaction (Aljaser, 2010).

This issue arose when I was pursuing my Bachelor's degree, and I realised many mainstream school staff members were unfamiliar with the philosophy of inclusion; many schools refused to enrol students labelled with SEN and viewed the SEN programmes as

a failure, resisting Western countries' practices. Nevertheless, in 1996–1999, the number of SEN programmes in mainstream schools increased from 3 to 58 (Almosa, 1999).

After a few years, local communities came to view the SEN programmes as socially beneficial. Alnofal (2002) published an article in a local magazine titled 'Aldamj Dream Comes True in KSA' and stated that, because the KSA is a large country, it is especially challenging to expand SEN schooling into rural areas. However, he added that offering SEN services in rural mainstream schools gives students labelled with SEN the opportunity to benefit from specialised services in their neighbourhood schools.

Statistically, according to the GDSE, in 2006 more students who are labelled with SEN are educated in mainstream schools than in SEN schools—56% of girls[7] and 90% of boys labelled with SEN attend KSA mainstream schools Almosa, Alsaratawi, Alabduljabbar, Albatal & Alhusain, 2006). Moreover, in 1996–2007, there was an increase from 18 to 971 SEN programmes in KSA's mainstream schools (Almosa, 2010). In 2011, there were 704 SEN schools for boys labelled with ID and 286 SEN schools for girls. SEN programmes were higher, and there were 2311 SEN programmes in mainstream schools for boys labelled with ID, and 999 for girls (Alnahdi, 2014).

As a key member in the GDSE, Almosa (2004) claims that it is not just the quantity but also the quality of the KSA's SEN programmes that makes them as effective as their international counterparts. However, the SEN programmes in mainstream schools are still highly segregated, and as discussed in the preface, there is still room for improvement, which will be explained later in this chapter.

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[7] Since the KSA's educational system is segregated by gender (including the administrative offices) and although both follow the same legislation and both have SEN provision despite the gender segregation, the action for this support from the administration offices could be different which explains the significant difference in the numbers of schools by gender in these studies.

### 1.6.1. *Special Educational Needs Programmes and Educational Leadership*

The Organisational Guide for Mainstream Schools in the KSA (2013) states that schools are to be governed by a SL, three vice-principals (for student affairs, educational affairs and administrative affairs) and two or three secretaries. This structure is depicted in Figure 2.
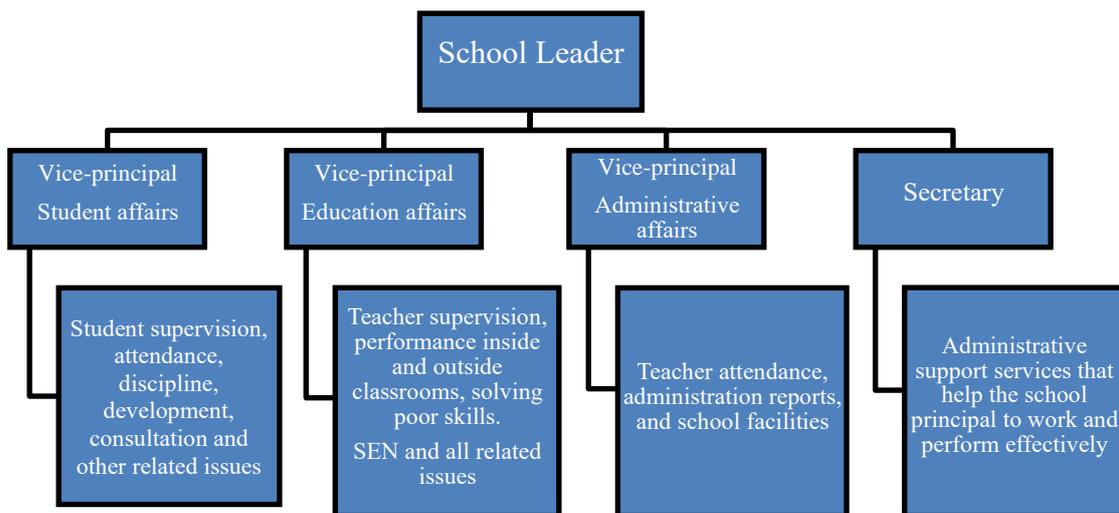


**Figure (2)** Kingdom of Saudi Arabia schools' administrative Structure.

### 1.6.1.1. *Terms and Conditions for Employment*

The MoE has a set of conditions that SLs need to meet. An SL must have an undergraduate degree, pass an interview testing her on formal administration regulations and exhibit leadership and problem-solving skills. Moreover, she must receive B grades on her performance for 3 years as a vice-principal or work as a teacher for at least 4 years. The SL must also complete two general training courses and one leadership training course per year (MoE, 2019).

**1.6.1.2.** *School Leaders' Responsibilities*

According to *Article 26* in Section Six of the 2001 RSEPI, SLs are tasked with the primary administrative and pedagogical responsibilities for the SEN programmes. These responsibilities comprise the following:

1. Directing schoolwork to achieve the SEN programme's aim in mainstream schools;

2. Supporting student interaction inside and outside the classroom by providing the necessary facilities to teachers to allow students labelled with SEN to perform as well as their peers;

3. Ensuring that students labelled with SEN have the right to use the school's facilities;

4. Overseeing the transition from a SEN to mainstream school;

5. Monitoring attendance for the year;

6. Overseeing the school budget and ensuring it accounts for students labelled with SEN;

7. Determining how many lessons each SEN teacher should have (18–20 per week);

8. Encouraging cooperation between school staff and the parents of students labelled with SEN;

9. Serving as an example for the staff and reflecting the characteristics of leadership;

10. Creating a welcoming environment for students labelled with SEN;

11. Overseeing procedures aimed at the acceptance of students labelled with SEN in mainstream schools; and

12. Cooperating with the SEN supervisors to enhance inclusive practices by applying the recommendations and participating in GDSE committees.

Moreover, *Article 22* states that the SL is the SEN programme's primary supervisor and must provide the necessary supplies to support the requirements of students labelled with SEN and their teachers. They must work to create environments that encourage students labelled with SEN and their peers to interact. SLs also need to oversee the financial budget to cover the SEN programme (RSEPI, 2001).

Moreover, the GDSE, established the Organisational Guide for SEN in the KSA (2014) that SL need to follow in addition to The Organisational Guide for Mainstream Schools in the KSA (2013, 2014).

#### 1.6.1.4. *Evaluation Criteria*

There is a set of leadership behaviours that SLs are expected to adopt to ensure high-quality performance while pursuing their schools' aims. The Organisational Guide for Mainstream Schools in the KSA (2013, 2014) outlines evaluation criteria for SLs. This includes organisational capacity; knowledge of school systems and procedures; the ability to develop management work strategies, define work in steps with a timeline, complete work on time, and finally, accept and implement directions. Other parts of the evaluation include follow ups of the SLs' records, which have a significant evaluative role. These records include materials on lesson preparation, admissions, meetings, school exam schedules, committees, job descriptions, the school system and operational plans.

Further information on educational leadership will be discussed in the Literature Review Chapter Two. Next, I will discuss the areas requiring development.

### 1.7. The Areas Requiring Development (Research Problem)

Statistically, the number of the SEN programmes has increased in KSA mainstream schools, and as the GDSE claims, it is not just the quantity but also the quality of these programmes that makes them effective within the international trend.

As explained in the preface, I can say that the KSA educational system is eager towards inclusive education, aligning themselves with the international movement. However, the educational reform initiatives for addressing polices, like the Salamanca statement, are young, with a considerable need for improvement.

It can be explained that the KSA has shifted towards inclusive education by implementing an array of polices and other structural changes in some mainstream schools. This educational reform orientation doesn't reflect a true change in school perception, it only shows the desire to follow the international trend. These changes, as explained previously, amount to integration rather than inclusion, which raises challenges for mainstream schools to respond to all students' diverse abilities, with other parts needed to be addressed.

A review of the previous policies that the school system based its practice on (School Structure changing) shows contradictions between the orientation towards inclusion in practice and the real language used in these polices. For example, Article 39 of the RSEPI (2001) states that mainstream teachers' tasks include accepting students labelled with SEN in their classrooms and collaborating with SEN teachers by polices. However, as Alnahdi (2014) states, what happens in these schools is not inclusion: even during breaks, students labelled with SEN often spend time with one another instead of interacting with their mainstream peers. Another example, as raised by Alnahdi (2014), is that mainstream teachers do not usually welcome mixed-ability classrooms, refusing to accept students labelled with ID in their classrooms. These contradictions, observed in my study, involve several components.

*First,* inclusion requires not only changes to school structure, including policies, it also requires changes to how people think of disability and inclusion. The understanding of

disability and inclusion is worth exploring, as this understanding influences the school lives of students labelled with ID. It appears that the KSA's educational system is still trying to fully grasp Aldamj as inclusion beyond mere School Structure changes, specifically focusing on Inclusive School Culture. This is also related to disability understanding – to achieve inclusive education this needs a radical rethinking where mainstream schools give up the traditional view of disability.

**Second,** the concept of the *Least Restrictive Environment* mentioned in the KSA's education policies aims to enable students labelled with SEN to benefit from all available services in mainstream schools (Aldabas, 2015). However, the *Least Restrictive Environment* in the Aldamj definition is provided without clarifying in detail the requirements that constitute it (Alquraini, 2013). Consequently, Alnahdi (2014) states that the SEN programme implemented in the context of mainstream schools remains unclear for the educational practitioner, giving schools more flexibility (Weber, 2012) and adapting the term based on the unique characteristics of each School Culture.

This crisis related to the lack of consensus on how to interpret the term *'Least Restrictive Environment'* has practical implications for whether and how to use multiple alternative placements, such as isolated SEN classrooms in mainstream schools or SEN Recourse Rooms/Units[8] without considering students' rights/desires.

**Third,** there is a crisis that relates to the confusion surrounding the term 'Aldamj' as inclusion. The overlapping meanings of inclusion and integration/Mainstreaming from English to Arabic cause the same procedures to be applied for both terms. Many

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[8] In the KSA, SEN Recourse Room/Unit is allocated in most preschools where a student labelled with ID have one to one support in no more than half hours with specialists including SEN teachers and psychologists.

professionals in the KSA think *integration* is equivalent to *inclusion* (Alahmadi, 2009), and both terms have been employed since Aldamj (Weber, 2012). The term 'partial inclusion' has also been employed (Gaad, 2011), but this is paradoxical given that true inclusion, by definition, cannot be partial. Moreover, the issue of a lack of literature on this terminology has not been addressed (Gaad, 2011)**,** as the two models often appear simultaneously, and many writers in the KSA use Aldamj to refer to several different practices in mainstream schools (e.g. Alkhozama, 2009).

To sum up, it is clear that the GDSE has fallen short of implementing true inclusion. Mostly, it has focussed *on quantity,* not *quality, prioritising the placement* (integration) of students labelled with ID in mainstream schools. Thus, it is difficult to argue that neighbourhood schools in the KSA are inclusive. With continued focus on integration, inclusion is still seen as more of a slogan than a reality, meaning KSA neighbourhood schools are still struggling to include all learners. As Alquraini (2013) states, there remains a clear gap between the aspirations of the KSA's educational policies and the reality of inclusive practices, with room for improvement.

My PhD study can therefore contribute to supporting the SEN services that are provided in mainstream schools to move away from traditional ways of thinking (SEN) related to Psycho-Medical Model, because students labelled with ID are excluded within neighbourhood schools.

## 1.8. Conclusion

During my experience in SEN services and mainstream schools in KSA, I have seen reform practices shift in terms of the school systems based on education policies, budgets, and specialists as a human support, as discussed above. However, the SEN programmes in mainstream schools remains underdeveloped (Alahmadi, 2009; Weber, 2012;

Alquraini, 2013; Alnahdi, 2014), and mainstream schools are struggling to be inclusive and truly welcome students labelled with ID. It can be said that these restructuring efforts, combined with the enrolment in mainstream schools of an increasing number of students labelled with ID, represent a starting point in the overall pursuit of giving them a legitimate chance to attend neighbourhood schools with their mainstream peers.

Next, there will be a review of the literature in several aspects related to School Culture, Disability Studies and Educational Leadership, focusing on the study aims in order to identify the gaps which my study addresses.

*Chapter Two*

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**Literature Review**

**2.1. Introduction**

As explained in the preface, globally, previous decades have witnessed the types of educational reforms that have changed schools' actions toward achieving their aims (Fullan, 2001). Thus, for these educational reforms, as Burnett (2005) explains, schools in many countries continue to confront obstacles that prevent them from achieving their aims. This is especially true for mainstream schools with an inclusive orientation that provide services for students labelled with Special Educational Needs (SEN), including Intellectual Disabilities (ID).

In 1996, mainstream schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) educational system have been revisited as the best environment for educating all students (Almosa, 2008). The KSA's Ministry of Education (MoE) for educational reforms seeks to change School Structure so that mainstream schools support SEN programmes, for example, by providing specialists, budgets for teaching materials, curricula, and school systems and education policies (see Chapter One) that are essential for successfully implementing SEN programmes.

Nevertheless, on their own, these changes do not make schools inclusive. Doyle (2001) explains that, for mainstream schools to account for diverse (abilities and[1]) and needs, it

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[1] In this thesis, as previously explained, the term "abilities" refer to each student being viewed as an individual with their own abilities and where these varied abilities are given a value.

is vital to change the School Culture. Thus, a critical point in educational reform, as Burnett (2005) states, is having a School Leader (SL) who understands both their School Structure and School Culture, where cultural models (e.g. Inclusive School Culture) help to describe the underpinning behavioural practices.

To elaborate further, this chapter reviews the literature on inclusion and educational leadership related to the study followed the sequences of preface introduction. Move from the general idea as a concept to more practical aspect of leading of change. *First,* it will focus on how the concept of School Culture shows how each school distinct and unique and also will identify the complexity of School Culture in the literature. *Second,* to make the concept of School Culture clearer, this chapter will review the differences between School Culture versus School Structure by identifying three change levels including the procedural level, structural level and cultural level.

*Third,* it will consider School Culture and changed actions, which I refer to as Mainstream Schools' Needs rather than SEN. This section makes clearer the gaps in the literature that the study contributes to. *Fourthly,* this leads to review the redefinition of 'intellectual disabilities' in Disability Studies and Disability Studies in Education. *Fourth,* this section will focus on how various understandings of disability have endured over time and how this influenced educational practices, segregation, integration and inclusion. *Finally,* as inclusion is viewed as a process of school transformation, this section will focus on identifying educational leadership versus management, and also will illustrate transformational leadership theory when leading for change.

Next. the concept of School Culture will be explained.

## 2.2. School Culture

Since the 1970s, education has had a growing interest in the concept of culture due to the dissatisfaction with management models focussed on the structural aspects of schools (Bush & Middlewood, 2013). This concept shows that every school has a different culture, making each school distinct (Schweiker-Marra, 1995; Hinde, 2004).

Leading from this, most schools share similar classroom and common area designs, and the day is organised predictably. Yet, while there are similarities, the School Culture represents the uniqueness of a school (Finnan & Levin, 2000). Some schools have a clear shared vision, some have environments that welcome parents and some have a School Culture with eager and collaborative teachers. However, others have an unclear staff relationship, discouraged members, lack of commitment and a failure to inspire.

The concept of culture is complex (Finnan & Levin, 2000), as the literature defines School Culture in several ways. Bush and Middlewood (2013) define School Culture by focussing on values and norms held by individuals, coalescing into shared language as informal factors rather than formal structural elements. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) also view School Culture as including unconscious elements, such as the school's ideology, that guide staff behaviour and practices. Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu (1999) declare that investigating School Culture helps to understand factors that motivate and influence school members' daily behaviour. Similarly, Carrington (1999) views a School Culture as a set of beliefs that characterise a school, shape its daily functions, and influence how school members treat each other and collaborate.

Other definitions show that School Culture is something that surrounds and gives meaning to school members, but it cannot be seen (Finnan & Levin, 2000). If a School Culture is coherent, however, then Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) argue that every school

member will be able to predict how others will act in a particular situation, which in turn, makes school members more comfortable. The unspoken rules for acceptable action are what makes schools either flow smoothly or break down (Stoll, 1998). Briefly, Hinde (2004) defines the School Culture as the unrecorded rules that direct a school's activities and conduct to achieve school aims.

In referring to School Culture, Bass and Avolio (1994) describe the school as an organisation, stating that the School Culture is the social glue that holds school members together. Stoll (1998) also explains that the School Culture is a neglected concept even though it is the basic essence of school as an organisation. Stoll adds that School Culture is what generates the identity or mindset of school life, where each school has different realities.

Wren (1999) describes School Culture as the hidden curriculum, where the school administrator needs to have a complete picture of their school by the exploration of the School Culture and its almost imperceptible influence. Wren adds that this curriculum manifests in encouragement from teachers and administrators towards directing students' ideal behaviours; it helps students become productive members, in school and then later in society. Similar, for Miravet and García (2013), School Culture is a set of implicit expectations which directs student and staff practices. In their definition, the School Culture is not static; it is shaped constantly through school member interactions and reflections.

Although the school climate is one feature of the School Culture, Engels, Hotton, Devos, Bouckenooghe (2008), McCarley, Peters and Decman (2016) and Allen, Grigsby & Peters (2015) use the phrase 'school climate' as a synonym for School Culture. Engels et al. (2008) and McCarley et al. (2016) describe the school climate as reflecting on member

behaviour, including hard work, interaction and intimate nonverbal communication and friendships. Moreover, as Evans (2001) explains, the school climate, norms, philosophy and symbols emanate and integrate to form a culture that is unique, deep and stable. For more clarity, Stover (2005) states that the climate is how school members feel towards their schools, whereas culture is why they feel this way. Stover provides an example of bullies, and how they have unfavourable effects on the school climate. The question of why this behaviour exists digs deeper into School Culture (values, beliefs and attitudes), which in Stover's view, is the only way to achieve real change.

Others, such as Peterson and Deal (1998), define School Culture as the prospects, beliefs and values that are created over time in solving problems; in their view, it shapes how a school's staff and students act. Hargreaves (1994) also confirms that School Culture is problem solving, viewing today's culture as targeted towards solve tomorrow's matters. It is clarified by Schweiker-Marra (1995) that a School Culture comprises of the beliefs, norms and values that provide a feeling of stability and continuity for educators in solving problems towards achieving demanded changes. Then as Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) explain, School Culture is a framework that a school creates, not a problem to be solved, but rather, it deals with emergent problems. However, they also maintain that the School Culture can be an invisible force field that can limit thought and action, a box outside of which school staff are forced to think. Bass and Avolio (1994) agree that changing can constrain innovation because of past roots, and they note that School Culture with strong internal guides prevents top administrative powers from hindering efforts to change. As Finnan and Levin (2000) and Hudgins (2012) explain, this means that culture can either facilitate or frustrate change.

To summarise, Evans (2001) offers a definition of School Culture that has three levels—artefacts, values and assumptions. Artefacts are the most tangible visible level of culture of an institution—the features that you notice, feel and compare that inform first impressions. These include the physical space, social climate, displays of interaction and behaviour, emotion displayed, rituals and language heard. These include how the classrooms are arranged, buildings decorated, and meetings run, as well as how people talk to each other. However, even these artefacts can be seen, they can be difficult to interpret without the deeper understanding of motivators, such as values as a second level.

At the second level are values, which are more complex. To begin with, this level was hypothetical, but it was ultimately accepted by school members and has become the way of doing things. Values include concepts like equity, in which every student can learn by respecting differences. Sometimes, these values are subconscious but still guide behaviour. However, the values may occasionally be ignored, even if known, until they reach the status of beliefs and assumptions.

Finally, the culture's deepest level is the basic assumptions and beliefs on which culture are based. These exist at the most unconscious depths, cannot easily be expressed and are seen as the truly cultural level. Fundamentally, this refers to the underlying shared convictions that guide thoughts and behaviour and create the culture.

Beyond these levels, to understand School Culture, this thesis also needs to review the differences between School Culture and School Structure, which will be accomplished in the next section.

## 2.3. School Culture and School Structure

According to Stoll (1998), School Culture and School Structure are related and interdependent, and can influence one another, for example when school teachers have

the *motivation* (School Culture) to develop part of curriculum, but the *timetable* (School Structure) acts as a barrier for not allowing them to meet during the day. In contrast, the school may provide *computers* (School Structure) for each classroom, but teachers may not use them because they *believe* (School Culture) in minimal risk taking.

Stoll (1998) illustrates that even though School Culture and School Structure are related and interdependent, for effective change in School Structure, it is necessary to check the underlying School Culture. This means, as Bush and Middlewood (2013) explain, that external innovation (such as the educational authority's structural support) usually fails because it is not parallel to the teachers' values, whereas School Culture gives teachers a feeling of ownership over the school educational reforms.

Providing more clarity, Whitaker (2010) identifies three levels to understand the changing practice—procedural, structural and cultural. He defines procedural change as the low-level and simple action of school change, for example, where change is related to the time at which attendance is taken, such as at the beginning of the day or in the last period. Structural change, while more complex than procedural change, can also be seen as a matter of management, where changing is related, for example, to adding more time in the schedule or switching math textbooks.

Whitaker (2010) argues that these examples create changes in the school's organisational structure, but they may not make a change in school members or how they do things that create change. Following from the example above, if a high school class is 90 minutes instead of 50 minutes, the teacher may just hand out more worksheets in the additional period but with the same instructional approach. For the other example, providing new math textbooks does not mean that the teacher will use new teaching strategies or ways of teaching math.

The more challenging level of change is cultural change, which involves changing how school members do things in an organisation. This relates to how school members interact and behave; it is changing the ethos of the school members. For example, if a school has a vision to make all school decisions and actions for the best of all their students, this leads to changing attendance time (procedural change), changing periods times (structural change), and beyond that, changing how teachers teach in the extra time.

The next section to be discussed is School Culture and changing action.

## 2.4. School Culture as Changing Actions

To broaden the understanding of changing School Culture, which I refer to as Mainstream Schools' Needs rather than SEN, it can be said that a school would assume some of the features of what Senge (1990) identifies as a learning organisation, defined as 'an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future' (p. 14). Kruse and Louis (2009) explain that organisational learning is the school's continuous improvement, including deeper collective engagement and understanding of how improvement occurs, when school members take responsibility for problem-solving and when they acknowledge even small failures to consider alternatives.

To clarify, in the process of changing for educational reform, some of the schools that focus on educational reforms (such as having inclusion) may face resistance from some of their members in the implementation of new ideas (Fullan, 2001; Theoharis, 2007; Whitaker, 2010). This includes both the smaller daily changes and the larger ones that take place over time (Stoll, 1998; Finnan & Levin, 2000). Highlighting the difficulty of the change process, Dorczak (2013) states that even the most rigid school community can be transformed and make changes. Some schools, as Whitaker (2010) illustrates, could

achieve the change needed in a few months or even a few weeks; for some, as Evans, (2001) illustrates, change may require a lengthier process.

One of the factors that influences whether a school accepts educational reform is whether its School Culture *values change* (Finnan, 2000). Finnan and Levin (2000) confirm the need to make school members more aware that their school has a culture, and highlight how, in some cases, it is necessary to build a new School Culture to *improve student learning*. Moreover, an impetus to change depends not only on the change type or size but also on involving everyone within the organisation (Salisbury & McGregor, 2002). In other words, organisational change only happens if the employees change as well.

The first step, then, in building a new School Culture is identifying the *desired change*; specifically, it is necessary to identify the *problem* rather than the *symptoms* (Whitaker, 2010). Bass and Avolio (1994) and Kruse and Louis (2009) state that there is a need to modify key aspects of School Culture, questioning its deeply rooted assumptions and values to fit the required direction.

Here, my study contributes to bridging the gap in KSA's SEN literature. Mainstream school segregation or integration practices are not the problem—instead, this is a symptom of *the way of thinking* about disability and inclusion that shapes specific School Culture. To illustrate this, the next section will first provide a brief description of the parallel developments of Disability Studies, then will describe the formation of Disability Studies in Education.

## 2.5. Redefining 'Intellectual Disabilities' in Disability Studies

Some of the traditional ways of thinking about disability can be explored by examining Plato's position as a historical concept, Shanimon and Rateesh (2014) state that the exclusion inherent in Plato's philosophical arguments is based on the normative

conception in human societies of proper functionality of the human nature and body. They add that from these philosophical foundations, it is posited that those outside the norm are undesirable and should be expunged. Alnashar (2009) clarifies Plato's attitude towards humans born with any kind of imperfection, explaining that he completely neglected disabled students, attacking them, considering them redundant, and believing it is not right to take care of them. Alnashar adds that to distinguish between individuals, Plato dreams of a utopia, a city of only healthy people who are perfect in terms of physical strength and ethics. In this utopia, children who are born with defects must be hidden away.

Analysis of this social prejudice of ableism (disability discrimination) allows a focus on the barriers to inclusion at a structural level. These barriers, just like normalcy, can be easily overlooked. Ableism exposes the exclusionary process, locating disability at the social attribution of abilities (Giese & Ruin, 2018). From the perspective of ableism, then, it is especially important to understand that disability is socially and culturally constructed. It turns the gaze, raising the potential for focussing on the exclusionary and discriminatory potential of ableism or normalcy.

Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009) declare that notable developments in Disability Studies were observed in the 1970s, challenging the ableist ideology and social oppression. However, Disability Studies fully emerged in the United Kingdom in the early 1980s (Cameron & Moore, 2014). According to Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009), the legitimacy of the new discipline was strengthened by disabled students' demand for the global disability rights movements of the late 20th century.

Disability Studies has gained ample currency in the academic fields of the humanities and social sciences. In this context, Disability Studies can be seen to have similar approaches

to understanding the differences between human beings, such as in Race and Ethnicity Studies, Women's Studies or Black Studies (Ferguson & Nusbaum, 2012). Disability Studies, as Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009) state, follows the methodological, conceptual and theoretical approaches set by, for example, critical race theory, which critiques traditional approaches by focussing on understanding race as physical and cultural. In Disability Studies, disability and impairment are placed in an historical and social context, analysing the depiction of concepts, cultures and experiences of disability in any form.

To explain further, several authors highlight the key focus in Disability Studies. Ferguson and Nusbaum (2012) state that in Disability Studies, disability is more than just an impairment or functional limitation. Disability Studies acknowledges the embodiment of disability, pushing for recognition and prioritising the subjective experiences of a disabled student. In contrast to a Psycho-Medical Model (PMM) that will be clarified later in this section, embodiment sees individuals as an amalgamation of body and mind to understand them more, and it forces them to see the interior of a disabled student as more than the body (Loja, Costa, Hughes & Menezes, 2013) This means that the subjective experiences of disabled students are placed at the forefront and prioritised. Loja et al. (2013) add more that the identity takes the central position in the disabled embodiment; this signifies that disability is more than physical impairments, rejecting the ableist perspective of disability and encouraging a focus on the total experience. Chaudhry (2019) also acknowledges that considering the embodied experiences of disabled students helps us to understand more about the realities of their lives. What people see as the obstacles or challenges faced by disabled students does not usually reflect the reality of these embodied experiences (both physical and political or those that touch on their lives daily) it ensures that people do not separate the disabled from their lived experience.

Additional literature states that Disability Studies does not involve studying bodily conditions or managing disability; rather, it offers a distinctly critical perspective on the societal and cultural mechanisms used to exclude disabled students (Cameron & Moore, 2014). Disability Studies as Connor, Gabel, Gallagher and Morton (2008) describe also creates an intersectional attitude to understanding disability in relation to class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and nationality.

In addition, Reid and Knight (2006) highlight the centrality of lived experiences over Disability Studies, favouring the use of diverse perspectives and methods, challenging experts' knowledge and interrogating who has the legitimacy to speak on disability-related concerns (e.g. allocation of services). Offering an interrogation of the politics of exclusion and a critique of pathologising beliefs on disability, they elevate the knowledge of disabled students over that of 'experts', promoting democratic participation and challenging hegemony.

Ferguson and Nusbaum (2012) also describe Disability Studies as pushing for the adoption of values-based research in the discipline. Values of openness, fairness, honesty, accountability, stewardship and objectivity bolster the integrity of the research, ensuring that it advances knowledge. They add that within Disability Studies, more intense claims for advocacy have emerged. The legitimacy of ethical considerations within all approaches to researching disabled students is largely accepted.

Moreover, Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009) argue that Disability Studies plays a critical role in re-evaluating existing models of disability, where harmful discourse assumptions have limited the research and understandings of disability. Understanding that this harmful view fails to encompass the diversity of disability, it ignores the need for a more inclusive practice and questioning of the limitations of this discourse. This

critical focussing on models like the social constructionist model, with a primary focus on ensuring lived experiences are understood, provides potent grounds for economic, political and social change. Similarly, Goodley (2014) states that Disability Studies seeks to destigmatise disability, interrogate sociocultural practices, and challenge societies that value health or see its absence as defective. Adding to that, it encapsulates negative practices that discriminate consciously or unconsciously and impose barriers that prevent disabled students from engaging with society on an equal footing

Finally, Ferguson and Nusbaum (2012) state that the study of disability came to be interdisciplinary in order to fully understand all aspects of disability. Disability Studies not only focuses on disciplines such as the arts, humanities, and social sciences, but also SEN education and social work. Disability Studies can only develop if its positioning and perspectives are accessible to all disciplines, with the objective of learning how to support and educate disabled students. Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009) agree that Disability Studies can be viewed as a move towards developing an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary frame of study in an attempt to critique existing notions of disability. It has continually influenced the research agendas of other applied sciences across education, medicine, science, architecture, engineering and design. Following on from this, Disability Studies in Education will now be discussed.

### 2.5.1 *Disability Studies in Education*

Deficit ideology is profoundly entrenched in the social consciousness through the language used in *research* and *educational practice* (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009), and it continues to direct some mainstream schools with SEN services.

Related to *educational scholars*, the literature often presents these students as intellectually impaired and having behavioural, speech and social impediments that cause

them to fall behind under ordinary classroom demands (Beveridge, 1999). Gargiulo (2012) argues that this view was the result of studies that characterized students with their sensory, physical, or cognitive impairments, rather than by their abilities to contribute, or lead successful, happy lives. Disability Studies in Education, as Connor et al. (2008) explain, boosts the influence and visibility of Disability Studies among all educational scholars and provides a platform for the exchange of ideas and collaboration among Disability Studies activists and scholars in education. They add that for educational scholars, Disability Studies in Education is viewed as a key development in inclusive education. This ensures there are practical avenues for educational inclusion, by examines and builds a new discourse of disability emphasising its socio-political contexts towards conceptualisations of diversity, it also highlights the ways in which Disability Studies in Education supports classroom practices.

Grue (2011) also states that Disability Studies seeks to change discourses in which spoken and written language are embedded with societal prejudices, aiming to achieve equality. In addition, Connor et al (2008) argue that the need for clarity about Disability Studies in Education was fuelled by the appropriation or co-option threat from factions opposed to Disability Studies in Education's radical nature and the implications for inclusive education. The assiduous retention of traditional concepts of SEN education in materials purporting to be Disability Studies in Education further strengthened the push for clarity, as most scholars had missed the primacy of the Social Model in the new conceptualisation of disability under Disability Studies in Education, assuming it was a new name for conventional SEN education. Ferguson and Nusbaum (2012) also stress the participatory aspect of Disability Studies, noting that the disabled students, and their families should influence what is explored and taught about Disability Studies, emphasising that scholars with disabilities should be at the forefront of research and training.

In *practice***,** even with good results and increasing rates of learning success, the ideology of normalcy makes segregated education seem natural for students labelled with ID (Reid & Knight, 2006). Reid and Knight (2006) state that this ideology of normalcy tends to disadvantage students with medically defined impairments and has led to the abnormal classification and rationalisation of exclusion, where SEN education is considered inferior to the mainstream curriculum that defines the standards of normalcy. Shakespeare and Watson (2001) also confirm that this ideology of normalcy holds that the school's role is solely to help students labelled with SEN to overcome their deficiencies and fit into the school; if this does not occur, they are segregated.

Disability Studies in Education is not just a synonym for rehabilitation sciences or SEN education (Ferguson & Nusbaum, 2012). In contrast, Disability Studies in Education shifts the focus from individual impairment to a multidisciplinary perspective on disability to effectively amplify the experiences of disabled students. However, Baglieri, Valle, Connor and Gallagher (2011) note that Disability Studies in Education evolved in part as research in SEN education, to answer questions about appropriate teaching practices for students labelled with SEN and the nature of disability. This means the use of the perspective of Disability Studies in Education attempts to offer a critical stance towards conventional SEN education, producing meaningful change to policy and practice.

For example, Storey (2007) states that disability content should be in the national curriculum and textbooks to infuse content on disability into all aspects of the curriculum. Moreover, Storey illustrates that in schools, teachers have ordinarily already received their credentials, so they should be trained on issues like ableism. This training can be presented in terms of discrimination and multiculturalism so teachers can understand the

significance of ableism in schools. One way of delivering this training could be through inviting those with disabilities to present, rather than using SEN teachers, so they can discuss their experiences. Storey (2007) adds that ableism has often been ignored due to the view that simply becoming better teachers and helping students to learn new skills is adequate. However, issues like ableism affect the lives of disabled students, and it is needed to challenge a school setting that is often resistant to change.

Another example from Baglieri et al. (2011) examines Disability Studies in Education and its repercussions for pedagogy. Here, the Disability Studies in Education perspective is aligned with inclusive education, where disability is perceived in terms of interactions among social contexts. Disability Studies in Education works to shape access practice through three considerations—first, viewing notions of ability, disability and learning as unfixed; second, examining how disability is created through interactions and settings; and third, clarifying how different classroom practices mark individuals as disabled and restrict their access to education. One example of this is co-teaching and allowing for the teaching of students with impairments, or those labelled with SEN.

To this end, how disability is defined influences how a student's experiences are seen, as well as the solutions considered by decision-makers (Loreman et al., 2010). Disability Studies aims to foster a new discourse of disability, that suggests being different does not mean being stigmatised (Norwich, 2008; & Farrell, 2004), and that mainstream schools should change their way of thinking about disability (Kenworthy & Whittaker &, 2000). Thus, as Disability Studies aims to foster understandings of disability, my study contributes to the field to localise disability theory by exploring the way the language is employed to describe disabled students in KSA educational context. More explanations will be discussed in the next section, concerning:

### 2.5.2. *Different Models of Understanding Disability*

There is an ongoing debate in Disability Studies about how disabilities are and ought to be conceptualised, where each model is based on finding resolutions by different means (Loreman et al., 2010). This, as Haegele and Hodge (2016) explain, has given rise to various models of disability, such as the Psycho-Medical Model (PMM) and the Social Model (SM) as popular models of disability. However, there are other models, such as the charity model, which minimises disability and portrays it as a problem that can be addressed through charity. The model of human capacity contains the educational, physiological and medical/public health sub-models, all looking at how individuals acquire different capacities. The model of technology studies focuses on the built environment, along with the physical world inhabited by disabled students, and their families. The economic model of disability focuses on market demand as the primary driver for rights and compliance (Shanimon & Rateesh, 2014).

From that, adoption of specific models led to the emergence of different settings in education—segregation, integration and inclusion. The next section addresses the PMM and the SM as popular models of understanding disability.

### 2.5.2.1. *The Psycho-Medical Model (Segregation)*

The PMM (also known as the 'individual model', focussing only on within-child factors), although established as the leading approach for understanding disabilities (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009), is the basis of SEN services that promote unequal treatment due to difference (Connor et al., 2008). To clarify how the model is constructed, discussions of how disability is *defined* and *diagnosed* and how *educational settings* are chosen in this model are outlined next.

*First,* the PMM defines 'disability' as arising from biological and psychological deficits in normal functioning. Biological definitions are based on a deduction of cause and effect, identifying disorders and their causes to alleviate symptoms and prevent future occurrences (Gates, 2007). This model sees SEN/ID as medical conditions, focussing on the aetiology of a syndrome that causes developmental delay, reducing quality of life (Oliver, 2009; Loreman et al., 2010). The biological perspectives define 'disability' in terms of categorisation, judging student's limitations by codified functional norms. 'Abnormal', 'idiotic', 'deficit', 'syndrome' and 'pathology of impairment' are terms associated with this classification (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). Bricout, Porterfield, Tracey and Howard (2004) confirm that the PMM situates disability as a disease or trauma in the context of impairment—cognitive, neurological or sensory and pathological. Moreover, it posits that impairment arises from symptoms, and consequently focuses on eliminating or reducing disability's pathology (Hornby, 2001).

The psychological definition also uses clinical diagnostic criteria similar to those employed in the biological approach (Llewellyn & Hogan, 2000). Psychology is the study of abnormal human behaviour, focussing on criteria that identify deviation from social and statistical norms, like intelligence quotient (IQ) scores or typical maladaptive behaviour (Gates, 2007). According to Dewsbury, Clarke, Randall, Rouncefield and Sommerville (2004) and Johnston (2005), this perspective holds that students should be held responsible for their abnormal behaviours and should try to achieve normality. Consequently, disability is defined as a tragic problem determined by fixed characteristics (Dyson & Gains, 1993; McIntyre, 1993) to be feared or pitied.

It can be seen, as explained above, that these definitions of the concepts of disability comprise a set of assumptions due to *differences* which promote unequal treatment (Connor et al., 2008), resulting in a dehumanising and devaluing identification. It is as

Rayner (2006) states continued to influence the field of SEN services. Skidmore (1996) notes that although the early terminology ('backward student', 'slow learner') differs from that of today, this model has still shaped current research on SEN.

**Second,** regarding diagnostic procedures, the PMM adheres to the notion that only specialists can make decisions regarding student who are perceived to be impaired (Thomas, Walker & Webb, 1998). This involves an assessment process that uses symptoms to measure impairments (Loreman et al., 2010), whether a student meets these accepted functional norms and determines how far she/he is from particular criteria categorising disabilities (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009).

For clarify, Thomas et al. (1998) declare that, in the field of psychometrics, the view is that impaired students should be categorised and labelled according to their difficulties because they all have similar needs. Goodley (2014) also argues that the first thing medical professionals do is label the student (through diagnosis) via the lens of medical discourse, focussing on the causes, effects and experience of impairment.

Landsman (2005) declares that parents of disabled students are faced with the challenge of diagnosis, as well as a model labelling the student and causing permanent damage. This frames disability as a problem intrinsic to the student's impairment, devoid of optimism, as doctors have 'written off' the student. This is difficult to cope with and offensive to a student who, with proper intervention, may 'overcome' the disability, reduced prospects, and social depreciation faced. In these cases, Landsman adds that professionals try to encourage parents who are in denial to accept reality, suggesting further testing to confirm the results. They explain how parents' resist the professional's categorisation and their authority over their children.

***Third,*** SEN provision has a long history. The procedure delineates individual needs—and how those needs are met—based on impairment (Haegele & Hodge, 2016). PMM professionals were considered to be experts in student's problems, making SEN school a natural space for them. Once disabilities are identified, as Boxall, Carson and Docherty (2004) explain, individuals can no longer be taught by ordinary standards; they are isolated from society in SEN programmes that often include treatment with drugs, therapies, and behaviour modifications managed by specialists. The aim of these SEN settings is to help students labelled with SEN appear as normal as possible and cope/fit in with society's requirements/norms—or be removed entirely. In other words, the goal of therapy is assimilation (Landsman, 2005; Loreman et al., 2010).

However, the PMM has been subject to many criticisms at the core of both Disability Studies and Disability Studies in Education. Dewsbury et al. (2004) state that, in defining 'disability', the model relegates disabled students to unimportant societal roles and denies them the right to live as equals (Swain & French, 2000). In a case study involving a girl named Gina, Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) find that, from the day she was born, doctors decided where she would live and how she would be educated; no one listened to what she wanted. She was treated as though she needed to be fixed and told that she should change to fit into the social system. Then, as Haegele and Hodge (2016) state, while medical professionals are experts in the diagnosis and curing of illness, that they should not have the authority to determine the social understanding of disabled students. They may not consider the individual's needs or wishes as they are forced into taking up a limited range of options based on how the disability is categorised.

In addition, for Shanimon and Rateesh (2014), the position of defining 'disability' assumes uniformity, and as such, individuals with the same impairment are perceived as

having the same needs and experiences. Haegele and Hodge (2016) add that language used by the PMM influences how individuals relate to and discuss individuals with disabilities. In the context of sport, for example, aspiring athletes with disabilities discover that their goals are often ignored, and the idea of someone with a disability succeeding in athletics appears at odds with widely held notions of disability.

Another issue is that the PMM's assessment process is purely mechanistic; its diagnoses serve only to label students so that they can then be segregated into SEN schools (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). The assessment determines who does and does not meet specific criteria for what is considered normal (Loreman et al., 2010), based on vague symptoms that have been defined by professionals and constructed into medical conditions, with the aim of correcting and adjusting the deviation from the functional norm (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). From that, Ferguson and Nusbaum (2012) state that the label of disability has functioned as an accusation to identify a lesser person more than an assessment of their (abilities and) needs. As Evans (2001) states, it denies the subjectivity of disability in that it does not consider the position of the social and cultural.

As discussed previously regarding the isolated school setting, unitary taxonomies of illness are harmful to students' self-perceptions, and furthermore, they are not useful for education planning (Loreman et al., 2010). Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) state that these labels lead professionals to focus solely on the skills that the student cannot perform instead of on what the student wants to do. This means that labelling serves only to mark students as different (Slee, 1998).

To this end, Bricout et al. (2004) and Reid and Knight (2006) mention that the interventions based on this model have some important effects, and how this model is fundamental to government funding, which gives disabled students access to resources

that would not typically exist. Yet, as Gates (2007) explains, this model ignores the important role that environments (i.e. School Culture) can play in exacerbating student's problems and places the onus of disability on the individual (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). Disability Studies counters this model's perspective, explaining that disability needs to be reconceptualised through a critique of pathologising beliefs about disability and an examination of the politics of exclusion (Bricout et al., 2004). This has led to the emergence of new exploratory paradigms in the social sciences and humanities (Meekosha and Shuttleworth, 2009). Rather than asking about how education can change students, according to the PMM view, schools should be asking how they can change to accommodate every student's (abilities and) needs (Dyson, 1990; Booth, Ainscow & Dyson 1998). This leads to a discussion of the SM of disability.

### 2.5.2.2. *The Social Model (Integration and Inclusion)*

In the 1960s, a radical reconsideration of the concept of 'disability' took place due to the efforts of disabled students and their families in the form of organised disability rights movements (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). These movements challenged the stigma and discrimination promoted by the PMM (Thomas et al., 1998). The creation of the SM saw the introduction of Disability Studies as a promising field for addressing the issues faced by disabled students (Oliver & Barnes, 2010). The SM is closely linked with human rights and social justice, acknowledging that disability is a form of oppression. To clarify how the model is constructed, a discussion of how disability is *defined* and *diagnosed* and how *educational settings* are chosen in this model will be outlined next.

*First***,** the SM distinguishes between 'impairment' and 'disability'. 'Impairment' is defined as a functional lack in the body, and 'disability' is defined as a restriction levied by a society that does not accommodate impaired students. The PMM, in contrast, views 'impairment' and 'disability' as the same, with disability as an attribute of impairment

(Oliver, 2009). For example, the consequence of a stammer is problems in conversation (Johnstone, 2005).

In defining 'disability', the SM relieves the social pressure on the disabled student and subverts the idea that disability is the result of impairment (Oliver, 2013). Impairment may cause functional limitations, but society is the main contributor to 'disabling' students through a social construction (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). As much of society places increasingly severe restrictions on the impaired person, the disability worsens (Hutchison, 1995). Oliver and Barnes (2010) note that the SM shifts the focus to the ways in which society restricts disabled students' opportunities to take part in mainstream activities. Thus, as Boxall (2002) explains, it is not impaired students who need to be treated; rather, it is the society that denies them their rights and excludes them that should change.

*Second,* regarding this framework's method of assessment, the purpose of the assessment in the PMM is understanding how disability affects the student labelled with SEN. In contrast, the focus in the SM is on how society limits the abilities of the disabled student, not her/his bodily function. Haegele and Hodge (2016) state that under the SM, disability is shortcoming relating to action originating from a social organisation that does not acknowledge the disabled students, leading to their exclusion. This is what I refer to as Mainstream Schools' Needs, discussed later in this chapter.

Leading on from this, then, below-average achievement is not a reflection of a student's disabilities; rather, it is a reflection of the experiences produced by the environment and society's barriers (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). The barriers that need to be considered can be environmental (inaccessible buildings and services), communication-based

(unified communication interaction) or *cultural* (negative societal attitudes; Bricout et al., 2004).

However, the SM has a number of critiques, for example, Johnstone (2005), Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) and Haegele and Hodge (2016) highlight the inability of the SM to address impairment as an observable attribute of the disabled students. Oliver (2013) and Owens (2015) also state that the differentiation between impairment and disability tends to ignore the impaired experience of the disabled student. Nevertheless, the SM perspective is significantly different than that of the PMM, as is explained next.

***Third,*** for a long time, due to the influence of the psychometric view, segregation seemed to be appropriate for organising an educational system (Thomas et al., 1998). Manset and Semmel (1997) and Allan (2010) state that the SM emerged as response to the SEN approach, which was focused on individual deficits with no evidence supporting the traditional SEN models—which, at best, had highly suspect benefits. As Oliver and Barnes (2010) argue, there was significant debate about the effectiveness of segregated SEN schools for achieving educational goals, as they offered 'care and protection' and nothing more. This led to many countries calling for mainstream schools to *integrate* students labelled with ID, which later gave way to *inclusion.*

### 2.5.2.2.1. *Integration/Mainstreaming Approach*

SEN in the United Kingdom has undergone many changes since segregated settings fell out of favour. In response to the Warnock Report (1978), the government adopted the 1981 Education Act, which created a framework for integration approach[2] (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). The report identified three types of provision, which are as follows:

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[2] As explained in Chapter One, 'mainstreaming' is a synonym for 'integration'.

- *Locational Integration*, which provides a separate classroom for students labelled with SEN in the same building as their mainstream peers but does not give them the ability to interact with them;

- *Social Integration*, which *allows* students labelled with SEN and their peers to interact outside the classroom or during extracurricular activities but segregates them for the remainder of the school day; and

- *Functional Integration*, which *allows* students labelled with SEN to spend part or all of the school day in mainstream classrooms, depending on the severity of their disability and other conditions (Warnock Report, 1978, par. 7.6–11).

In the early 1990s, the term 'integration' emerged to describe a variety of modes of SEN educational provision (Farrell & Ainscow, 2002). The Warnock Report (1978) established the right of students labelled with SEN to be integrated into mainstream educational settings *wherever possible.* It shifted the focus from separate settings as the sole way to offer SEN services to alternative methods in mainstream schools.

Following the Warnock Report (1978), the 1981 Education Act later gave students labelled with SEN the *chance* to be educated in mainstream schools if certain conditions were met, such as the availability of educational psychologists, SEN teachers, SEN resource rooms, educational specialist assistants and phonological or speech therapists. In addition, the Act dictated that the presence of the students labelled with SEN should not disrupt their peers' education (Norwich, 2008).

The literature has addressed integration in several ways, showing, for example, how far it is from segregation. In terms of *location integration*, Farrell (2004), who studied students who took part in location integration, found that there were no significant

differences between location integration and segregated SEN schools. In some cases, integration was more segregated than SEN schools were because discrimination was embedded in the SEN classroom (Jupp, 1992).

For *social integration*, Farrell (2004) argue that students educated in separate classrooms (ostensibly with the chance to be part of the school's social life) may or may not have true opportunities to interact with their peers or benefit from the school's facilities. Which means even if students labelled with SEN are able to interact with their peers in a few places, it would still be insufficient because these arrangements aim only to give the students labelled with SEN equal opportunities to 'access' a school's mainstream setting. As Jupp (1992) argues, SEN classrooms that are attached to mainstream schools can be just as segregated as separate SEN schools.

Finally, regarding the Warnock Report's *functional integration* method, this required schools to improve the quality of their education, teaching methods and availability of resources to accommodate students labelled SEN (Norwich, 1999). However, having the alternative SEN provision, many schools continue to provide only limited support and isolate these students in separate classrooms in mainstream schools (Clarke, 1991). According to Norwich (2008), the integration approach allows for mixed models, with SEN provision continuing to exist in mainstream schools. As Sebba and Ainscow (1996), Lipsky and Gartner (1997) and Frederickson and Cline (2009) argue, integration puts the onus of change on students labelled with SEN, implying that they need to be active members in mainstream classrooms, and if they are not, they will be transferred to SEN classrooms or even SEN schools. In contrast, Sebba and Ainscow (1996) argue that, even if students labelled with SEN are integrated in mainstream classrooms (functionally integrated), they are usually treated individually and given a different curriculum (i.e. an

individualised programme) with an assistant's support. As they work in one-on-one support sessions for most of the day, these students may be (gradually) isolated from the learning community.

To sum up, the Warnock Report identifies issues of placement, defining 'integration' in terms of the setting rather than the quality of education (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996; Farrell & Ainscow, 2002; Farrell, 2004). Thus, as Farrell and Ainscow (2002) and Bunch and Valeo (2004) explain, integration is a corollary to the PMM because it describes educational difficulties as solely the result of a student's deficiencies.

Moreover, McIntyre (1993) states, a standard education system designed for the whole population should be differentiated for all (abilities and) needs. If SEN provision is needed, he argues, it means the difficulties were created by the system's failure to meet every students' needs, and it is to be remedied by changing the system. This is what I have previously referred to as Mainstream School's Needs. Connected to this, Booth (1996) and Clark, Dyson, Millward and Skidmore (1998) states that, in approaching the issue of inclusion, the notion of SEN should be challenged as the term truly refers to *unmet (abilities* and) needs, which will be discussed next.

### 2.5.2.2.2. *Inclusion in the Education Setting*

The introduction of the SM engendered a major shift in education for students labelled with SEN to *integrate* them into mainstream schools, but as explained above, this did not represent the full application of the SM. Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) argue that applying the SM to an educational system would replace a segregated system with an *inclusive* one. Thus, compared with the integration approach, *inclusion* does not aim to change students labelled with SEN to fit into the mainstream classroom; instead, it aims to reconfigure the entire school to accommodate every student (Ainscow, 1997).

According to Corbett (1999), the language of inclusion is more polemical and passionate than the language of integration is; however, every author thinks that inclusion necessitates change: it is not about fitting into the status quo. Corbett (1999) describes the metaphor for inclusion as a:

'circle [that contains] many different shapes [of different] sizes, all interrelating within the whole, and the caption read[s], "Come in. We celebrate difference here. You can be yourself and not struggle to be normal". It is that struggle which can be debilitating and create additional disadvantages to those already marginalised'. (p. 128).

In contrast, a metaphor for integration would be a 'square peg struggling to fit into the round hole, accompanied by the caption, "Come in but only if you can fit" (Corbett, 1999, p. 128).

Corbett offers three levels of inclusion: at Level 1 is the superficial surface inclusion, led primarily by policy and philosophies of school efficiency. Level 2 is comprised of structural changes to curricula. Only Level 3 addresses the concealed curriculum of essential value systems, rites, customs, initiations and acceptance, which daily life is comprised of. She reflects that this is described as "deep" culture because it is often ambiguous and difficult to fully comprehend without sustained participation. Like exploring the bottom of the ocean floor, a dip into the deep culture of an institution can reveal unexpected treasures and submerged dangers.

Whatever policy or structural process is in the deep culture level, this is what helps students labelled with SEN to feel included (Corbett, 1999). These points show that, along with the policies and curriculum as an integrated approach, the School Culture needs to

be addressed to a student to feel included. For this next review, several studies on inclusion practices are considered to explore the aspects of what I call Inclusive School Culture in mainstream schools with an inclusive orientation.

## 2.6. Inclusive School Culture

School Culture as explained above, should be based on what is the best for students (Whitaker, 2010); where mainstream schools with an inclusive orientation need to consider the levels of change they want—Is just providing SEN programmes in mainstream schools enough to make students labelled with ID feel included? To clarify, SEN is often seen as a service programme provided separately from mainstream, and as Corbett (1999) states, it is often removed from the norm and treated as a marginalised sub-culture. Ballard (1995) confirms that, if the term 'SEN' (as individual education services) is used, the separate SEN culture will continue.

However, Ainscow and Sandill (2010) argue that inclusiveness does not focus solely on students; it requires processes of social learning and cultural development, influencing how people think, talk and work. Dyson (1990) adds that educators need to reconceptualise SEN, moving away from an 'individual change' model to the 'system-level change' model, in which SEN is defined in terms of the failure of the school system to change and eliminate these needs. This means that students labelled with SEN vary not because of their characteristics, but because of the school setting.

To move from traditional SEN models based on individual change to a whole-school model, McMaster (2013) argues that educators need to have predominant and clear definitions to serve as a framework for moving towards inclusion. However, Carrington and Elkins (2002) and Miravet and García (2013) acknowledge that there are no unified,

clear definitions. This has led to many studies producing models focussed on describing inclusion in several ways.

For example, Miravet and García (2013) and Francis et al. (2016) state that the inclusive school model makes students feel that they are part of the school, arguing that inclusive classrooms should be typical for all students. Others researchers, such as Hoppey and McLeskey (2013), find that schools with inclusive environments are fostered by a shared vision; as Dyson (1990) and Frankel, Gold and Ajodhia-Andrews (2010) state, the vision is the bridge to a shared belief and the guide decisions and day-to-day operations. Another view held by Doyle and Doyle (2003) states that, to achieve inclusion, schools need to be caring communities, working to ensure students carry a compassionate duty beyond their schools and into their communities, where students are not only cared for but are also involved in caring for others.

Another example provided by Gross et al. (2015) demonstrates that school–community partnerships are needed to support inclusiveness, including universities being invited to make decisions and provide ongoing training to support teachers. Ainscow and Sandill (2010) agree stating, that inclusion is characterised by commitment to building relationships outside in the local community, including parent relations.

Others cite inclusion as an attempt to embody shared values. Miravet and García (2013) provide two central factors for enhancing inclusive, namely, shared values and a set of agreed-upon objectives. These factors allow school members to communicate via a common language, modify their expectations and form better conceptions of equal teaching practice. This is congruent with Ainscow and Sandill (2010), who view schools with inclusive cultures as having a staff consensus around school values. They add that

the school should be open inclusion to discussions on why certain changes are desirable in that specific context.

A further example for viewing inclusion is accepting diversity and understanding that everyone differs in some way is an asset to instil mainstream schools with the ethos of inclusiveness (Loreman et al., 2010). Likewise, McGlynn and London (2013) argue that inclusion requires moving away from categorisation to become more heterogeneous, and as Carrington and Elkins (2001) state, this can direct school member behaviour in supporting students to progress at their natural rate, regardless of their learning abilities. Zollers and Yu (1998) find that successful inclusion is linked to a School Culture viewing disability as something to be celebrated and considering that all school members need to extend their views of normalcy.

Additional studies cite inclusion is a school setting that does not see students' differences as a problem. DuFour (1995), Ainscow and Sandill (2010) and Strogilos (2012) argue that teachers should be responsible for re-examining their practices, making them more responsive and flexible and encouraging collaborative efforts to facilitate every student's education. Schools do not necessarily improve as a result of individual action, but instead, due to a variety of people working together in different ways, using a multitude of resources (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 2009).

To summarise, from all the above it can be seen that changing School Culture to be inclusive is not the aim, but rather, the objective is addressing the school's goals (Kruse & Louis, 2009), which leads to a strengthening of school networks as communities (McMaster, 2015). Then, as Doyle (2004) argues, for schools to become communities, principals as SLs need to be community builders. This brings me to consider the differences between leadership and management in education.

## 2.7. Educational Leadership versus Management

The field of school administration was built on the foundation of management theories (Doyle, 2004). These theories have led school practitioners around the world to believe that the role of SLs consists solely of managing schools; however, in 2014, the job title 'School Leader' was created by the KSA's MoE, replacing 'School Manager/Principal'. Doyle (2004) argues that the shift is not simply a change in language; instead, it represents a radical shift in how those in this position *think* and *act*. This section focuses on the differences between educational leadership and management and how they relate to School Culture.

'Educational leadership' is understood as a principal's ability, using clear values and beliefs, to influence school members to act according to the school's vision. In contrast, 'management' consists of ensuring regular and timely staff and student attendance, maintaining classroom discipline and providing necessary resources (Bush, 2007). Day, Harris and Hadfield's (2001) study of 12 successful schools showed that principals tend to view 'management' as focussed on procedures, the system and paperwork, while 'leadership' as focussed on improving and motivating people.

Similarly, Stoll and Fink (1996) define 'leadership' as a humanist approach for transforming School Culture; it is related to vision, inspiration, communication, motivation and shared ownership. Conversely, 'management' is associated with structures, such as approaches for solving problems, policy implementation, methods to organise people and technocratic approaches in general. These researchers add that SLs initiate changes that are needed to help others reach their goals. 'Management', in contrast, is defined as maintaining, rather than changing, organisational arrangements.

In Bush and Middlewood's (2013) definition, they show that leading can take several styles, but it is essentially people oriented. This confirms that leaders go beyond management; they are associated with transformation and development, where management is associated with the continuation of systems and structures. When Doyle (2001) asked students to talk about leadership, they viewed a leader as someone who is caring, helpful and guides others. The teachers also observed that the focus on caring student behaviours had improved. This means that 'leadership' is the act of influencing people's actions to achieve desirable goals; as McCarley et al. (2016) urge, in its basic form, leadership is the school's influence—no single school member has this potential authority.

Leading on from this, it can clearly be seen that there is a link between educational leadership and School Culture/Inclusive School Culture. Bass and Avolio (1994) declare that the characteristics of School Culture are taught by leaders and adopted by members for building school as community. Thus, the discussion below will consider Inclusive School Culture when leading for change.

## 2.8. Inclusive School Culture and Leading for Change

As explained in this chapter's introduction, for schools (including mainstream schools that have SEN services with an orientation to inclusiveness) in many countries, educational reform continues to confront the obstacles that prevent them from achieving their aims (Burnett, 2005). However, Sebba and Ainscow (1996) and Oliver (2009) state that mainstream schools can change and become inclusive, regardless of their current state and despite any obstacles; all types of schools can pursue implementing inclusion. Rayner (2006) explains that mainstream school change is not simply about coercion, it is about a leadership moral purpose in shaping how school members think and act.

Specifically, in a way which unifies the language of all staff with the aim to benefit all students.

Thus, inclusion in my study is viewed as a process of school transformation. It is clear, then, that not all leadership styles are up to this task when leading for change. As explained in the preface as there is much less certainty about how leaders should act for Inclusive School Culture. My study then contributes to the field, with many leadership theories examined in the literature. Transformational Leadership theory stands out, where the main focus is on people's values and beliefs (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Disability Studies goes against the normative view in any society, questioning the practices that affect disabled people/students' quality of life. Transformational Leadership theory could seek to challenge social constructions in the ways of thinking about disability and inclusion to encourage open dialogue, sharing a vision to become more receptive to change.

Transformational Leadership theory will be discussed below.

### 2.8.1. *Transformational Leadership Theory*

Transformational Leadership was presented by Burns in 1978, who stated that this leadership model occurs when a leader engages with other individuals in an inspirational style (McCarley et al. 2016). This theory was further adapted by Bass (1985), who also viewed Transformational Leadership as focussed on increasing the interest of the individual around achieving higher performance despite any barriers.

Burns' model differentiates between two types of leader–follower interconnection, namely transactional, that focuses on task-oriented, attempting to maintain the status quo (McCarley et al. 2016) and transformational types that focus on focussed on developing

followers' values, needs, aspirations and wants, as well as strengthening the link between them (Moolenaar, Daly, & Sleegers, 2010).

Hallinger (2003) also provides another way of differentiating by observing first- versus second order and top-down versus bottom-up effects. For first or second order effects, they refer to the degree to which principals employ strategies of coordination and control or 'empowerment' and to what extent leadership is individual (instructional) or shared (transformational). Instructional leadership targets first-order variables in the process of change. Hallinger also describes how the model of instructional leadership is 'top-down', emphasising the coordination of others to achieve goals set by those at the top of the organisation. Instructional leadership has been characterised as a commanding, top-down approach to leadership, emphasising the principal's control. Transformational Leadership, in contrast, is deemed to be shared leadership, where change is stimulated not through top-down control but through participation from the bottom up. These are conceived as second-order effects as the principal creates the circumstances in which others are motivated to improve the school without specific orders.

Despite significant support for Transformational Leadership in the leading literature, it has been criticised regarding its applicability in the school context. For example, in defining Transformational Leadership, Yukl (1999) states that there is no clear theory, leading to uncertainty in distinguishing between different transformational behaviours. However, in a review of the literature on Transformational Leadership, Allix (2000) stresses that Transformational Leadership emphasizes values, attributing significance to symbolic behaviour, and sees the role of the leaders as making events important for others. Moreover, Bass and Avolio (1994) state that Transformational Leadership

influences relationships between leaders and followers, with a mutual commitment to a mission; thus, it fosters collaboration to facilitate on-going improvement.

It can therefore be argued that the philosophy behind Transformational Leadership emerges from two perspectives—the psychological perspective, based on psychological mechanisms theory, and the social science perspective, focussed on the dichotomy of directive (task orientation) versus participative (people orientation) perspectives.

Moreover, empirically, research conducted across many different countries confirms that Transformational Leadership encourages the *desired* changes to a school. Leithwood and Jantzi's (2000) study highlights the effect of Transformational Leadership on students and family engagements; Moolenaar et al., (2010) study reveals that Transformational Leadership increases innovation; and another study conducted by Leithwood (1992) illustrates that Transformational Leadership is related to collaboration, teacher development, and problem solving. In addition, Saeed and Ahmad's (2012) study shows the effects of Transformational Leadership on citizenship behaviour, and a study by Abu-Hussain (2014) shows that Transformational Leadership increases school members' valuation of the school system.

Moreover, some authors outline other critical concerns of Transformational Leadership, and as Allix (2000) and Bush (2007) highlight, the employees' needs are wrongly perceived as objective, and considered by leaders as superior. Transformational Leadership fails to observe autonomy, presuming that leaders have the power to alter knowledge and modify people's needs. Despite this, Stewart (2006) states that these critics fail to differentiate between authentic and pseudo- Transformational Leadership, with core concepts of Transformational Leadership being ignored. Pseudo-Transformational Leadership is therefore labelled as unethical, and genuine

Transformational Leaders act as the authentic Transformational Leadership, they are ethical actors encouraging pluralistic leadership and the enforcement of reasonable consequences.

Then, from the perceptions of Transformational Leadership theory as explained in the preface, inclusion is not a personal issue; rather, it is a human need that is applicable everywhere as a natural right. Leading on from this, to establish an inclusive practice, SLs need to foster a new orientation in schools by discussing the purpose and conceptions underlying the change. SLs need to make a difference through their knowledge, actions, and values (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013), fostering school members to think and act through transformative developments (Riehl, 2000).

To this end, inclusion in my study is viewed as a process of school transformation thus, next to be discussed, are authentic Transformational Leadership behaviours.

### 2.8.2. *Transformational Leadership Attributes*

Leithwood (1994) identifies six factors that constitute the most substantial adaptation of Bass' (1985) study. Leithwood's (1994) model has been subject to investigation over the past decade, and most of the literature, such as that of Bass and Avolio (1994), has reviewed and been distilled into four factors, as follows: (1) inspirational motivation, (2) providing intellectual stimulation, (3) individualised consideration support and (4) idealised influence. Each of these elements are associated with specific practices, as will be described in the following subsections.

### 2.8.2.1. *Inspirational Motivation*

Bass and Avolio (1994) illustrate that, in a transformational culture, there is a feeling of purpose and long-term commitment to meet challenges, there is as Leithwood (1992)

states, a united language with interdependence and mutual interests to achieve school aims.

Thus, in the inspirational motivation process transformational models of leadership are described by Leithwood (1992) as a leadership style where SLs motivate school members by establishing a clear vision, with charismatic SLs who have personal abilities of social exchange to affect their followers. This vision portrays a desirable future (Leithwood, 1992), inspiring followers to make an extra effort to achieve more (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

In having such a vision, SLs as transformational leadership foster change rather than maintaining the status quo, creating a productive culture that develops the School Structure (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Pounder (2008) and McCarley et al. (2016) agree that, by clearly communicating a vision, Transformational Leadership sets high expectations for peak performance. For instance, Ngang (2011) confirms the need for a vision—a set of shared values and beliefs that denote what teachers want to accomplish and empowering their commitment to effective teaching.

Moreover, the vision provides school members with a sense of purpose, increases the value of what is important for the school and raises the motivational maturity to transcend self-interest to achieve the vision of the organisation (Ngang, 2011). In addition, Bass (2000) states that, in a highly innovative and satisfying organisation, SLs exhibit a sense of vision to school members and empower people to take greater responsibility.

### 2.8.2.2. *Modelling Best Practice*

Transformational Leadership styles change the lives of people and organisations, reshaping their views and values and altering their expectations. Such effects are transmitted through followers' responses to their leader (Saeed & Ahmad, 2012).

SLs, as idealised models, are characterised by a leader who not only creates a vision but expounds confidence in it to instil pride, trust, respect and feelings of success (Pounder, 2008), as well as considering the moral consequences of behaviour (Bass and Avolio, 1994). As a model SL – Bass and Avolio also outline in their discussion the ways leaders solve problems – respond to crises and give praise and punishments are all relevant to an organisation's culture.

Transformational Leaders then behave as models of desired behaviour (McCarley et al. 2016) and in a way that inspires enthusiasm in teachers to tackle challenges (Stewart, 2006). These behaviours begin from the top and become the symbols and stories of the organisation's new culture, as Bass and Avolio (1994) confirm that SLs, as role models for assimilating members into the School Culture, do not act because they are expected to, but rather, because they feel it is their responsibility.

### 2.8.3.3. *Individualised Consideration*

Transformational Leaders need some time to focus solely on the objective; however, at other times, extensive attention should be turned to their relationships with their followers (Bass, 2000). According to Bass (1985), personality, respect and trust are vital characteristics of Transformational Leadership.

In addition, Transformational Leaderships' individualised consideration is characterised by a leader who pays personal attention to school members considering their individual needs (Tourish & Pinnington, 2002). Saeed and Ahmad (2012) agree that Transformational Leadership has an inspiring communication style and can effectively interpret others' feelings. This includes treating all workers as individuals, understanding their needs and ambitions and helping develop their skills (Bass & Avolio, 1994). As

Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) demonstrate, leaders inspire confidence in teachers' abilities, share responsibilities and risks and recognise individual contributions.

Furthermore, McCarley et al. (2016) state that Transformational Leaders pay attention to individual differences, abilities and support individual strengths. Bass and Avolio (1994) add that Transformational Leaders carefully observe progress, find out what motivates each individual, and become familiar with their followers, which improves communication and the exchange of knowledge.

Moreover, Stewart (2006) illustrates that an individualised consideration is characterised by leaders who meet the needs of all members; create supportive environments in which difference is valued; and promote mentoring, coaching and development opportunities while avoiding criticism of individuals' mistakes. These attributes enable teachers to reach their potential when leaders as transformational leaders recognise their desires and needs (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Next is a discussion of intellectual stimulation as a final attribute of Transformational Leadership theory.

### 2.8.3.4. *Intellectual Stimulation*

Although Transformational Leadership seems indulgent in terms of individual consideration, as I outline above, they provide an environment for innovation; SLs using the Transformational Leadership style to stimulate teachers to rethink how things have been done (Pounder, 2008). Bass and Avolio (1994) state, in Transformational Leadership theory, leading is built on the assumptions that everyone can provide some contribution to handle any complex problem, meaning that all organisational members operate to their full potential.

Based on the idea that teachers are closer to problems (Pounder, 2008), intellectual stimulation is characterised by SLs who establish energy in school members in a climate that supports creativity, innovation, willingness to tackle challenges (Bass, 2000 & Nguni, Sleegers & Denessen, 2006), risk taking, collaborative decision making, experimentation and enthusiasm, resulting in greater exertion and productivity (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Stewart, 2006).

## 2.9. Conclusion

This chapter provided a contemporary context for my study, offering a review of the literature in the areas of SEN, inclusion and educational leadership. The literature reviewed directly relates to the research questions and preface structure, providing the background within which the study emerges and illustrating the gaps that the study contributes to.

The review explored the area of School Culture, defining it and identifying how it compares and contrasts with School Structure. Moreover, the chapter reviewed the emergence of Disability Studies, reviewing how Inclusive School Culture can respond to students' diversity and refuse to marginalise them. As my study views SLs as key contributors in promoting the development of Inclusive School Culture, the final section of this chapter addressed leading for change, focussing on Transformational Leadership theory and its attributions as a leadership style.

Reviewing these elements of the literature, my aim was also to illustrate what my study contributes. These contributions include moving the focus of the KSA's mainstream education system from changing School Structure to changing School culture for inclusiveness, based on Transformational Leadership theory. This can support Inclusive School Culture aspects, where the main focus is on people's values and beliefs. Moreover,

in localising Disability Studies with the concern about imposing Western on to the KSA context, my study contributes to Disability Studies as another way of understanding disability from the KSA educational setting.

In the next chapter, the research design and methodology are articulated.

*Chapter Three*

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**Research Design and Methodology**

**3.1. Introduction**

When planning to explore inclusion in KSA's mainstreams schools as a researcher in social science, there were several aspects within the educational context I was eager to focus on. Research in the social sciences is based on a process of extending one's understanding of the social world in which research is undertaken (Pole & Lampard, 2002). My aim was to explore the aspects of Inclusive School Culture in mainstream schools that provide Special Educational Needs (SEN) programmes for students labelled with Intellectual Disabilities (ID). I sought to analyse this through the perspective of School Leaders (SL).

Carrying out this project gave me the opportunity to become more confident in planning and conducting qualitative research, where my research took place across multiple stages. Matthews and Ross (2010) outline that the proper choice of a methodology in conducting research depends on how a researcher plans to address the study's aims.

Thus, this chapter will illustrate the complexity of the methodology used, from theoretical aspects to the analysis. This mapping will highlight the challenges faced, skills required, and progress achieved. In this chapter then, I will *first* discuss how I formulated the research questions, then I will explain by research paradigm as the guiding structure for researchers when studying particular phenomena. *Second,* this paradigm leads to the design and methods selected, based on the interpretive approach. *Third,* I will highlight how participants were selected for the study. *Fourth,* I will explain the pilot study and

what the outcomes were. *Fifth* will be an overview of the data collection and gathering procedures, ethical considerations, and the trustworthiness of the data. *Finally,* the analysis of procedures based on the thematic analysis and what did a thematic analysis offer to the interpretation of my participants' stories.

## 3.2. Developing the Research Questions

The research aim is the reason for the study being carried out, it emphasizes what is to be achieved and guides the direction of the study and the main task to address the research problem. Then the goal following this step is to design a research project by writing questions, where the answers will achieve the aims of the research (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

I need then to know how to develop my research questions, according to Agee (2009), while good qualitative research questions are usually refined and developed over time, poorly constructed research questions can affect every stage of a study. Agee adds that good research questions elaborate what I want a researcher to know about participants' perspectives in certain social interactions. As Matthews and Ross (2010) illustrate that in social science research, there are four types of questions—exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and evaluative—that help discern what types of data need to be collected. In addition, Agee (2009) explains that research questions need to be flexible enough to be used to explore unforeseen themes. Moreover, as Agee states, the questions should be focussed, not broad, and they should be answerable in a manageable timeframe. While they should not include multiple sub-questions, they should produce results that contribute to the research field.

In this step also I develop a deeper understanding of my research questions. As any research involves concepts that researchers want to learn more about, and since concepts

can be understood differently, researchers should clearly define the relevant concepts using operational definitions to ensure that these concepts are workable for the research (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The purpose of operational definitions is to allow researchers to discern when the phenomenon they are researching happens; as Matthews and Ross (2010) note, 'an operational definition should be valid for and specific to the research—it should be able to be used to gather data to help you to address your research question' and it 'is always context-specific, designed for each research project' (p. 16). Reviewing the literature related to the subject helps construct my operational definitions (see Figure 3).

| Understanding Disability | School Culture and School Structure | Operationalisation of an Inclusive School Culture |
|---|---|---|
| • This concept refers to how participants think about students labelled with ID, and the implicit beliefs that influence how they behave towards these students in practice.<br><br>• It involves knowing how they think about categorisation, student's behaviours, and specialist services; how they define 'normal' and evaluate student's progress. | • School Culture refers to the norms, values and beliefs as unwritten rules that characterise a school community.<br><br>• In contrast, School Structre refers to using new technology, reorganising the curriculum, schedules, teaching methods, the use of space and time, learning assessments, changing how space and time are used and altering how funding are used. | • This concept refers to how SL lead for change to establish inclusive practices. It is concerned with an SL's typical school day, which helps determine Inclusive School Culture aspects. |

**Figure (3)** Research operational definitions

From the above, the study aims are addressed through the following questions:

*Q1: How are the cultures of mainstream schools with SEN programmes influenced by SLs' conceptualisations of disability?*

*Q2: How do SLs conceptualise inclusion (Aldamj) as the foundation of an Inclusive School Culture?*

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*Q3: What Leading for change actions are taken by the SLs to promote Inclusive School Culture development?*

This research question has 2 sub-questions. To answer the main research question, I need first to explore what form SLs use to promote inclusivity in their schools and then move to the practical side of leading for change.

>   *Q3a: How do SLs conceptualise school changing actions (Culture versus School Structure) while supporting inclusive educational reforms?*

>   *Q3b: How do SLs for leading for change employ Transformational Leadership theory to operationalise Inclusive School Culture aspects?*

*Q4: From the SLs' perspectives, what issues do they face while developing Inclusive School Culture aspects?*

After writing my research questions, I was able to select a suitable paradigm, which is a central decision for any research project. Matthews and Ross (2010) explain, research paradigms are used for justifying how and why a certain methodology should be chosen; this is discussed in the next section.

## 3.3. Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a framework that guides researchers in the study of a phenomenon and determines which data should be documented (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a paradigm reveals the researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions about the research context. Thus, for the research to be precise and reliable, the ontological and epistemological perspectives underlying the selection of the paradigm should be made explicit (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). There are several reasons for this requirement; specifically, it is necessary 'to understand the interrelationship of the key components of research...and to avoid confusion when discussing theoretical debates and approaches to social phenomena' (Grix, 2004, p. 58).

### 3.3.1. *Ontological and Epistemological Positions*

Two key perspectives considered in research are ontology and epistemology. ***Ontology*** is the study of the nature of the being and represents the starting point of any study. Ontology refers to what there is to study and what the researcher is able to understand about social occurrences, that is, the nature of the knowledge available to the researcher (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Ontology is more about what exists and what can be known rather than how it can be known. Clearly, what can be known affects the way in which we can go about researching it (Grix, 2004). There are various methods for observing and analysing social phenomena (Matthews & Ross, 2010); the different ontological positions of objectivism, constructivism and realism can be used to inform the researcher's knowledge.

***Epistemology*** described as an aspect of philosophical thought predicated on the theory of knowledge, it is looks at potential methods for understanding and analysing the nature of social reality (Grix, 2004).  It is the study of how we understand, conceptualise and make assumptions about the social world (Grix, 2004). As Guba and Lincoln (1994) declare it refers to the researcher's assumptions about the framework of the context being investigated. It includes pursuits related to the study of systems of beliefs that articulate knowledge, the ways in which individuals can declare what they know and how this knowledge is interpreted (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Since there are different subjective realities, researchers need to explore social contexts through the participants' perspectives and interpretations (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2010). This method results in an interactive process between a researcher's knowledge and what is known in the 'community under study' (Grix, 2004).

I selected my research paradigm after questioning the nature and observability of reality, ontology, epistemology and the viability and validity of knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln,

2008). The ontological position proposes that there is no single absolute reality in social life. Reality is a subjective, not an objective, entity; it exists in people's perceptions, which are influenced by their social culture (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Social phenomena can be considered 'real' only in terms of their constructed nature (Matthews & Ross, 2010). More specifically, these phenomena are notions that are continuously revised through social interaction and reflection. Consequently, a social reality consists of the meanings associated with a certain social phenomenon.

Disability and inclusion in schools are phenomena that are constructed by social actors. Since researchers are part of the social world, they imprint their understandings and meanings on observable phenomena. This means that ideas about disability and inclusion, and how they are used to develop inclusive practices, are continually being constructed and reconstructed by SLs through their social interactions.

From that my study's ontological position rejects the constraints imposed by positivism; it focuses on determining precisely how and why events occur and views individual responses as flexible rather than unmoving. As interpretive paradigm Cohen et al. (2010) outline, the interpretive paradigm examines subjective beliefs in socially constructed realities. These realities are composed of the subjective meanings with which participants imbue the world they live in and the researcher's engagement with the gathered information.

The aim of the interpretive approach (which is contrasted with positivism) is the pursuit of objective knowledge through deduction and by testing theories. This approach is founded on the objectivist (or realist) ontological position, which holds that facts are objective truths and the world can be explored and measured through statistical analysis, correlation, verification and logical reasoning, allowing a measurement to be produced.

The interpretive paradigm is exploratory (or descriptive), and interpretive research seeks to understand complex social situations as they are defined by the members of a community (Creswell, 2013). Interpretive researchers promote a comprehensive interpretation of how participants, living in a specific context, perceive the world and experience particular events.

From an interpretivist position, I interrogated different practices of inclusion, focussing, first, on how effective they are, and second, how the confusion produced by differing views of disability is influenced by the development of participants' thinking. Many social scientists think that research requires explaining certain social phenomena that may not be immediately observable (Matthews & Ross, 2010). As an epistemological position, interpretivism emerged from this concept. It prioritises subjectivity in attempts to understand social action and can be linked to constructivism, in which the nature of a social phenomenon consists of how social actors understand it and what meanings they ascribe to it.

As mentioned above, the ontological and epistemological positions characterise knowledge as socially constructed facts and values that do not exist in a single objective reality; people have different experiences, and they interpret those experiences differently. These ontological and epistemological assumptions have affected my choice of methodology. I have investigated current practices in the KSA related to the feasibility of supporting students labelled with ID in mainstream schools, and my experiences have fundamentally affected my ontological and epistemological positions. Given the exploratory nature of this study, which aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of why a specific social phenomenon is perceived the way it is, the interpretive paradigm is the most appropriate approach to use (Creswell, 2013).

In this study, I sought to understand the nature of social realities surrounding particular social phenomena, that is, disability, inclusion and educational leadership, through my subjective interpretations. Furthermore, from an epistemological perspective, my interpretations were filtered through the lens of my experiences as a teacher in a mainstream school; a trainer of undergraduate students working in mainstream schools with SEN services; my religion's belief of respect for human rights and finally, as an advocate for disabled students' rights. Following the interpretive paradigm, I explored the various constructions created by my participants to examine their perspectives about inclusion and SLs engagement with the socially constructed realities in their School Cultures. For example, since students labelled with ID have been enrolling in mainstream schools in greater numbers, and despite the fact that inclusion is mandated by the MoE, the KSA's educational system still lacks true inclusion (Alquraini, 2011). Moreover, factors related to educational leadership, such as how SLs understand inclusion and disabilities and how participants operationalise aspects of Inclusive School Culture, can help or hinder inclusion, depending on their beliefs, values and personal experiences.

## 3.4. Research Methodology

When researchers use the interpretive approach, they adopt research methodologies that yield qualitative rather than quantitative data. According to Grix (2004), the interpretive approach uses a qualitative research method for exploring and interpreting the variations among and relationships between events in a social context. Qualitative data in an interpretive epistemological approach usually consist of the participants' words and expressions and focus on their subjective understanding of stories, feelings, beliefs and opinions (Matthews & Ross, 2010). In contrast, a positivist epistemological approach gathers quantitative data that can be statistically analysed.

Then, the qualitative approach enables researchers to understand the social context being investigated and interpret subjective experiences (Grix, 2004). It focuses on explaining findings for social situations instead of using statistical findings (Cohen et al., 2010). It produces more data than quantitative research methods by exploring how individuals make sense of their social settings through rituals, societal roles and social structures (Berg, 2001; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). Next to be illustrated is the qualitative research design.

## 3.5. *Qualitative Research Design*

Before beginning a research project, a research design should be laid out. A design is a comprehensive description of the techniques that will be employed for addressing the research questions (Cohen et al., 2010). This framework should include all the design elements, from which the action plan is developed (Hatch, 2002); the framework then determines which methods will be used to gather data, where the study will take place, who the participants will be and which strategies will be used to analyse the data (Cohen et al., 2010). However, this framework can be adapted, allowing for changes to be made according to the circumstances.

### 3.5.1. *Research Methods*

Qualitative techniques for gathering data include individual interviews, diary writing, focus groups, documentary analysis, observations, role playing and personal accounts (Grix, 2004). Since the study's aim requires SLs to articulate their views about disabilities, inclusion and leading for change, I chose to conduct both individual interviews and focus groups.

### 3.5.1.1. *Individual Interviews*

For several reasons, I decided to use semi-structured individual interviews for gathering information from the SLs. *First*, this study has an interpretivist aim to explore SLs' perceptions of disability, inclusion and leading for change. Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) explain, individual interviews allow researchers to explore and elicit participants' perspectives about issues that the researchers cannot directly observe. Moreover, they help researchers learn more about the values, views, beliefs and perceptions related to a specific topic (Wellington, 2015). *Second*, researchers can use semi-structured individual interviews in several ways to learn about how participants understand the world (Matthews & Ross, 2010). When an individual interview goes beyond mere conversation, it can produce deep insights and a more holistic understanding of the respondent's views, which can help the researcher clarify aspects of the subject under investigation (Creswell, 2013). *Third*, individual interviews can reveal which factors influence how the SLs' experiences affect their understanding of the research issues. As Wellington (2015) states, individual interviews can elicit the story behind a participant's practices and the experiences behind her/his values and beliefs.

*Fourth*, individual interviews typically produce more detailed data than research methods like questionnaires do. With individual interviews, a researcher can explain the purpose of the research, answer the participants' questions and correct any misunderstandings (Cohen et al., 2010). Moreover, individual interviews allow a researcher to respond to what a particular respondent says and ask different follow-up questions; the responses are not predefined (Grix, 2004). In contrast, as Grix (2004) explains, questionnaires ask every participant the same questions in the same order with a fixed selection of answers. Furthermore, individual interviews give researchers the opportunity to pick up on

nonverbal expressions, and in any case, they are typically more engaging than questionnaires for the participants (Anderson & Arsenault, 2004).

*Finally*, individual interviews are guided by some questions that could be expanded on during the discussions, and researchers can digress and ask follow-up questions to encourage participants to expand on particular themes (Berg, 2001). In general, face-to-face interactions allow researchers to ensure that the participants understand the questions properly and elicit answers that offer better insights than the answers that other data collection methods would produce (Cohen et al., 2010).

### 3.5.2.2 *Focus Groups*

Individual interviews can be used with other data collection methods (Matthews & Ross, 2010); consequently, this study also employed focus groups. focus groups share much in common with semi-structured individual interviews; however, they are not merely an adaptation of the individual interview technique (Gray, 2014). focus groups are beneficial to exploratory research, and as Matthews and Ross (2010) state, the focus in focus groups is the researcher's interest in the content of the discussion; on how people interact; on how they tell their stories and how they explore others' experiences and perspectives, not simply obtaining answers to the questions.

In focus groups, each group can involve 5–15 participants and last two hours, often based on a single topic (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Moreover, the focus groups gather data via discussion and are guided by facilitators who encourage the participants to share information about their experiences and freely express their opinions (Denscombe, 2007).

The objective of conducting a focus groups is stimulating a dialogue, facilitated by the researcher, between group members who share a common interest (Grix, 2004). As focus groups give each participant the opportunity to offer her/his insights and allows the

researcher to prompt the participants to share ideas that they would not otherwise share in individual interviews (Wellington, 2015). In addition, focus groups not only reveal what individuals find important; they also create a cooperative environment that produces more insightful discussions (Anderson & Arsenault, 2004). When properly administered, focus groups can be extremely dynamic; by stimulating discussion, researchers can prompt participants to brainstorm ideas and comment on each other's experiences (Berg, 2001). Moreover, unlike individual interviews, focus groups let participants build on their ideas through their interactions with each other, and they give researchers the opportunity to observe these interactions, and in response, elicit more ideas about the research topic (Berg, 2001).

As Wellington (2015) argues, participants may be more relaxed in group settings and encouraged to share more about topics related to the research. focus groups foster discussion among participants, and by motivating each participant to articulate her/his opinions, produce multiple perspectives (Berg, 2001). They give participants the opportunity to voice their concerns about their situations.

Finally, given the considerations outlined above, individual interviews (which were used to address the first, second and third research questions) and focus groups (which were used to address the fourth research question) were useful tools for gathering information because they allowed me to comprehensively interpret the participants' experiences and opinions about disability, inclusion and leading for change.

### 3.6. Strategies for Choosing the Participants and Context

The sampling method is highly important for qualitative research, since the quality of the research depends not only on the appropriateness of the method but also that of the sample (De Vaus, 2001). Factors like expense, time and accessibility often prevent researchers

from acquiring information from the whole population. Consequently, data obtained from a smaller group are used to represent the total population; this is referred to as the 'sample' (Cohen et al., 2010).

Qualitative research based on exploring and interpreting perceptions uses purposive sampling, in which the researcher selects specific participants with specific criteria to explore the research questions in depth (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Selecting participants who suit the study's purpose allows the researcher to gain richly detailed information about a certain context (Cohen et al., 2010).

The exploratory nature of this study meant that 30 participants were sufficient for gaining the data required to address the research questions. However, in purposive sampling, the number of participants is less important than the presence of characteristics that relate to the research aims and the kind of data that the researcher wants to collect (Matthews & Ross, 2010). In this sampling method, the researcher uses her/his judgement to decide which participants can offer useful perspectives about the studied phenomena (Gray, 2014).

To ensure that the purposive sample could fulfil the study's aims, six characteristics were considered. *First*, SLs were chosen because they constitute the core of every school, as their perspectives are the power engine for school members. *Second*, preschools and primary schools were chosen because, unlike secondary schools, SEN programmes were provided in these schools before they were in secondary schools, which resulted in few secondary mainstream schools for girls that educate students labelled with ID. In addition, the SLs at these schools may have more experience with providing services for students labelled with ID. *Third*, this study considered only SLs with two or more years of

experience. This limitation ensured that the SLs were familiar with the SEN programme and able to contribute a variety of backgrounds and experiences to the study.

*Fourth*, although I am interested in feminist issues, the focus of this study on female SLs is due to the gender-segregation system as explained in Chapter One. As explained, male students do not receive a better or different quality of education, but segregation is due to religious and cultural factors. Thus, educational researchers in the KSA usually focus on their gender's educational matters. For me it is not practical to write about and analyse the other gender's issue, since the KSA's educational system is gender-segregated – even in their administrative offices, women do not see men or work in their environment.

Moreover, even though I could use a female-gendered lens, it is still impossible for a female researcher to conduct individual interviews in boys-only schools. I tried to recruit three male SLs for individual interviews, but they preferred phone interviews due to the religious-cultural norms they held, viewing it as unacceptable to meet with a woman in a public place. However, for me, phone individual interviews may not give a clear view of their perspectives and School Culture compared with a face-to-face individual interview, so I opted not to pursue interviews with males.

Furthermore, focusing exclusively on female SLs may be considered in terms of feminist concerns, which is among the major contemporary internationally sociological perspectives. I was aware of some of the issues related to the impact that segregation and the relation between the genders have. From my perspective, feminism explains that the cultural misinterpretation of the Quran and Prophet Mohammed's Peace Be Upon Him (*PBUH)* Hadiths is reflected by the KSA's culture, and these norms have a major role in affecting governing polices in the KSA for women (rules and rights). Moreover, the

norms that girls are raised with in their families could affect the ability to conduct themselves as leaders, and subsequently the rights for students labelled with SEN.

Although the KSA government began considering feminist issues and empowering women in the last few years, this issue is still complicated. It is still not acceptable to discuss these issues, especially in the educational field where refusal and denial persist. Even when I attempted to study these issues, I found none of the above concerns from the participants, who viewed it as an issue which can be explained by my interpretation above.

*Fifth*, I chose Riyadh because I work there. It is also the KSA's largest city in terms of population, and consequently, it has more students labelled with ID and more mainstream schools that provide SEN programmes than other cities do. *Finally*, while choosing mainstream schools, I ran into some quandaries; it was unclear whether certain schools could be deemed 'inclusive' or simply 'moving in an inclusive direction'. I solved this problem by selecting schools that refer to Aldamj as inclusion according to the education authority's criteria. Moreover, choosing a perfect school that distinguish themselves to be an inclusion school was also difficult, where perfect is not clear term to the education authority and thus, visiting as a large number of mainstream schools with SEN programme was seen as helpful to explore SLs perspectives and their Inclusive School Culture aspects.

During the first phase of this study, I selected 30 schools (preschools and primary schools), and from these, I interviewed 30 SLs[1]. In the second phase, I conducted two

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[1] See Appendix (1).

focus groups with five participants each[2]. Having described the study's research methods, I now discuss the pilot study.

## 3.7. Thematic Data Analysis

Analyses of qualitative data are mainly concerned with interpreting and acquiring a robust understanding of respondents' stories and explanations (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Thematic analysis, as Braun and Clarke (2006) acknowledge, offers theoretical flexibility, unbound by a particular epistemological position. This reinforces the importance of maintaining attention on the raw data throughout interpretation (Matthews & Ross, 2010). When conducting thematic analysis, it is vital to analyse raw data so that any conclusions made retain the core values and ideas relayed by the participants.

For the data obtained from the individual interviews and focus groups, I used a thematic analysis, whereby the raw data are described, discussed, evaluated, interpreted and explained (Wellington, 2015). This technique identifies patterns (or themes) from examples coded in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), requiring an application procedure to ensure that an accurate set of information is derived (Matthews & Ross, 2010). With qualitative data, thematic analysis enables the interpretation of main concepts from raw data, primarily through noting important themes (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Thematic analysis enables the researcher to analyse data through categorization, breaking data down into pieces, and establishing links between the different aspects of data prior to interpretation.

## 3.8. Pilot Study

A pilot study can provide feedback on certain components of the methodology and make the main study's success more likely (Teijlingen, Rennie, Hundley & Graham 2001). For

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[2] See Appendix (1).

the pilot study stage, I started thinking about the quality of my data collection guides for individual interviews and focus groups, and my skills in conducting these methods.

I conducted individual interviews first and then focus groups, as the participants may not feel comfortable talking freely about their personal experiences in focus groups (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). This could be due to participants being reluctant to disclose some issues (relating to disability and inclusion) in this situation, therefore the individual interviews helped participants feel less intimidated. After sharing their opinions in relaxed, one-to-one individual interviews, the participants found it easier to exchange their ideas in a group setting (see the fourth research question) since the focus groups were less formal and artificial by nature. Most importantly, scheduling the focus groups after the individual interviews gave me the opportunity to revise the focus group's data collection guide to elicit responses related to the issues that emerged during individual interviews.

I established the data collection guide for individual interviews and focus groups as explained above, included prewritten questions that used to guide the data collection process and prompt participants to speak (Wellington, 2015). For example, for Q3, I wanted to know whether the SLs could see the bigger picture when talking about their School Cultures, such as how the school staff communicated, whether students labelled with ID saw themselves as valued members of their schools and what underlying assumptions school members used to rationalise their behaviour.

Guides like this help researchers cover every point and topic and provide ways to begin the interaction with the participants (Matthews & Ross, 2010). However, I was not adhering strictly to the guide. I gave the participants the flexibility to speak about any matters relevant to the subject. Wellington (2015) supports this approach, suggesting that

checklists can be used to accommodate new issues that are expressed by the participants during (and after) each individual interview.

In the two guides, the questions for the individual interviews and focus groups were translated from English to Arabic. I was aware of the importance of making my questions easily understandable. However, there were terms that I intentionally did not clarify. For example, the Arabic words for *inclusion* and *integration* were not used to avoid affecting the participants' views. Instead, I used the Arabic term الدمج (Aldamj) used by all participants, which refers to SEN programmes for students labelled with ID in mainstream schools.

I conducted the pilot study with three volunteers, two working in the SEN field and one in the field of educational leadership. Taking what I learned from the pilot study, I revised the data collection guides for the individual interviews[3] and focus groups[4] and then translated them to Arabic. For example, when looking at the students most at risk of exclusion in schools, I wanted to examine whether there were any exclusionary processes present. I also wanted to see if there was evidence of Inclusive School Culture.

The pilot study also helped me become comfortable using the recorder and gave me the opportunity to practise the skills that encourage participants to answer honestly and not respond in ways deemed the most acceptable (Matthews & Ross, 2010). I used probing questions like the following: 'Can you expand a little bit more?', 'Why do you feel that way?', 'Anything else?' and 'What happened after that?'. In addition, after a pilot focus group, I reorganised the questions and formulated them in a way that tended to provoke more discussion.

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[3] See Appendix (2).
[4] See Appendix (3).

The pilot study also gave me the chance to test other ways to deal with different behaviours that could arise during the discussions and develop skills to manage the conversation[5] (Denscombe, 2007; Cohen et al. 2010 & Gray, 2014). Furthermore, I looked at whether the terms created any misunderstandings, especially those stemming from the translations of School Culture and Inclusive School Culture. I also asked the volunteers to provide feedback on the information sheet.

Ultimately, the pilot study was an essential phase in my research, giving me the confidence to carry out the focus groups and spurring me to reorder the questions so that they collected data more effectively.

### 3.9. Data Collection Procedures

Data represents a substitute for the social reality a researcher wishes to study. To come nearer to a true representation of facts, values, opinions, experiences and social phenomena, where a researcher looks at spoken words and nonverbal gestures (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The necessary data were collected in three phases (see Figure 4).
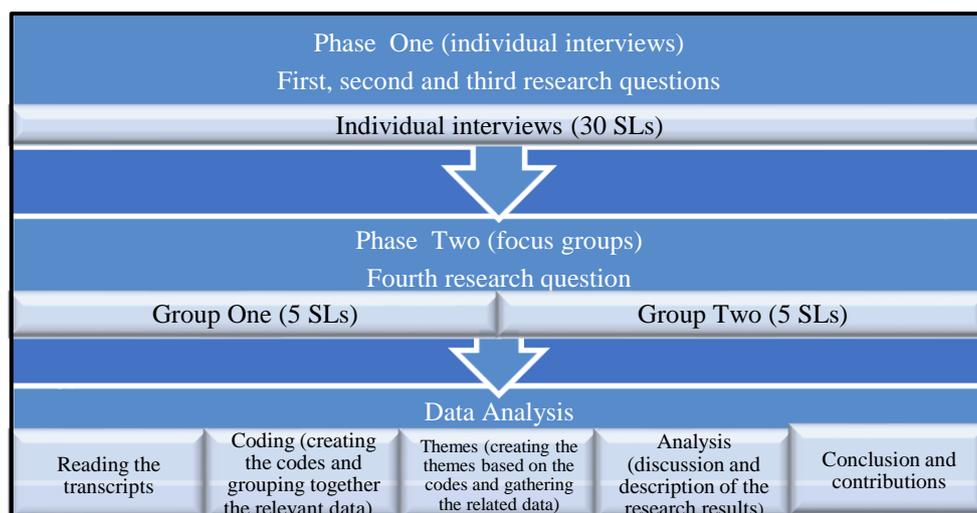


**Figure (4)** Procedures of data collection and analysis

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[5] See Appendix (4).

***Phase One*** consisted of individual interviews (30 SLs) and answered the first three research questions, which were related to understanding disability and inclusion from the perspectives of SLs from preschools and primary schools and how they operationalised their Inclusive School Cultures. ***Phase Two***, two focus groups with five participants; these sought to answer the final research question, which were related to the issues hindering the development of Inclusive School Cultures. ***Phase Three*** involved the data analysis, which took place across several steps: transcription, coding, creating themes, analysis and detailing the study's contributions.

### 3.9.1. *Phase One: Organising the Individual Interviews*

I contacted an educational authority, the General Directorate of Special Education (GDSE) at the MoE[6] by sending a formal letter asking for permission to conduct individual interviews at more than 30 schools and a focus group as second step, which was translated to Arabic. During my first year of PhD study, I acquired a general knowledge of a few schools. At this stage, however, I needed to be sure that the participants exhibited the relevant characteristics and were willing to participate. After receiving permission, I started by calling each school. I introduced myself, told them about my study and asked questions about their experiences (including their work experience), the number of students and teachers at their school, how long they had been providing the SEN programme and which SEN services they provided. I recorded their answers on a background information sheet[7] for each SL and her school.

Next, I selected the participants that exhibited the desired sampling characteristics, and later, made a schedule for arranging the individual interviews. Some participants wanted their individual interviews to be conducted over a single day, while others preferred two

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[6] See Appendix (5).
[7] See Appendix (6).

days so that the interruptions would be limited. I also took down their email addresses and sent them the information sheet and consent form[8] for the individual interview, which was translated to Arabic.

The lengths of the individual interviews varied; some lasted two hours, while others lasted longer depending on the distractions. Before every individual interview, I made sure that the setting was comfortable and free of distractions. I began each individual interview by introducing myself and explaining why I was interested in the topic. I described the individual interviews procedure and its aim, provided the interviewees with many opportunities to ask questions and made sure they understood the aim of the research. Then, I set up the recording equipment (every participant consented to being recorded). I told them they could pause the recorder at any time during the individual interview if they began to feel uncomfortable.

To make the participants more comfortable, following the data collection guide, I began the individual interviews by asking general question and engaging them in an easy conversation. According to Cohen et al. (2010), individual interviews do not need to be conducted quickly; in fact, the discussion should proceed in a leisurely manner so that participants are more likely to introduce new themes.

The individual interviews were then guided by several questions that could be expanded on during the conversations[9]; this allows a researcher to follow up on details and expand on different themes (Berg, 2001). To interpret the SLs' subjective perceptions and make the data collection methods produce the most—and most valuable—data possible, I arranged the questions in the following order: (1) personal opinions, (2) how

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[8] See Appendix (7).
[9] See Appendix (2).

the concepts are perceived and (3) factual questions about their schools. In addition, I gave the participants the opportunity to elaborate on their responses, and if needed, ask for clarification. Most importantly, the questions were adapted for each participant during the individual interview to encourage them to reflect on their views, stories and beliefs.

Since an individual interview is not simply a purposeful conversation (Wellington, 2015), I did not play the leading role; instead, I encouraged the participants to offer their perspectives about the research topic and listened to what they said. The questions were framed in a way that implied that the interviewee was the expert on the topic, while I was the one seeking to acquire knowledge (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Additionally, I took notes and divided them according to the research questions. These included important data, reminders to ask a question or follow up on another question and questions to which a participant did not have a clear answer. I also used these notes to reflect on the participants' reactions, nonverbal actions and interesting remarks, as well as recording my tentative interpretations of what they said (Matthews & Ross, 2010). For that interviewers need to be active listeners; and as Matthews and Ross (2010) explain need to think about what they heard and be able to recall details from the interviews.

A portion of the individual interviews did not take place in the SLs' offices. To conduct informal observations, meet the teachers, visit the classrooms and witness the SLs' expressions of their School Culture, I asked them to take me on a brief tour around their schools.

At the end of the individual interviews, I asked the participants if they wanted to add any other comments or if they thought that the individual interview had missed important details. After this, I thanked them for their participation, told them about the second stage of my study—the focus groups —and invited them to participate.

After each individual interview, I made notes about my interpretations and reflections. As Matthews and Ross (2010) explain, researchers who work with qualitative data move constantly between gathering, working with and reflecting on the data. According to them, researchers should be constantly in touch with, thinking about, organising, familiarising themselves with and analysing their data as soon as they are collected.

### 3.9.1.1 *Difficulties Faced During the Individual Interviews*

The individual interviews were relatively productive and successful, but I experienced some difficulties while interviewing the SLs. Distractions such as teachers entering the SL's office, for example, forced me pause most of the individual interviews on several occasions. In some cases, I postponed the individual interview to another day, which took a lot of time and meant that I had to reorganise the individual interviews schedule.

I was also concerned about possible disparities between the SLs' reported and real practices. However, most of the SLs were willing to give the time needed to express their views clearly, and they provided consistent responses when the same questions were asked in different ways. They also were generally confident, viewing the individual interviews as an opportunity to share their experiences.

Another difficulty emerged when I used some of the research terms (e.g. School Culture and Inclusive School Culture). Thus, I tried to clarify these terms to establish a shared language; planning to encourage the participants to engage with my research and provide data in response to a correct interpretation of my terms.

In addition, the qualitative data collection was new to my participants, so it took some time from the individual interviews to explain their concerns, and clarify further regarding the individual interview as data collection method. Using a recorder and open discussion was an interesting and unusual approach, and some participants asked what they should

say and what procedure would be used to represent the data. In that case I worked hard to explain that there was no need to be worried about the correct way to answer questions, conforming that all interviewees are valued and can ask for clarification if needed. Meanwhile, some participants were embarrassed by the method used to gather qualitative data and how it really reflected the current situation, helping them to see more than just completing the survey.

The final difficulty related to the SLs' personalities. Although most of the respondents were cooperative and responsive, a few would question why I asked particular questions, and certain SLs wanted to ask questions rather than respond to my owns. Some participants did not fully respond to the questions or gave very short responses despite the questions being open-ended. It appeared that they would only go further when a follow-up question was asked. I also found some were reluctant to respond, and some found it hard to explain their ideas. These issues made me work to use different methods, including a prompt sheet of individual interview skills[10] to elicit their views.

However, with the individual interviews, I became more skilled at asking questions and make my participants express their ideas, and I learned how to manage huge amounts of data. Interviewing 30 SLs in a limited time was exhausting, not only because of the overwhelming quantities of raw data but also because I had to manage different personalities among the participants. I had to discover the most appropriate and efficient ways to ask questions and elicit clear and useful information. Despite these challenges, I found gathering data and hearing about the SLs' experiences extremely exciting. At this stage I needed to take time during the interviews, be prepared for each individual interview, be alert to the SL's responses, and consider verbal and nonverbal expressions

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[10] See Appendix (4).

for more clarification. This was important to support a deeper understanding and enable the creation of a clear picture at the end of each individual interview.

### 3.9.2. *Phase Two: Organising the Focus Groups*

The focus groups consisted of the SLs I judged would be the most effective in a group discussion, but to prevent them from interrupting one another, I tried to place no more than two active participants in each group to give each participant equal time to give their views. I also placed the SLs who had talked about their difficulties during the individual interviews with others who had some success in developing Inclusive School Cultures in their schools. I hoped their experiences would stimulate discussion and cause them to talk naturally about the issues they faced. Moreover, each focus group included preschool and primary school SLs to promote more discussion. As underlined during the individual interviews, the preschool and primary school SLs seemed to be unfamiliar with the practices of other schools. Matthews and Ross (2010) contend that researchers should include people with different experiences in a focus group to ensure a productive group dynamic (see Chapter Seven, research question four).

I sent the prospective participants the information sheet and consent form[11], which was translated to Arabic. The information sheet included the focus group prospectus and information about the time, place, who would be participating and how the group discussions would be organised. I outlined the rules, explained that every participant would be given the opportunity to contribute her views and stated that the discussion would be focussed on the research aim and directed by me as the facilitator (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

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[11] See Appendix (8).

To organise the discussion, I created a data collection guide[12] to make the data collection methods produce the most—and most valuable—data possible. In a focus group discussion, can use some additional materials to help stimulate the dialogue (Matthews & Ross, 2010). I used activities and YouTube videos[13] to encourage group discussion rather than simply an individual interview.

This guide included 4 steps. *Step 1* starts by informing the group how the discussion will be conducted and guided; discussing some ground rules to organise the discussion. Then *step 2* includes 3 cards, for example, card 1 includes an introductory question to give each participant the opportunity to speak, and then conclude the discussion with an activity. Card 3 includes set of questions used to prompt the participants, and directions for facilitating the interaction.

Moreover, *Step 3* includes one card that focuses on prompting the discussion by asking how participants view what is shown in the YouTube videos and what part of Inclusive School Culture they have seen in the films. Finally, *Step 4* includes 2 cards and is the closing task – a way of ending the focus groups' discussion. For example, Card 6 includes a task focused on the difference between segregation, integration and inclusion[14].

To ensure that the focus groups were equally accessible to everyone, I booked private meeting rooms in a hotel in central Riyadh city and scheduled the meeting for the evening, which everyone agreed was suitable. The room had a circular table and chairs; name badges, sufficient facilities and refreshments were provided. I set up my recording equipment and displayed photos related to the questions on a projector to stimulate discussion, as recommended by Matthews and Ross (2010). The two focus groups lasted

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[12] See Appendix (3).
[13] See Appendix (3).
[14] See Appendix (3).

between three and four hours each, including a half-hour break for prayer and refreshments.

### 3.9.2.1. *Difficulties Faced During the Focus Groups*

Having experienced interruptions among group members during the pilot focus group, I organised the discussions by giving two cards to the participants. They raised their cards when they wanted to speak, and I raised my card when I wanted the conversation to move along to another participant. This method was helpful, especially for transcription. Inevitably, there was a type of power dynamic in this context. I found myself in a position where I had to stop the recorder and work with equal time slots for everyone, while allowing those who needed to add anything some more time at the end. I also reassured the participants that I was simply collecting data and I was not the arbiter of 'correctness'.

Another issue was that, although some SLs were willing to participate in the focus groups, they were unable to attend due to the weather and transportation issues. Fortunately, because I had many interested participants, I was able to find alternatives.

However, the most interesting stage was the focus groups. Despite the challenges of managing the group participant (SL) meetings, the guide that I used helped me not only to collect data but also make it an enjoyable experience for the SLs. During the break, I served coffee and food, and I was able to observe the SLs talking about the photos, activities and videos provided.

### 3.10. Ethical Considerations

Ethics are the principles governing a researcher's behaviour (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008), as Wood (2005) states, in how they collect, store and manage participants' personal information. I followed the University of Sheffield's Research Ethics Policy and adhered

to the requirements of the Data Protection Act. The ethical considerations in this study were as follows:

- **Receiving official permission:** I sent a formal letter through the MoE that included information sheets and consent forms that stipulated the aims of my research, it explained that the participants (SLs) have the right to withdraw at any time before or during the individual interview and focus group as well as containing information about how the data would be used. The SLs had to sign the consent forms before they were eligible to take part in my research;

- **Data collection skills:** The utility of the methodology depends on the researcher having the necessary data collection skills. I reviewed the literature about data collection procure, conducted a pilot study to ascertain the viability of the data collection questions and reviewed any irregularities in the research design. I assessed how participants interpreted my individual interviews and the focus groups' questions and whether providing more information would have been useful for them;

- **Voluntary participation:** The participants were informed that their participation in my study was entirely voluntary, they were able to refuse to answer any particular questions, or withdraw from the study entirely at any point before or during the individual interview and focus group;

- **Confidentiality:** The participants were informed that the individual interviews and focus groups would be recorded. I told them that I would not use their names/identities, or the names of their schools and the information would be used only for the study. The data were stored

digitally and securely on the University of Sheffield's Google Drive to prevent data loss. I replaced the names with codes to maintain anonymity. I destroyed the recordings after transcribing them and will destroy the transcripts after completing my thesis;

- **Care and sensitivity:** The participants all provided informed consent, all the participants' responses were kept confidential and I conveyed my respect and appreciation to the participants for volunteering;

- **Difficulties solved without affecting the participants' time:** While laying out this study's timeline, I accounted for the possibility that there would be some challenges before and during the data analysis. For example, I knew that the individual interviews and focus groups could take up a significant amount of the SLs' time, and I sought to minimise the inconvenience associated with their participation by letting them choose their individual interview times, providing an estimate of how long the individual interview would take, avoiding talking about issues irrelevant to the research and trying to avoid interruptions that could cause them to offer less detailed responses; and

- **Power relations:** Qualitative research departs from the traditional view that the researcher is the definitive authority; instead, it visualises a symmetric partnership that promotes the participants as equals in the research process (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). This new process attempts to create new power relations whereby the researcher shows that she/he respects and believes the participants' experiences and perceptions and is actively ensuring that they are equal partners. To

maintain this relationship, I was respectful and made sure that I did not reflect on the participants' views during the individual interviews and focus groups. In addition, during the analysis, I kept in mind that the participants had given me their time, so I sought to conduct a non-judgmental analysis of their input and ensure that my power over the analysis did not give me a sense of superiority or cause me to become judgmental.

## 3.11. Trustworthiness of the Data

To meet the standards of methodological rigor, I collected, organised and analysed data in ways that met the standards of trustworthiness for qualitative research. There are four elements of trustworthiness, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Morrow, 2005). *Credibility* refers to the data's internal consistency, that is, one's confidence in the validity of the data. *Transferability* means that the findings can be generalised and applied to other contexts by other researchers. *Dependability* is concerned with the ability to obtain consistent results between researchers, analytical techniques and time. Finally, *confirmability* is related to the objectivity (or non-objectivity) of the study, positing that research should be unaffected by bias and influence (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Noble & Smith, 2015). These dimensions of trustworthiness are critical, because together, they signify the findings' worth.

I ensured ***credibility*** of the individual interviews and focus groups by taking the time to understand the SLs' experiences, rewording the questions and asking the same question in different ways to see if their responses varied and go deep into their perspectives. Moreover, detailed quotations helped me depict the participants' lived experiences truthfully and accurately. In addition, during the individual interviews and the focus groups, I sought to connect their responses with typical happenings during the school day.

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I also maintained contact with them in case I needed further clarification. Through these efforts, I was able to faithfully represent their views.

For *transferability*, I selected participants via purposive sampling, which ensured that the sample would be representative, and I chose 30 SLs from different districts in Riyadh. To ensure *dependability*, I had discussions with my supervisors at the University of Sheffield to receive feedback on several drafts of the research methodology before and after collecting data, and I recorded these changes throughout the process. Moreover, I created a database to ensure that I made accurate decisions throughout the research. For *confirmability*, to reduce the influence of power relations as mentioned above, I kept detailed and reflexive notes about the participants' expressions and actions, which created an auditable trail of how I interpreted the participants' views.

## 3.12. Thematic Data Analysis Procedures

### 3.12.1. *Data Transcription*

The transcription process involves listening to the recordings and producing written forms (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a valuable research practice in data analysis, containing written transcripts of participant responses (Bailey, 2008).

Although this stage can be immensely time consuming, transcription helps ensure the results are accurate, since the transcription process facilitates the creation of a set of results (Cohen et al., 2010; Matthews & Ross, 2010). Thus, I checked the transcripts twice to ensure that I wrote down exactly what was said, and I went back to some participants several times. Bailey (2008) explains the importance of transcript review, giving the participants a chance to confirm what they said, providing clarifications, correcting inaccuracies or errors, and verifying the accuracy.

Moreover, the recorded data were written in an easily comprehensible format and considered verbal and nonverbal expressions. As Cohen et al. (2010) and Gray (2014)

emphasise the importance of recording different types of data to aid interpretation; these can include notes about the participants' tone (e.g. harsh or kind), voice inflections, pauses, silences and mood (excited, angry, begrudging, etc.).

The transcriptions kept are in Arabic for coding; however, I translated the selected examples into English at a later stage. Translating the responses during analysis would have affected the quality of my interpretation, caused me to misinterpret the participants' views, and thus, affected the results.

### 3.12.2. *Becoming Familiar with the Data*

Before presenting findings or engaging in an in-depth analysis, it is crucial to become familiar with the raw data (Cohen et al., 2010). This stage is a vital part of the research process because it helps ensure that a researcher's interpretations are reliable (Matthews & Ross, 2010; Gray, 2014).

Thus, I immersed myself in the raw data to gain familiarity with it, and as Braun and Clarke (2006) state, acquire an overall understanding of the respondents' answers. I read through all of the raw data in the individual interviews and focus groups transcripts with my accompanying notes. My aim was to acquire a general sense of what the participants shared in each individual interview and focus group and *flag* anything interesting or significant. These notes, taken together, created an *index* organised according to certain categories and issues, which used to find specific data easily (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

### 3.12.3. *Data Coding*

After gaining familiarity with the raw data and identifying the general meanings of the participants' responses, I started developing ideas about the data relevant to the research questions. This process is called 'coding' (Matthews & Ross, 2010); it involves

operations that lead to properly evaluating the important data, which in turn, helps identify themes (Matthews & Ross, 2010; Gray, 2014).

In this process I used both inductive and deductive approaches during the coding stage. In exploratory qualitative research, the inductive approach looks at patterns (or themes) that emerge from the data (the participant's responses), allowing a researcher to develop theories (Soiferman, 2010; Gray, 2014; Liu, 2016). Researchers start from different premises and work towards a conclusion or theory that is not known at the start of the study.

I began with a research question and worked towards constructing a theory. After finding common themes, I drew associations between them to build theoretical models (Matthews & Ross, 2010). This means that the research question, my ontological perspective and the relevant literature influenced the formation of the themes and helped me create a plan for implementing the research.

In contrast, in the deductive approach, researchers can use their ideas and develop assumptions based on an established theory (Gray, 2014). The theory-led analytical modes use the theories of the study to guide the coding process or as a foundation. These data were anchored in theories of leading for change, and the literature review and background analysis of what other researchers have done in the field of leadership allowed me to select the Transformational Leadership theory, which was appropriate for my study.

In the early stages of coding, I used NVivo; however, I soon recognised that coding manually, and creating my own *database* in the process, would be more practical. Consequently, before coding, I organised the raw data (Cohen et al., 2010) by putting the transcriptions from the individual interviews and focus groups into a schedule and

different Microsoft documents files (arranged by participant) for each colour[15]. I used pink for Understanding of Disability, yellow for Understanding of Aldamj , green for Aspects of operationalising their Inclusive School Culture, light green for understanding of School Culture and School Structure., grey for challenges of changing their Inclusive School Culture (discussed in focus groups), and blue for other themes that can be used for supporting my analyses.

Then, as Gray (2014) and Elliott (2018) suggest, I carefully read the raw data, underlined key responses and made notes for later reference. Next, I analysed each component of the data and highlighted interesting phrases. As Matthews and Ross (2010) state, a researcher can code data by asking exploratory questions, such as 'What do they say about…?', 'Why might they say that?' and 'What might they mean by…?' (p. 374).

### 3.12.4. *Organising the Codes*

The organisation stage is the process involving working with the data coded to elicit particular themes. This involves categorising codes under potential subjects and the assignment of coded extracts relevant to these themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Matthews and Ross (2010) state, researchers should arrange examples (codes) of what participants said about a certain issue in a summary chart; this will allow researchers to look at the data categories across different cases, which will help them identify specific themes. Codes related to the same phenomenon were grouped together and evaluated (Gray, 2014). The evaluation caused particular themes to emerge from combinations of codes. The process was entirely iterative as I went back and forth through the different

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[15] See Appendix (9).

phases with different themes, revisiting it several times before finally arriving at the key themes.

For each question, I used a different analytical approach, which can be described as the following: for Q1 the analysis used was from bottom to top, for Q2 the analysis used was from top to bottom, and for Q3 the analysis used was joining and matching. For example, the five themes that emerged from research question one were arrived at from the bottom to top, meaning from the SLs' individual understandings of disability, to reach the model held.[16]

Bearing in mind that some themes could emerge during the early stage of data gathering, as happened to me, this for me was a sign of good preparation and of how the data collection guide was affected in collecting the data.

### 3.12.5. *Defining and Naming the Themes*

To search for themes, ***first,*** the researcher collects codes related to each other and assembles them in visual maps. These grouped codes represent one linked idea; certain codes may form the main idea, while others comprise sub-ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gray, 2014). ***Second,*** the researcher analyses each group and sees where patterns begin to emerge; where each pattern is a theme. ***Third,*** the researcher names each theme and describes how it is aligned with the aims of the research. Bearing in mind that these steps provided a general guide for me to reproduce themes from the individual interviews; each research question is organised in a slightly different way[17].

Before the translation stage, a researcher needs to make several drafts and review them to eliminate areas where they overlap and reduce redundancies.

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[16] See Appendix (10).
[17] See Appendix (11).

### 3.12.6. *Quotations Translation*

Regmi, Naidoo and Pilkington (2010) define translation as the process of changing something that is spoken or written in one language to another language by encoding the meaning conveyed to the language of the readers.

Thus *first*, due to similarities between the SLs' perspectives, some of the data have not been outlined in the findings. I chose the examples that most strongly resonated with each theme. *Second,* I read and worked to comprehend the Arabic text and outline the main words and sentences. *Third,* I tried to reduce the quotations by cutting out some of the long sentences, either if it was repetitive or unrelated to the theme presented. *Fourth,* I wrote the main target from coding this example. *Fifth,* I divided the text into several parts. *Sixth*, I highlighted the words that cannot be translated literally. *Seventh,* I kept some of the Arabic text to help me during the interpretative stage; I will discuss this later. *Eighth,* I moved some of the examples that seemed to be irrelevant to the blue highlighted documents without translation – this example, as I explained, was used for supporting my analyses. *Finally,* I followed some strategies that I established during translation to produce the equivalent text in English, as follows:

- Most of the time I translated a text literally, translating the same word in the original text as a word-for-word translation for the text target. I followed the same syntax and the same style of the original text.

- I then decided whether the translations made sense, after which I considered the particular cultural contexts and situation of the reader's language.

- If literal translation was not useful, I needed to use different expressions to transmit the same reality, expressed in the natural form of the reader's language but following the structure of the SL's example.

- I did not translate the institutions or the name of any educational programme, but used English letters to help in pronounce it.

- I kept some Arabic words in the examples as these words have specific meaning that cannot be translated, meanwhile explaining them during the discussion.

- I needed to translate the idioms or proverbs used by the SLs but in the meantime, I explained the meaning during the discussion.

- I needed support from a native speaker in some examples, which helped me to ensure the main ideas of the participants were understood by the reader.

Next, I will present the Research Findings and Discussion, which is the final stage of the thematic analysis.

### 3.12.7. *Presenting the Research Findings and Discussion*

After themes and sub-themes are established, the researcher can present the data and discuss the results of the research. I kept this goal in mind throughout the research, and consequently, changed the names of the themes throughout the analysis to make them clearer, easier to comprehend and more reflective of the data.

For interpretations, I was interested in how participants made sense of their experiences, as Matthews and Ross (2010) state, I read the coded data and noted what lay behind what was being said. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the 'task of the write-up of a thematic analysis...is to tell the complicated story of your data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis'. They add that it 'needs to do more than just provide data...[It] needs to go beyond description of the data, and make an argument in relation to your research question' by making the codes represent the themes meaning and interpreting the result that leads to answer the research questions. (p. 93). I also returned to the main transcripts several times throughout the process, looking at the

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raw data in different ways to check my interpretations, draw connections in each case, and refine the themes and sub-themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006 & Matthews & Ross, 2010).

The stages of understanding the data regarding the critical analysis were the most challenging as I had not used these skills in my country of origin. However, the feedback from my supervisors made me more critical, and I became confident that I could contribute to the literature and practice.

Finally, I worked on supporting my interpretation as Braun and Clarke (2006) explain, by employing the related literature to support the discussion and the findings and to identify how the research contributes to the literature and existing practices.

### 3.12.8. *Thematic Data Analysis Procedures Difficulties*

As explained above, I faced some difficulties during this stage in the ***data transcription,*** which was immensely time consuming and took around 6 months. For individual interviews, the raw data was 900 pages in length. I never anticipated this or planned around the time it would take, especially the focus group responses. However, more data meant more confidence in the analysis and providing the result. For the focus group recordings, the raw data was 47 pages in length. But it needed more attention, more detail, and more time to transcribe, which I had not fully anticipated. To ensure the results were accurate, I checked the transcripts twice to ensure that I wrote down exactly what was said.

Another challenge with the transcription process was the frustration I experienced when some parts of the recordings were not audible, resulting in a potential loss of information. There were some unintelligible words that I had to use placeholders or fill with other texts until the participants had time to review it and provide clarity.

Furthermore, related to **data coding,** as explained above, in the early stages of coding, I used NVivo; however, I soon recognised that coding manually, and creating my own *database* in the process would be more practical. However, I also faced difficulties handling the huge amount of data I had, which took around 3 months. Eventually I found each coded data interesting, and viewed it that all my participants views were important and could provide deeper understandings and important results.

Moreover, related to **quotations translation**, it was equally challenging to fully translate the work from one language to another, and it was also impractical, so I chose to translate only the coded parts.  However, it was also challenging to fully translate the work from English to Arabic, as this was immensely time consuming due to lengthy examples and the need to be alert enough for accurate translation. This took around 4 months.  Another challenge was working with words in Arabic that did not have an equivalent in the English language, or when the English language had several versions of the same word. It can be challenging to settle on one translation that succinctly captures the original meaning. In that case, I made a decision on which word best represents what was said in the original language and had to use the closest ones in meaning, then it was important to review these parts with a native English speaker.

Moreover, **Organising the Codes,** as explained above, involved the categorisation of codes under potential themes and the assignment of coded extracts relevant to those themes. This stage was not easy, and I was to follow a different approach for each question as explained above. To reach this approach, I spent 3 months using a different analytical approach before reaching clearer and joint quotations under several groups.

 In addition, in **defining and naming the themes** there were initially some apparent and outstanding themes, but after the translation of the text, the themes seemed to disappear.

There were also themes that overlapped, and to narrow them down meant excluding some aspects of the other themes. It took me around 4 months to find an overarching theme that correctly depicted a particular aspect in the data collected.

Finally, there were some difficulties related to **presenting the research findings and discussion**. This took me, as with most PhD students, around 6 months, and can take more depend on the data requiring analysis and discussion. This also depends on the reading that you need to support your discussion. These stages of understanding the data regarding the critical analysis were the most challenging as I had not used these skills in my country of origin. However, the feedback from my supervisors made me more critical, and I became confident that I could contribute to the literature and practice. Moreover, analysis and presenting the findings also required a continual review of analysis and rereading the quotations. Each time I did this, I discovered new results to be discussed as another interpretational layer. So at this stage, I needed to keep reading. The more you read, the more you write, the more you develop your drafts, the more you take deep feedback from your supervisors. With repeating reviews for each chapter of my findings, my analytical skills improve.

To sum up, reaching this stage was not easy and it requires passion, open-mindedness and patience; it requires self-motivation. This stage for me was about responsibility and readiness to make the correct decisions. PhD students are allowed to make mistakes but the main thing is seeing the improvements reflected on the drafts.

### 3.13. Study Limitations

My study includes several limitations that I need to outline. One limitation is that the MoE restricted the study to only three months. However, despite this limitation, I prepared a data collection guide, as explained above, to assist me during the individual

interviews and focus groups and organised my time to ensure that no days were wasted, and I could visit all the chosen schools.

Although this study does not include the perspectives of other school members, such as SEN teachers, mainstream teachers, students labelled with ID and their parents, which would have resulted in more data and strengthened the validity of the research, the large number of the participants, and the two data collection methods were sufficient for gathering robust and valid data. In addition, during the individual interviews and focus groups, most of the participants had enough time and were confident enough to clarify their comments if necessary.

As explained above, the study focuses exclusively on female SLs. Since the KSA's educational system is segregated by gender, it is impossible for a female researcher to conduct individual interviews in boys-only schools. I tried to recruit three male SLs for individual interviews, but they preferred phone individual interviews due to the religious and cultural norms they held, viewing it as unacceptable to meet with a woman in a public place. However, phone individual interviews may not give me a clear understanding of their perspectives and their School Culture compared with face-to-face individual interviews.

The final limitation is that there were some contradictions in the SLs' responses to the individual interview's questions for the first research question. I accepted these because people's views about issues like disability can be affected by many factors such experiences. However, as discussed later, the aim of the first research question was to explore how specific conceptualisations of disability affect the School Cultures of mainstream schools that offer SEN programmes for students labelled with ID, not what specific disability model is held by each participant.

## 3.14. Conclusion

In this chapter then, the formulation of research questions was discussed, leading to an overview of the research paradigm. The research paradigm can be explained as the guiding structure for researchers, enabling them to decide which data should be noted. This paradigm leads to the design and methods, which in this study are based on the interpretive approach. I then provided details on participant selection. This chapter also highlights the steps involved in the data collection/gathering procedures; how I employed individual interviews and focus groups to collect the data; and data collection difficulties and skills learned. This chapter also explained ethical considerations that arose during the study and assessed the dependability of the data. I ended the chapter by explaining the analysis of procedures used in my study, based on the thematic analysis.

In the next four chapters, I will present my findings and discussion.

**Research Question One: Results and Discussion**

*How are the cultures of mainstream schools with Special Educational Needs (SEN) programmes influenced by school leaders' (SLs') conceptualisations of disability?*

## 4.1. Introduction

Inclusion is a fundamental education policies, both internationally and in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). However, as I explained in the preface, inclusion is not merely a policy; it can also be a way of thinking about disability. As Ainscow and Sandill (2010, p. 407) state, inclusion is 'a matter of *thinking and talking*', and because disability is a constantly changing concept, how it is defined (in specific cultures) significantly influences the school experiences of students[1] labelled with SEN (Loreman et al., 2010).

Then as SLs are crucial members in every school for inclusion (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004), the ways in which they understand disability influence the whole School Culture (see Figure 5). Their perceptions include the norms, beliefs and values that affect how a school operates (educational action reform), interpreting education policies in such a way as to reproduce patterns of inclusion or integration, and therefore, segregation. As Capper and Frattura (2009) argue, if SLs perceive that social justice should be their schools' primary goal, they will leverage education policies in reform initiatives that support it.

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[1] The students labelled with ID in the examples can be male or female, as the preschool education system is mixed gender.
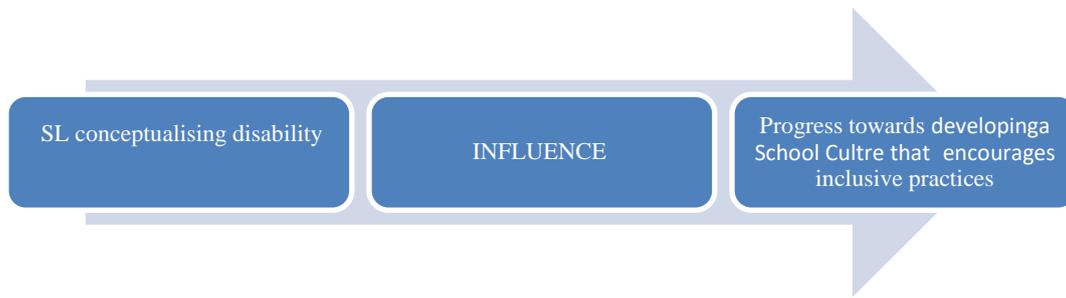
**Figure (5)** How the understanding of School Leaders influence the progress towards inclusion.

I visited 30 mainstream schools with SEN programmes for students labelled with intellectual disabilities (ID) to conduct individual interviews with the SLs. The objective was to elucidate how their conceptualisations of disability reflected on the School Culture. In other words, I wanted to see if their conceptualisations of disability influence the school experiences of students labelled with ID.

Since disability is abstract, it is possible to conceptualise it only through how people express their interpretation of the idea via their norms, values, opinions and beliefs. Thus, during the individual interviews, the SLs were asked questions intended to uncover their conceptualisations of 'disability'. These questions included topics like the following:

- How the students' differences were viewed;

- How the specialised services were conceptualised;

- The SLs' initial experiences in working with students labelled with ID;

- How behavioural difficulties were conceptualised;

- Whether the SLs categorised and labelled students with ID; and

- The eligibility criteria for enrolment in their mainstream schools.

The individual interviews results showed that *most* of the SLs categorised students labelled with ID into two groups, namely, *trainable* students and *educable* ones. The term 'trainable' refers to students with moderate to "severe" ID, while 'educable' refers to students with mild ID.

I was encouraged to explore why these two terms—trainability and educability—appeared so frequently, as well as how they were reflected in the School Culture. Thus, during the individual interviews, I asked additional questions to prompt the SLs to show their values, opinions and beliefs, and I encouraged them to share their thoughts in describing their conceptualisations of disability, to see what disability models they held and how this was reflected in the School Culture, influencing the school experiences of students labelled with ID.

During my research, I was struck by the language used by SLs to describe their experiences. I had to reread the transcripts several times before I could identify which models they were using. For example, several SLs seemed to be influenced by the PMM, but after going back and carefully considering their stories, I determined that they were also being influenced by several other models. The overall results showed that *most* SLs' descriptions of disability could not be explained by a single unified perspective. The SLs held a mutable perspective, influenced by a combination of several or dual disability models that varied between 'trainable' and 'educable'. The intersectional perspective includes the Psycho-Medical Model (PMM), Social Model (SM), Normalisation Model (NM), affirmation model (AM) and Faith Model (FM). This means that the employment of a specific disability model, as well as specific model combinations, was influenced along the lines of these two groups.

Using multiple models to view students labelled with ID can help address the limitations inherent in each model (Hutchison; 1995; Skidmore, 1996; Bricout et al., 2004; Frederickson & Cline, 2009). According to Frederickson and Cline (2009), there are certain limitations inherent in the PMM and SM; to address this, they propose a model of understanding disability called the Intersectional Model, which explores the complexity of the factors involved and seeks to ensure that students labelled with SEN are adequately supported by accounting for individual and environmental factors. Bricout et al. (2004) also suggest a new model based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach, in which person–context interactions influence individuals' psycho-emotional experiences.

In the model outlined by Bricout et al. (2004), there is a process of person–context interactions called the Systems Model, which integrates the PMM, SM and Transactional Model. Here, support from people in the environment can facilitate the development of students labelled with ID. The model is conceived as concentric circles of influence, in four layers from the closest to most distant—family, neighbourhood, school and society—where the person's environmental interactions construct her/his experience.

From the above discussion, I argue that the intersectional and multiplicity perspective can help encourage the development of Inclusive School Culture, because it helps to see the situation from different angles. However, in my study, due to *the dominance* of the PMM and NM in most SLs' perspectives, a '*dual practice*' in School Culture emerges. Here, for example, even when students labelled with ID are enrolled in mainstream schools, if they are unable to keep up with their peers, they will be excluded. In the dual practices concept, SLs prefer a school system that can provide a continuum of services, and they are resistant to major changes. They are more comfortable with pull-out practice (pulling

students out of class for special education, as explained in the next chapter) and think that separate SEN services are a good option for certain students.

However, as the main object of this study is to elucidate how SLs' conceptualisations of disability reflected on the cultures of mainstream schools, below, each disability model that has emerged is discussed in terms of how it reflected on the School Culture. Accordingly, as I explained before, the discussion clarifies how the School Culture influences the school experiences of students labelled as trainable and educable[2], does not conduct a judgmental analysis of SLs input, and ensures that my power over the analysis did not give me a sense of superiority or cause me to become judgmental.

In the next section, the PMM will be discussed in detail.

### 4.1.1. *The Psycho-Medical Model*

As explained above, the PMM represents a belief that, once a disability is identified, students can no longer be taught by ordinary standards; rather, there is a need for an alternative, separate form of education managed by 'specialists' (Boxall et al., 2004; Loreman et al., 2010). Although the KSA's policies give students labelled with ID the right to be included in mainstream schools (Alfaiz, 2006), the study results show that *most* SLs supported the PMM regarding the view that students labelled with moderate to "severe" ID may be considered '*trainable*'. Holding this model represents a belief that not all students labelled with ID have the right to be included in mainstream schools.

For students categorised as '*educable*'—those with mild ID—they were enrolled in mainstream schools and defined as able to learn; however, the study results showed that *some* SLs' views (especially those of the SLs from primary schools) reflected the PMM,

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[2] The students labelled with ID described in the examples may be male or female, because the education system in preschool is mixed gender, as explained in Chapter One.

and thus, caused these students to be excluded *within* the mainstream school or even moved to an SEN school.

To illustrate the PMM, below, examples from the individual interviews are given related to the eligibility criteria for acceptance of all students labelled with ID in mainstream schools. Here, SLs' use of the term 'trainable' shows how their concept influenced the School Culture, causing these students to *be excluded* and sent to a SEN school. One SL said,

> *Sometimes, the education authority sends us students who have been incorrectly diagnosed[3] and forces us to accept them for a follow up...[4]Some of them can't speak. I mean, they are a centre's students...They are not educable...It is not about accepting them, it is about whether or not we have the special services that they need.*

According to this SL, the education authority occasionally incorrectly judges students suitable for inclusion mainstream schools in, forcing the schools to accept these students and wait for a term (follow up) before deciding to remove them. The SL expressed that she tried to refuse students who seemed incorrectly diagnosed to her because her school simply did not have the capacity to teach students who could not speak. She tried to explain that it was not about refusing them; rather, her argument was that the school was unable to provide the support needed. However, it was evident in describing them as 'not educable' and 'the centre's students' that this SL had refused these students from the beginning and simply needed to wait until the end of the term to make an official decision.

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[3] Emphasis is underlined in all examples and some parts of the conversation have been omitted due to repetition or because it not related to the interview questions.

It can be inferred that this SL, by applying PMM in her School Culture, refused to put any effort into enhancing the school capacity needed to include the student. The terms used indicated that she perceived these students as unable to learn and indicated that they did not belong in a mainstream school. This PMM conceptualisation became even clearer in an individual interview with another SL, who said,

> *Once, by mistake, the education authority sent to us a mentally retarded student—a difficult, difficult one. After one week, we redressed the situation and asked the mother to remove her student…The mother was angry, she met with the psychologist, and later she admitted that her daughter was trainable. She knew that her daughter wouldn't be able to learn; then why did she want to put her in a mainstream school?...It is wrong to put unintelligent students with mainstream students because they will affect them [mainstream students].*

I asked, 'Why didn't the school wait for one term? Why wasn't this student given that?' The response was as follows:

> *She kept screaming. When she'd enter the classroom, the mainstream students would cover their heads…because she'd pull their hair...When the SEN teacher was absent, there was no one to look after her. She was too active. Is that normal behaviour?...The whole class refused her. What is the benefit of cheating me? She will stay for a few months and then she'll leave.*

With the word 'redress', this SL was referring to 'correcting' what the education authority had done. Even then, the authority requested waiting for a one-year follow up, but in the first few days, this SL, by holding PMM, came to perceive that the girl was uneducable—just from seeing her screaming—and the education authority had sent her by mistake. However, from my experience, I would suggest that this girl's behaviour was a consequence of the teacher's and students' rejection of her. This SL's PMM conception was clear when she focussed predominantly on the mainstream students' unwillingness to cope with the girl. The expectation of being refused already prevented the student from settling down. Moreover, the most critical part in the SL's PMM viewpoint was that she described the mother as a cheater who misled the SL, simply because she wanted her

daughter to be taught in the best place for her, and how she was right to refuse, explaining that the mother would figure it out sooner or later and move the girl to an SEN school.

Another SL expressed a similar view, stating,

> *Sometimes, excesses of the student with severe ID happen at the education authority's office because the parents want their children to go to mainstream school...I will accept them only if they are educable, not if they are trainable.*

I asked her, 'What if the parents want their child to continue at this school? You already have a programme for students with ID'. She replied,

> *We often succeed. I will ask a mother to go to the clinic and get her child's IQ [intelligence quotient] results so that she can prove us that her child belongs here… Sometimes, the parents can't accept the reality that their children are zeros, no academic skills…A mother may be afraid of SEN school…but we tell her that her child isn't educable…Anyway, we give these students a chance.*

This SL thought it was impossible to know if a student was educable, or suitable for a mainstream setting, without an IQ score[5]. She explained that the education authority makes excuses for parents' excessive requests. In her PMM view, it seemed that she did not think parents were justified in coming to the school without IQ reports for their children, and she gave the parents an opportunity by giving them time to show evidence of the IQ report result. This SL's PMM perspective asserted that she could not accept or refuse the student until she received the IQ report, which would determine whether a specific student was 'educable' or 'trainable'.

This SL, also applying PMM in her School Culture, thought it was strange how some parents could not accept that their children were 'zeros' with 'no academic skills'. However, it was clear to me that while the parents had accepted the reality that their children had differences, this did not mean they would isolate their children in SEN schools. They wanted their children to be taught in the best place for them; from the

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[5] A total score taken from standardised tests aimed at measuring intelligence.

parents' perspective, SEN schools would negatively affect the students and isolate them from society; yet, in the SL's view, the mother's fear of SEN schools was not an excuse, and she tried to show that she was being cooperative when she gave the mother a chance.

The next examples show how the SLs' PMM views were similar to those of other school staff, such as SEN teachers and psychologists, confirming how these perspectives had become a part of their School Culture, because  SLs' perspectives influence them, One SL stated,

> *I have a student who was accepted as 'educable'. However, when she entered year three, the SEN teachers said that she had stopped developing. I contacted the education authority supervisor to do the IQ assessment again…Her mother wanted her to stay, but she needed a programme for 'trainable' students...She still needed a specialist.*

I asked, 'Why doesn't the SEN teacher make this a "trainable" supported plan? Aren't the SEN teachers specialised?' The response was as follows:

> *They keep saying that the students are not 'educable'…Well, logically, they work with the 'educable' students…the SEN teachers evaluated on the individual educational plan [IEP].*

The same PMM language as that used by the previous SLs appears, showing that these SLs thought their SEN programmes were not suitable for 'trainable' students. The SL agreed with the SEN teacher that the student labelled with ID had stopped progressing, which caused her to argue to the education authority that the student should be moved to a SEN school. This was based on the view that the SEN teacher could only teach 'educable' students, as evaluated by the education authority, according to the students' achievement on their IEP. In this sense, she expressed the view that 'trainable' students are unable to learn, although her school had SEN teachers providing individualised sessions—meaning that these students could be supported. Significantly, as a primary school, the school had

SEN classrooms[6], so it had the same capacity as SEN schools. Thus, it is not clear why they refused to accept this student other than because of the SL's PMM perspective.

Another SL expressed,

> *I kept telling the SEN teachers not to promise the mother anything… Sometimes, the teachers find, the students are initially 'educable', but the situation changes with time...The mothers refuse to understand the difference between students who can be included and those who cannot.*

I asked her, 'What is this difference?' She responded,

> *They [SEN teachers and psychologists] say that this place is not suitable for them…I contacted the education authority, so the students are no longer my responsibility; we are not to blame if we do not do anything with them…In the end, we are trying to do what is best for the students.*

This SL, by applying PMM in her School Culture, asked the SEN teacher not to make a decision until after the follow-up observation, even if the student seemed 'educable'. She did not want to have a difficult conversation with the parents if the school decided to transfer their child to an SEN school. The SL expressed that the student changed, and her school discovered that it could not work with the student or could not provide the specialised services that were needed. If she showed that the student had changed and was no longer able to fit into the school, the educational authority supervisor would not blame her school and staff because they did not want to do anything, that is, achieve the IEP goals.

In my experience working in the government-run SEN schools in Riyadh, I did not see much difference between the services they provided and those provided in government-run mainstream schools with SEN classrooms. Via the PMM, these SLs showed a desire

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[6] In the United Kingdom, this is referred to as a self-contained classrooms model.

to avoid a difficult situation that could be experienced with some students labelled with ID, under the assumption that they are unable to learn.

As a final example, one SL said,

> *When the students come to register with their mothers, I always make sure to be there. They know that their children are not 'educable'; a few parents haven't gained the knowledge that some are able to Aldamj.*

I asked her, 'But you have a SEN programme. Won't their children get the support they need?' She responded,

> *We accept 'educable' students only. Here, we have books, pens, paper.*

By describing some parents as not being knowledgeable, this SL, by holding PMM, suggested that some parents just wanted their children to go to a mainstream school, but she assumed that the school could not benefit these students. However, in holding a PMM SEN perspective, this SL appeared unaware of 'education' as a broad term; the process through which all students can achieve learning. Instead, she assumed that school is just books, pens, paper and academic curricula.

For students categorised as '*educable*', in the next examples, the use of this term (especially in primary schools) shows how the SLs' conceptualisation influences their School Culture, causing students labelled with ID to be excluded *within* the mainstream school or even moved to a SEN school. This relates to enrolment in mainstream classrooms, valuing differences, labelling and categorisation and how students' behaviours are conceptualised.

The two examples discussed next relate to enrolment in mainstream classrooms. One SL said,

> *We had students with ID in mainstream classrooms, but no more [showing a comfortable facial expression]. The mainstream teachers refused to accept them.*

> *They already had 36 mainstream students; when we bring in students with ID, we have to take out mainstream students…SEN classrooms are much better for students with ID.*

Another SL expressed:

> *No, they have their own classrooms…This is not refusing the student; this is SEN strategy…I can't understand how they will be able to work together [SEN and mainstream teachers] to teach the students. When I put the students with ID in SEN classrooms, everything goes well.*

These SLs, as well as many other SLs from primary schools, perceived that the students should be taught a specialised curriculum by a SEN teacher in a separate SEN classroom. In the discussion with the first SL quoted above, who adopted a PMM perspective, a view emerged that mainstream classrooms are not meant for students labelled with ID; thus, she suggested that it is not logical to accept students labelled with ID and lose mainstream students.

The most critical part in both the SLs' PMM views was that they perceived their schools as considering what would be best for the students labelled with ID; however, the first SL was satisfied that there were '*no more*' students labelled with ID in her mainstream classrooms, while the second stated that '*everything goes well*' when the students are segregated. This clearly showed, at base level, that the PMM perspective makes them think about what was the most convenient for them rather than the students. Moreover, the second SL commented, '*This is not refusing the student; this is SEN strategy*', showing how she was influenced by traditional ways of thinking about SEN in relation to the PMM.

To clarify further, these SLs thought that students labelled with ID would receive a higher quality of education in SEN classrooms with SEN teachers. I can infer from these

PMM perspectives that they expected that SEN schools *could simply move into* mainstream schools, resulting in two types of schools in one building. They were most comfortable with having separate SEN classrooms, and in their view, it was not contrary to inclusion to place students labelled with ID in these classrooms. This implied that they simply did not want to make any changes to their School Culture and thought mainstream classrooms should be for mainstream students only.

Three other examples have been chosen to show another way of conceptualising disability in the study results, which relate to not valuing differences. Some students who are labelled with ID, even those viewed as educable have been excluded from mainstream school just because of other differences they have. One SL said,

> *I remember a mother who came to our school and asked me to accept her daughter, who had an ID with physical disability, because our school was close to her house—but this is not a good enough reason. Her daughter seemed able to learn but needed a first-floor classroom, which I did not have… Every room on the first floor was occupied…I contacted the education authority, and they understood my decision. I asked them not to send any other students who were in the same situation. They were just sending anyone.*

Another SL, showing some retreat in her view, describes the behaviour of students labelled with ID:

> *I have three girls with ID and physical disability; two of them also have some difficulties with communicating…The education authority wrote that they were educable, but I didn't have the space to give them the physical therapy that they need.*

I responded, 'Okay, but what if they had physical therapy after school? What if you just focussed on the educational aspect?' She replied:

> *The SEN teachers kept telling me that the SEN centre was more appropriate for them… When one of them got angry, she threw her sandwich and drink on her clothes. The school nannies[7] refused to do anything for the students. They said*

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[7] In the KSA, schools have assistants who are responsible for cleaning the facility, as well as helping the students wash their hands, go to the toilet and so on.

*that they were disgusted…and that they didn't even get extra pay. Putting these girls with their group would have been good for them.*

I also asked, 'But why didn't the SEN teacher help with that?' She replied:

*Well, she helps, but not all the time. She's still a teacher.*

Finally, another SL with a similar view stated,

*I had a girl who seemed educable, but she needed to be fed with a tube. Having this girl in my school made me feel scared...I was afraid that a mainstream student would come and pull out the tube. On the first day, the girl was excited to show us the tube...It was strange to us [SL and her administrative team] that she wanted to show it to people…We felt that the SEN centre would be much better for her.*

These SLs, by applying PMM in their School Culture, refused to accept certain 'educable' students in their mainstream schools because of the other differences they had. These actions showed that these SLs held the PMM in the sense that they did not value students' differences. The first SL rejected the student labelled with ID because of her physical disability, although it would not have been difficult to find a room on the first floor. She contacted the education authority, requesting that they stop sending students in this situation, emphasising that '*they were just sending anyone*'.

The second SL, also applying PMM in her School Culture, rejected the girl who was labelled with ID and had a physical disability, although cooperation between school members would have been sufficient to accommodate her. The SLs supported the SEN teachers' dependence on the nanny to look after students labelled with ID instead of supporting these students to learn new skills so they would be independent in and outside the classroom. The last SL also showed that she was applying the PMM in her School Culture by rejecting the girl labelled with ID who needed to be tube fed; she viewed the situation as too strange, although the girl was confident and accepted her health situation,

showing the how she received her food. This example also related to the AM, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Another study result showed that being educable could give students labelled with ID the chance to enrol in mainstream school; however, via labelling and categorisation, the students labelled with ID could also be excluded *within* mainstream school.

During a school tour, one SL show me a board that included photos specifically for some of the students with ID as an SEN reward board. She was talking with pride that this procedure gave them special care. However, it seems to me that this PMM perspective reflects the School Culture focus on labelling and not being a part of the main school reward board. This was also discussed with another SL when I asked, 'Do you think that classifying the students helps them?' She replied,

> *Yes. Everybody in the school knows that this floor is for the Aldamj students. It's a SEN floor and a SEN teacher's room…It gives them their own SEN classrooms.*

I asked, 'Doesn't that make them feel discriminated against?' She said,

> *For the students, I don't think so. They are just on a different floor; but the parents and teachers might feel that way.*

Later in the individual interview, she said,

> *We have a prayer room, but they [students with ID] don't pray with the mainstream students...Yeah, they learn how to pray in their curriculum, but I don't know how to make them do that [shows confused expression after my question]…I don't think they know that it's part of the workshop. The prayer room is also on the second floor, not on the same floor as their classroom.*

This SL could not see how her view of disability (PMM) in her School Culture reflected on her School Structure, and how she perceived that the way her school was structured benefitted students who are labelled with ID, thinking that this gave them specialist

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attention. She used the phrase 'Aldamj students' to reinforce the labelling and marginalisation these students, where the school allocated SEN classrooms and the SEN teachers' breakroom to a separate floor. Consequently, students labelled with ID were unable to participate in prayer with their peers, even though they were taught how to pray in their SEN curriculum. Here can be seen the intersection of faith and ability; it can be stated that the School Culture influenced the practice of school staff in a way that exclusion was evident in the mainstream school, even in terms of faith practices.

The final result related to the PMM concerns how the behaviours of educable students was conceptualised by SLs and how this affected their School Cultures. When I asked one SL if working at this school with a SEN programme was her choice, she said:

> *It is not perfect, but the other school was so far from my home...My feeling was and still is discomfort...Their behaviours make things difficult...We have an active student; he's always asking to go to the toilet, and then he doesn't want to come back. The psychologist said to the mother that he really needs to take a medicine that would make him calmer.*

When I asked another SL if the psychologist at her school supports all the students, she said,

> *Of course not; the psychologist is only for the ID students. Their ID often cause them to misbehave. They throw water on or hit other students...Anyway, I keep telling the teachers to explain to mainstream students that they are disabled and that we need to accept their bad behaviours and whatever else they do. This is why I can't include them in mainstream classrooms...I think we are more comfortable with the current situation.*

In my experience, ID may cause students to learn and progress at different rates compared with their mainstream peers. However, as they seemed to accept the PMM, these SLs linked unacceptable behaviours with the ID. This was especially evident in the situation where the parent was requested to give her son medication to make him calmer, or in

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other words, keep the student from doing anything; instead of making the teachers address the situation, the school asked the parents to change the student.

Unacceptable behaviour can be seen in both mainstream students and students labelled with ID; however, the second SL perceived that the psychologist was only needed for the ID students. Moreover, holding the PMM perspective failed to support the students labelled with ID to settle in the school. Instead, she convinced teachers and mainstream students that their misbehaviour was caused by their ID.

These SLs viewed the exclusion of students labelled with ID as justified by the students' inappropriate behaviour. However, they were not aware of the link between the School Culture and the student's behaviour, as many students are unable to settle because of the feeling of being excluded, causing them to show unacceptable behaviour.

*Overall,* the above results show that SLs' PMM perspective towards ID students viewed as '*trainable*' and '*educable*', reflecting the School Cultures of mainstream schools with SEN programmes. It can be seen that although the KSA's education policies encourage inclusion for students labelled with ID, the above examples confirm that these SLs were influenced by the PMM affecting their School Culture, showing that they did not take issue with accepting '*trainable*' students *if* their schools had specialised services. This perspective assumes that the SEN teachers at mainstream schools do not have the necessary special facilities and teach 'educable' students only. Consequently, the view is that 'trainable' students should go to a SEN school. However, as a university lecturer in the KSA, I can confirm that SEN majors and undergraduate students study the full range of ID, including substantial (severe) needs. SEN teachers in mainstream schools and SEN teachers in SEN schools graduate from the same departments. Moreover, what is especially confusing is that, even in primary schools with separate SEN classrooms, the

SLs refused to accept 'trainable' students despite the lack of meaningful differences between the services provided in SEN schools and mainstream schools with SEN classrooms.

However, the reality is that SLs adopt this way of thinking simply because it does not challenge their school routines, ignoring the consequence that this causes students categorised as trainable to disappear and be cut off from ordinary childhood experiences. From their PMM perspective, they continue to blame the student's disability for the view that mainstream school is not an appropriate placement for them.

The SEN field, from a PMM perspective, defines ID according to IQ scores (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). Students are categorised depending on IQ score, a score of 50-55–75 indicates mild ID, 35-40 to 50-55 indicates moderate ID, 20-25 to 35-40 indicates "severe" ID and less than 20-25 indicates "profound" ID (Dockrell & McShane, 1993). As Frederickson and Cline (2009) state, students with low cognitive skills are often deemed to have an ID due to a below-average intellect, which affects most aspects of development. Students labelled with ID are viewed as having an intellectual deficit that causes behavioural, speech and social skills impediments that cause them to fall behind under mainstream classroom demands (Beveridge, 1999), as seen in the previous SL's examples.

As mentioned above, in one SL's view, the education authority tries not to focus on IQ scores in the mainstream government schools, such as the Wechsler Intelligence Test or Stanford Binet Test, which is a positive step. However, my data showed that the students who were transferred to mainstream schools by the education authority still had to be observed and go through follow ups; when the students fell behind the school standards, they were still transferred to a SEN school. This happened even if the mainstream school

had a separate SEN classroom. Thus, it can then be seen that the established school standards determine who meets specific criteria for what is 'normal' (Loreman et al., 2010). With these standards they assume that a student's disability is the problem, and this seen as a 'deficit' that need to 'fixed' by professionals at a SEN school, who aim to correct deviations from the norm (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001). Link and Phelan (2001) agree that standards differentiate 'us' from 'them', and thus, control who can access various domains, including in mainstream schools.

To explain these standards, Davis (2010) describes the origins of the concept of normality, noting that the 'norm' implies a relation to the majority of the people. Thus, the norm tends to include most of the population under a standard bell-shaped curve. This comes with extremes or deviations, dividing the population into typical and atypical subpopulations. In society, bodies are conceptualised as normal, or when they deviate from this, as disabled. Davis (2010) adds, under the aim of eugenics, which is to norm the nonstandard, deviations in intelligence are identified in the quartiles of the bell curve; here, higher deviations are classified as desirable and lower deviations as undesirable. The challenge with these modes of thinking is that they classify the population as standard or nonstandard, leading to the grouping of all undesirable characteristics together.

However, despite their widespread use, the assessment tools such as the Wechsler Intelligence Test or Stanford Binet Test are adapted into Arabic versions, (Egyptian and Jordanian) but have not been adapted to the cultural standards of the KSA context; which means that the validity for IQ scores cannot be ensured for KSA students, as there are significantly different standards.

Moreover, IQ tests have been proven to be inadequate because they promote the assumption that students with similar IQ scores have similar skills. If a student has an IQ

score of 40, she/he will be categorised as 'uneducable', and as the results above show, this may prejudice the teacher to expect that the student will be unable to learn. However, as Gates (2007) states, IQ tests do not clearly indicate the areas in which students experience difficulties. The assessment process is purely mechanistic; diagnoses serve only to label students so that they can be segregated (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). Similarly, Dockrell and McShane (1993) declare that it is better to define the student's needs when they arise because the categorisation does not indicate the support required, but instead, will likely lead to devaluation; encapsulating negative discriminatory practices, such categorisation will impose barriers that prevent students from engaging with society.

In addition, from the examples above, the assessments are typically conducted by a specialist, usually a psychologist who determines the appropriate setting; it cannot be ensured that the results are comprehensive. As Alquraini (2013) states, SEN centres in the KSA focus on IQ scores, and they usually do not apply a multidisciplinary approach that accounts for other participants in the student's life.

To clarify how IQ scores influence what teachers expect from students with SEN, I reflect on my experience as a SEN teacher. In the school I worked at, the educational authority employed a psychologist, and the SL, teachers and I were excited that she would be able to help. The SL asked to meet her to work on the IQ tests, and they asked us to take them seriously. The psychologist gave us the IQ scores for the students that I taught in my classroom, and the report showed that one had a very low IQ. I remember that the psychologist drew circles around the score as confirmation that the result should be taken seriously. I thought about how I could use this result to improve my students' learning, but I also remember thinking, 'What does this IQ score show me?' I had worked with

these students for two years before I knew their IQ scores. How did this result help me understand the students? It was just a number. The score can show other teachers who do not know the student that they have a low IQ and would find it difficult to learn. I was trained in the traditional way of thinking, and at my graduation as a SEN teacher, I still held this view; nevertheless, the IQ result meant nothing to me. I preferred to work on independent evaluations, which I found to be more reliable.

Thus, SLs need to view the psychologist as holding a new role for inclusion practices rather than focussing on determining the intelligence quotient (IQ) score to label the students. The psychologist needs to work on developing the School Culture towards inclusiveness (see Chapter Six for some stories on this topic).

In regard to students categorised as '*educable*', holding the PMM is associated with a specific view of disability constructed in the school sociocultural discourse for these students. The previous examples showed that, even if the SLs accepted them, the traditional way of distinguishing between 'special' and 'normal' needs is continually reinforced. This means that, although students viewed as educable are present in mainstream schools, they have not been included; they are separated in SEN classrooms, using the phrase 'special treatment' as a way of solving their unacceptable behaviour.

Even if they have some chance to be enrolment in mainstream classrooms in terms of their intellectual abilities, the School Culture practice does not help students labelled educable to feel included, which confers how the students are segregated within mainstream schools. Loreman et al. (2010) declare that isolated settings and unitary taxonomies of impairment harm the students' self-perception and are not educationally useful, serving only to mark the students as different and draw attention to their

difficulties. They also lead professionals to focus solely on the skills that students lack (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009).

To clarify, the PMM perception results in placing students labelled with ID in an existing School Culture without changing it, and this practice causes students to be separated twice—first when they are removed from opportunities to interact with their peers and second when they are taught in SEN classrooms. In many cases, there are two schools in the same building, a mainstream school and a SEN school. This is what causes the SEN programme in KSA to exhibit an *integration* practice, tending to adopt practices derived from SEN provisions without challenging the School Culture. Via such practices, schools are likely to simply establish new forms of segregation. Lunt and Norwich (1999) describe integration as a practice focussed on just placing the students with SEN in mainstream school. Moreover, as Corbett (1999) states, 'integration is about them fitting in with us, if individuals are to successfully integrate, it is they who need to adapt and assimilate themselves in the dominant norms which are accepted intrinsically superior to marginalised cultures' (p. 128).

Some SLs in the above examples did not think that the SEN classroom embodied labelling or discrimination. Nevertheless, during the individual interviews, I learned that the presence of SEN classrooms encouraged mainstream teachers to move out any mainstream students they *thought* were unable to adapt to the standards. One SL stated,

> *I have a mainstream student I'm trying to transfer to a SEN programme [SEN classroom]. She has some difficulties with communicating. Putting her in a SEN classroom would be good for her...It is unjust to leave her with a mainstream teacher who does not want her and 30 students who can walk in a straight line while she can't.*

I asked, 'Do you think that having SEN classrooms encourages the mainstream teachers to transfer some students to the SEN programme?' She responded,

> *No. They're just thinking about putting the students in the best place for them.*

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Clearly, the SEN classrooms in mainstream school can cause other problems related to isolation, and in my view, for SLs who hold the PMM, it is seen as a way to encourage categorisation and reinforce labelling.

Having described the PMM viewpoint, in the next section, the focus shifts to SLs who hold an SM understanding of disability, analysing how their conceptualisation of students labelled with ID categorised as *'trainable'* and *'educable'* and its influence on School Culture differ from those who hold a PMM view.

### 4.1.2. *The Social Model*

It appears that, when SEN programmes were first established, several SLs were influenced by the PMM. However, over time, as more students labelled with ID enrolled in their schools, some began to develop views about 'trainable' students that corresponded to another model, namely, the SM.

As SLs engaged with impairment as an embodied experience, they began to perceive that disabilities were caused by conditions imposed by society rather than medical conditions (Oliver, 2009). Oliver (2009) explains more that this definition of disability relieves the social pressure on the student labelled with SEN and subverts the idea that disability is only the result of bodily impairment.

During the individual interviews, I asked the SLs several questions about the appropriateness of including *all* students labelled with ID in mainstream schools, thereby eliminating the need for SEN schools. Below, several examples containing the term 'trainable' show how the SLs' conceptualisations influenced their School Cultures in relation to the eligibility criteria for acceptance in mainstream schools.

I asked one SL, 'Does the education authority transfer students with mild, moderate or "severe" cases of ID to your school?' She replied,

> *They didn't say which! I think that all the student cases should be sent.*

I explained to her how some SLs told me that students with "severe" ID or even moderate ID should be sent to SEN centres instead of mainstream settings. She responded,

> *But do you call the Aldamj? Students without ID need to become accustomed to seeing severe disability, so they don't grow up believing that they are strange…We had a girl who was unable to talk and do some hand movements…A few years later, I visited her classroom during a lesson and watched her as she answered the teacher's questions and acted independently. It was completely different compared with how she was during registration…The teachers play a role in that.*

This SL showed that she held an SM understanding of disability; she did not agree with the conditions for acceptance, and she asserted that SEN teachers and school staff could provide the support needed. In doing so, she placed great emphasis on how the teachers' actions can make differences to a student's functional skills. This shows that, if the teachers understand that all students have the right to be part of the mainstream school, and school can be a factor hindering student achievement. they can provide the support needed to facilitate achievement rather than preventing it.

Another example shows how an SL blamed the parents for other people's rejection of their children. She stated,

> *One mother thought that she needed to have an excuse if her daughter looked clean. She came to school without having had a shower for several days; her underwear was not clean... The other students didn't like being near her [sad expression]…That made the girl with ID hit them out of anger…Her SEN teacher came to me every morning asking to have her moved to an SEN centre, but I knew that was not fair.*

Holding an SM understanding of disability resulted in this SL's perception that the students' behaviours reflected their situation, and they would worsen if they were placed

in SEN centres. In this case, the SL explained that the girl's mother was not taking care of her hygiene and this was the reason for her behaviour. The mother thought the daughter's disability was an excuse for being dirty. As previously mentioned, in my experience, even students' most aggressive behaviours are usually brought about by the environment and a lack of acceptance.

Another SL expressed an important view. She stated,

> *I work with the education authority a lot, so I know that they are working to abolish the IQ test.*

I asked, 'Okay, then does the follow-up procedure vary between schools?' She replied,

> *Yes, that is correct. I encourage the staff, the teachers, the communication therapist and the psychologist to focus on the new students with ID and help them settle down and develop their skills... Some were not even able to speak, but now they are much better. If we put them back in SEN centres, then we'll go back to the main problem, and society will not accept them.*

This SL provided an important result for my study when she asserted that the education authority removed the IQ tests. I can infer that eligibility criteria for acceptance in mainstream schools depend on each school, showing the importance of having an Inclusive School Culture. This is clear in how this SL worked on that aspect. Holding an SM facilitates creating a School Culture that values students' differences, with the view that putting them in SEN schools will produce no benefit, because they will eventually encounter each other in public places. This SL showed the need for staff members to cooperate to bring all students together from the beginning.

Another two SLs explained their stories about the effect of IQ. One of them said,

> *Before the SEN programme was created, we had a boy with ID...He was with a mainstream teacher for two years, before she moved, and around the same time, the SEN programme was established. The psychologist did an IQ test for him, and the result was 40. Can you believe it?... He was moved to an SEN centre*

*because he was 'trainable'...Now, when students with ID come, they [SEN teachers] label most of the students as not educable…I observed one of the students every morning and I saw how he started to become more knowledgeable about the classroom and learned where to sit, how to talk with his friends...So, why say that they are not able to learn?…I later recognised that they [the teachers] are the ones who need to move. Any SEN teacher who is not efficient enough, she should just leave this job.*

In this SL's story, it is clear how labelling a student according to the IQ result caused the SEN teacher to reject him, although he had been a member of the school for two years before the programme started and had been part of a mainstream teacher's classroom. Holding the SM view allowed this SL to recognise the problem of teachers acting as barriers. She saw that SEN teachers started to refuse other students labelled with ID, as well as how one student was rejected although he was developing. This means that the labelling is not useful in some situations, since all students can learn in one way or another.

The other SL mentioned above was in the same situation, where she had a student who had been diagnosed as 'trainable' but preferred not to inform the teachers of this. She said,

*Diagnosing the students has many more disadvantages than advantages. A diagnosis will stick with students for their whole lives. Sometimes, I hide the diagnoses from them [teachers], because as soon as they know that they're trainable, they will refuse the students, and then such students will not be included...The diagnosis also affect their peers: If I say something to one of the students with ID, their peers will stop me. They will tell me not to talk to him, that he can't hear, can't understand.*

This SL also described how teachers become barriers to inclusion; because of this, she preferred not to share the diagnoses with them. She explained that the diagnoses—especially IQ scores—affect how students are treated and often determine their futures. Consequently, this SL, holding the SM, preferred to hide the student's diagnoses so that

teachers continued to work with them and did not develop negative expectations. This SL highlighted a crucial idea when she said that, if teachers[8] refuse the student labelled with ID, it also affects their peers. This SL showed she accepted the SM by requesting that the teachers do not ignore them, and instead call the students by their names just as with their mainstream peers, demonstrating to their peers that difference is not a barrier for sharing in daily classroom activities.

Regarding SLs adopting the SM, the understanding of disability will now be analysed, focussing on their conceptualisation of students labelled with ID who are categorised as *educable*, and how this affects their School Culture. As explained above, when SEN programmes were first established, many SLs were influenced by the PMM. However, over time, as greater numbers of students labelled with ID enrolled in their schools, their thoughts about disability began to change. Some began to develop views about 'educable' students that corresponded to the SM.

In relation to enrolment in mainstream classrooms and IQ scores, several examples in my doctoral research results show how the behaviours of students with ID are viewed, along with labelling and categorisation. The first examples relate to enrolment in mainstream classrooms. One SL said,

> *Yes, I include them in some mainstream classrooms. Before, when they saw them only during break times, they were not close enough…They viewed them negatively. But now, they recognise that they can sit next to them, that they can participate in lessons...An SEN teacher argued with me, saying that I didn't know about their IQ tests; she focussed on their social skills because there was no need to teach them more academic skills.*

By holding the SM, this SL suggested that including students labelled with ID in mainstream schools was beneficial because it allowed them to learn from their peers and

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[8] I have used the word 'teacher' to refer to both SEN and mainstream teachers.

allowed their peers to understand their differences. She argued with the SEN teacher, saying that she needed to teach the students more academic skills; in response, the SEN teacher claimed that she needed to follow the curricula associated with their IQ scores. However, this SL believed in the students' abilities and how important it was to see even some development, and she expressed that the IQ result could not provide criteria relating to what to teach the students labelled with ID.

From the SM perspective, standards for progress do not need to be the same for every student, and students labelled with ID and mainstream students can receive support according to their specific goals. Moreover, this SL, by applying SM conceptualization, seemed to successfully foster inclusion in mainstream classrooms, focussing on how the SEN teacher can provide support.

Another SL had a similar view related to separate SEN classrooms. She stated,

> *What happens in some primary schools takes us backwards, wasting the efforts that we made in the kindergartens. I don't feel that this includes them; it is just a sign of having Aldamj, not a real Aldamj.*

When I mentioned that the students played together during school breaks, she commented,

> *They are still separated from their peers. What about other periods of the school day? The student will be confused—Who is he? Who are his friends?*

The discussion with this SL led me to ask her whether some of these SLs often find the mainstream national curriculum too difficult and whether students labelled with ID frequently lose access to individualised support. She responded,

> *Actually, I am surprised. They can study together and account for individual differences during the individualised sessions. I do not believe that this is Aldamj. Alternatively, in the classroom…teachers should plan their lessons to account for individual differences. There are different levels in every mainstream classroom.*

From an SM perspective, this SL pointed out that the version of Aldamj that involves separate classrooms in mainstream schools has '*taken us backwards [and caused us to] wast[e] [our] efforts*'. She implied that preschools had worked diligently to build a School Culture that valued diversity, calmed apprehensions, taught acceptance and helped students become accustomed to each other. From her comment, primary schools did not practise real Aldamj because separating the students caused them to become confused and withdrawn. Moreover, in her experience, putting students labelled with ID in SEN classroom causes them to regress; when they are in SEN units, they do not have enough chance to interact with peers. She argued that isolating them is wrong and unhelpful, suggesting that a way of supporting individual differences is needed.

Other conceptualisations of disability aimed towards educable students were related to the students' behaviour. This was shown in how the SLs attributed some unacceptable behaviours to the students' situations (e.g. their families, teachers, peers, etc.) and not their ID.

I asked one SL, 'Do you find that students labelled with ID are sometimes stubborn or aggressive?' She replied,

> *Not that much; it depends on their families…When students are hit, they become more violent. We have a girl who hits her friends. She's aggressive...The psychologist contacted her parents, and we discovered that the girl's brother hits her at home for no reason at all...Some parents refuse to take their daughters into public places, take the entire family out but leave the ID daughter with her nanny at home...One ID girl said that her mother travels with the family and leaves her behind with her grandmother. Sometimes, subconsciously, she speaks with anger.*

Another SL shared this view:

> *If a student sleeps all day in class, and when the teacher wakes her up, begins screaming, is that because of her ID? No, we found that her mother does not*

*make her go to sleep early. During the week, she stays up until 2 o'clock in the morning.*

Another SL had a similar view of how family can cause the student labelled with ID to exhibit unacceptable behaviour. She stated,

*The problem is that some parents think their daughter should receive special treatment because she has ID. If she comes to school, she needs to follow the rules—and the students can do this, even if they have ID. From my experience, they misbehave because some mothers spoil them. A student cannot do whatever she wants simply because she has ID. If she hits anyone, she will be punished.*

My study showed that some other SLs had a similar SM conceptualisations but referred to a situation related to the teachers rather than the parents. One SL said,

*The teachers are the basis. They direct the behaviour of both mainstream and SEN students…Sometimes, the teachers are the ones who need to change their behaviour, not the students… Not patient. They want the students to behave well quickly, but that may take months, maybe up to six months...The SEN teachers want the psychologist to focus on the students, while they view themselves as volunteers when it comes to changing their behaviour.*

Another SL commented on the teacher as a reason for the unacceptable behaviours of students with ID. She said,

*The teacher can be the cause. I remember a student who refused to do a task because the activity's instructions weren't clear, and the student didn't have the appropriate materials. The activity exceeded his ability; he had a visual sensory difficulty…He screamed and refused to continue; their behaviour is a sign that students with ID are bored with the lesson.*

The final example shows how one SL had another view, suggesting that mainstream students can be the reason for ID-labelled students' behaviour. She said,

*The students with ID play and run around, and if one of them does something strange, the mainstream students will start laughing. Then, the student with ID will hit them or scream in their faces or reflect their behaviour... The teacher's role is to explain to the mainstream students that they're making them angry and*

> *teach them how to play properly—explaining that the students with ID can understand you, but you have to give them time, share and make them love you.*

From these comments, I can draw out that, holding the SM, these SLs perceived that the behavioural difficulties of the students labelled with ID are in fact influenced by external factors, such as the students' home life, inadequate teacher support and/or the other mainstream students. This means that every school member exerts some influence over the students' behaviour.

It is important to bear in mind that it is only the mother, not the fathers, who continues being blamed for the child's behaviour. This can show negative aspects related to gender segregation, where SLs generally can only have contact with mothers, as well as how it can affect the parent–school communication.

The final results relate to labelling and categorisation. During one individual interviews, an SL referred to the students by their names, not their disabilities, which encouraged me to ask her, 'Do you think that having separate services, SEN teachers and Resource Rooms negatively affects how the students feel?' Her response was as follows:

> *Well, do you mean categorising the students?...Well, this has two sides. The first is that all the services provided for the students depend on this categorisation…However, for me, the second thing is that it is possible that categorising limits their abilities and their capacity to improve. Thus, in my school, we try not to focus on the classification. We follow the student. Progress, classification is a reference, but people should deal with them in a flexible way.*

Another SL replied,

> *Yeah, I don't like labelling. It puts parents in bad situations. It's very hard on them. When I want to send a report about their child to the education authority, the parents refuse to sign it, saying that their daughter is not sick…I try to explain to them that this is just a name, that it allows her to get SEN support.*

Later in the individual interview, the SL commented,

> *This year, we've tried to give the resource room a different name to remove its negative connotation. We explained to the students that, to make their year group win, they needed to work hard to develop their skills so that they could wear the crown. That encouraged students with ID to wear this crown and feel happy because they studied hard with the SEN teacher and contributed to their class's victory.*

When I asked, 'What about the mainstream students; do they show any misbehaviour?', another SL responded,

> *Yes, some of the mainstream students do. They'll throw their snacks on the floor when they're angry, throw water on other students.*

I asked, 'Okay, but if both groups of students experience the same behavioural difficulties, why do the mainstream teachers reject the students with ID?' She stated,

> *It is just because of the name; they use it as a hanger [referring to ID labelling]…They have the SEN teachers, and consequently, the mainstream teachers are not responsible for them.*

These SLs acknowledged that labelling had more negative consequences than benefits. They critically argued that schools should use classifications flexibly. They also showed that there is no need to use formal labels to show the parents that the students' disabilities and IQ scores are not the school's main priorities. In their view, the key element is looking beyond labels, which will help eliminate the stereotypical language that constantly reinforces the idea that students labelled with ID are lagging behind their mainstream peers.

***Overall,*** the examples indicate that the SLs who were influenced by the SM regarding *trainable and educable ID students* were not concerned about the students' differences, and they believed wholeheartedly that the students had the capacity to learn. These SLs identified several barriers as social constructions that resulted in the students' disability and prevented them from being included in mainstream school. As explained in the

literature review (see Chapter Two), one such barrier comprises social cultural negative societal attitudes (Bricout et al., 2004).

In line with the SM, the SLs discussed in this section perceived that a limitation of intellectual skills does not lead to disability unless the School Culture works to reject tailoring education to students' differences. This is confirmed by Frederickson and Cline (2009); according to the SM, although impairment may cause functional limitations, society is what disables students. As Kenworthy and Whittaker (2000) argue, ending segregation not only requires shifting resources towards support programmes in mainstream settings but also signifies that schools must change the School Culture thinking (social barriers), which can be damaging to the lives of students. Finally, the results also shed light on the importance of changing the School Culture to accommodate all students' *ability* and overcome SEN traditional ways of thinking about disability as a socially constructed barrier.

As explained in Chapter Two, there is an ongoing debate in Disability Studies about how disabilities are and ought to be conceptualised. Haegele and Hodge (2016) explain, this has given rise to various models of disability, including the PMM and the SM as popular models of disability. However, there are other models of understanding disability; this study considers the NM, AM and FM—which relate more to the students categorised as *educable*—regarding students labelled with ID who have *already enrolled* in the SLs' schools. The discussion below will show how these conceptualisations influence the SLs' School Cultures.

### 4.1.3. *The Normalisation Model*

This research's results showed that *several* SLs used the language of normalisation to talk about students labelled with ID; this involves helping such students to become like their non-disabled peers. For example, one SL said,

> *I am encouraging teachers to work hard to help them [students labelled with ID] be more like their mainstream peers and develop their skills so that they fit into society.*

Another SL commented,

> *We put the students with ID in mainstream school as a normal society to help them develop their skills and become more like normal people...Yes, many students leave our school as normal students, and this is our aim, especially for the students whose parents do not want them diagnosed with SEN.*

These examples allude to NM beliefs, which relate to helping the students labelled with ID to catch up to their mainstream peers. From this perspective, separate SEN intervention is structured on ability standards to solve the student's limitations, focussing on the concept of normality. Again, Davis (2010) illustrates the origins of the concept of normality, noting that the 'norm' implies characteristics of the majority of the people. Therefore, the norm tends to include most of the population under a standard bell-shaped curve. This comes with extremities or deviations, dividing the population into typical and atypical subpopulations. He adds that this curve was applied in eugenics – where quartiles were used after eugenicists experienced challenges with classifying intelligence – explaining that one outcome of grouping all undesirable traits together is that disabled students can be classified as outside of the norm.

Given the considerations above, the dominance of 'normality' should be reversed, producing new ways of thinking about the 'abnormal'. To explain the NM view, in the

discipline of sport as an example, Giese and Ruin (2018) state that existing social understandings of the body are often contradictory: There is both a universal inclination towards (normalised) physical self-improvement and a paradoxical struggle to accomplish acceptance of bodily (intellectual) diversity. Similarly, through the perspective of ableism, students whose bodies do not conform to the school's entrenched norms are perceived as not fully human, and they risk social exclusion because they do not obey the normative societal expectations, which can be referred to as the NM.

In terms of School Culture, Hutchison (1995) and Florian (2006) state that the NM seems to emerge as a powerful tool for challenging discrimination and critiquing the hegemony of medical services provided to students with learning difficulties. However, Chappell (1992) argues that normalisation is inadequate, because at base, it has comparable foundations to perspectives seeking to change the individual. On the surface, the NM seems to be an extension of the SM, but in reality, it has values closer to those of the PMM. From the SLs' perspective, the NM requires the provision of services to support students with different abilities *so they can adapt to 'normal' standards*. Thus, the PMM and NM ultimately share identical ends—to cure/normalise students labelled with ID.

To clarify, it is not the aim to reject the provision of support services prescribed by the PMM, such as psychological consultations, speech therapy or individual education support. However, like the SLs who adopted the PMM, the SLs adopting the language of normality supported the professionalism aspect of SEN education and used the phrase 'special treatment'; they focussed on the students' difficulties and pushed them to be like their mainstream peers as a critical part of being accepted by society. As Chappell (1992) commented, the NM tends to reveal more about professional practices than about valuing differences.

The SM aims for a differentiated system to support a range of difficulties, where support services are seen as *standard provision for all students*, not *SEN provision* (Dyson & Gains, 1993; McIntyre, 1993). This contrasts with the NM in the SLs' perspective, where the focus is helping students labelled with ID to fit into the existing School Culture.

***Overall,*** although the SLs in the examples above intended to implement inclusive education, their School Cultures were characterised by the assumption that they needed to normalise students labelled with ID. Consequently, as they were caught in traditional SEN ways of thinking, their School Culture remained unchanged. Although this was problematic, I do not ignore the utility of the support needed, since all students have the right to learn in the manner that is best for them. This leads me to consider the language used by the SLs who were influenced by the AM, as an alternative model that focuses on providing support from a perspective that celebrates.

### 4.1.4. *The Affirmation Model*

The beliefs of some SLs aligned with the premises of the AM, a model in direct opposition to the PMM's 'personal tragedy' and critiques of the SM in excluding impairment (body) as an unobservable attribute of the disabled students (Johnstone, 2005; Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). The AM repudiates the idea of 'normality' promulgated by the PMM (Frederickson & Cline, 2009); it is also unlike the SM, which sees disability as a social phenomenon but ignores the individual (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001; Hughes, 2007). However, it recognises that barriers still need to be removed before disabled students can access services. The primary difference between the AM and SM is that, while the AM advances the idea that disabled students can enjoy their lives, like the SM does, it contrasts with the SM in that it does not ignore their personal characteristics, including their social and academic performance.

For example, one SL said:

> *'Normal life' is a broad term…I don't want to push the students to be just like their mainstream peers. If I do, their lives will be destroyed… Aldamj is when the society and community accept the student [different characteristics] as normal…Such students won't be odd, they will be treated normally.*

This SL did not want to push the students labelled with ID to be like their peers, suggesting that students labelled with ID need a place that respects their progress while providing stimulating education. She explained that her school measured the students' progress according to individualised standards. From this, and by her explicit comment that '*normal life is a broad term*', I can infer that her view is that each person always already has a normal life—the one she/he is living.

According to this SL, Aldamj aims to help students labelled with ID feel normal; she illustrated that, when mainstream students see and interact with something every day, eventually they no longer perceive it as strange. The key element in her view of disability is that, as long as one treats them normally—viewing their differences as a part of them— these students will live a normal life.

Another SL commented,

> *I need to focus on how they view themselves...We have a girl whose right hand is deformed. When she arrived, she was afraid to show her hand, but supported by her teachers, she eventually stopped caring…When she tried to draw a hand during an art lesson, her teacher asked her to draw both hands and show her friend what her hand looked like.*

This SL explained how the teacher helped the girl accept her disability and not feel nervous to ask for help when she needed it. In her view, she wanted to demonstrate that her disability merely distinguished her and that it was acceptable to need more assistance than her friends did. The critical part, in her view, was that although other students saw

that she was different, this should not be a problem. It was clear that she wanted to reach

the idea that students labelled with ID are put in difficult situations only when they are

discriminated against.

Another interesting point raised by an SL was as follows:

> *Well, the classification is helpful. The teachers would come into my office to ask me about a girl, and I'd explain...she needs to be supported by the SEN teacher or else she will be neglected...Not all students with ID need the same things. Some need more, while others can achieve more things more quickly.*

I asked, 'What about the parents? Do they reject that?' She responded,

> *We don't intend to minimise them when we categorise them. The parents are more comfortable this way. They are able to talk about their children's needs without feeling ashamed, and they are willing to ask for support because they know that their children should have it.*

This SL had a positive opinion of classification; in her view, it helped the teachers

understand the students' situations and enabled them to provide the most relevant support.

From her comments, I can infer that, since schools speak in a language that differs

markedly from the traditional ways of talking about SEN (PMM), parents can discuss their

children's supported needs more confidently, without feeling ashamed, and feel safe when

they know that their children will not be removed. Green (2003) states that some mothers

her study indicated that they coped with the everyday difficulties, but were irritated by the

pity stemming from stereotyping, caused them to view their children as burdens and left

them feeling depressed, ashamed, guilty, and isolated.

It is useful to carefully study the language used to describe disabilities. In the AM,

'impairment' includes physical, sensory and cognitive differences, and these differences

should be respected as a part of society's natural diversity. The SLs who held an AM

perspective expressed how ID can be seen as an ordinary characteristic, not an

extraordinary one, and as a result, students labelled with ID can accept and be pleased with who they are, away from a definition of disability in which they are stigmatised.

To clarify the SLs' perspectives, in the PMM and NM, the understanding of disability and normality produces stigma that reinforce the view of students labelled with SEN as tragic and pathetic. Link and Phelan (2001) defines stigma as the labelling, separation, stereotyping and discrimination created and existing together within a power structure in a social setting and applied to stigmatised groups. In the SM, the role of the disability oppressively affects how a person labelled with SEN/ID interacts with the world and how a student's disability is related to the social environment (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001).

However, the AM encourages students labelled with ID to develop a strong sense of self-identity, stressing that they should have control over their lives. As Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) argue, the problem is not impairment, but rather, it is the stereotypical attitudes linked with it. This model stresses that the individual's life should always be valued, regardless of any impairments (Johnstone, 2005), and it shows how impairments can become a vital part of a person's identity (Cameron, 2014). In Green's (2003) study, she noted that, in her neighbourhood, people initially thought that her daughter was strange. However, after regular interactions, people began to view her as different, but not strange, indicating that new discourses of disability were created. This is apparent, where, due to some people feel uncomfortable interacting with a person labelled with SEN as a condition consisting of helplessness, a lack of productivity, and even not accepted behavior.

From the above, it is clear how AM values criticise the effect of psycho-emotional disablism on identity. Psycho-emotional disablism is another dimension of disability where the emotional welfare of disabled students are undermined (PMM and NM),

particularly through discrimination, exclusion and prejudgment (Reeve, 2002). As Reeve (2002) states, the concepts of self-surveillance and the gaze are powerful, moulding how disabled bodies are controlled, as well as the influence on emotional wellbeing, causing individuals to feel useless and unappealing. Thus, a disability identity highlights the adaptation of a diverse experience of disabled students and a resistance to the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability as a political act, along with conceptions of power, at odds with preconceived ideas about disabled students.

***Overall,*** as the previous examples suggest, my study's results reveal that the AM is the answer to the question of how mainstream schools can provide extra support for students labelled with ID and still include them in mainstream classes. It explains that adopting the AM transforms a School Culture's consciousness about the meaning of disability and asserts the worth and legitimacy of the life of a person with an impairment. Its overriding aims are to challenge the assumptions of what constitutes normality or fulfilment (Swain & French, 2000). At the same time, it asserts that disabled students have the right to access the support needed as part of school services. This causes students who labelled ID to begin to accept their disability and request the support they need without experiencing stigma. As Swain and French (2000) argue, disabilities in education are viewed positively and education prioritises the development of a healthy self-image.

The next section is the FM as final disability model that has emerged.

### 4.1.5. *The Faith Model*

The significance of the FM lies not only in its novelty but also the finding that *all* participants were influenced by it to some extent. Some participants exhibited FM-related beliefs unconsciously, while others spoke about them explicitly. Even the SLs who were influenced by the PMM were also, to varying degrees, influenced by Islamic principles

to promote their Inclusive School Culture, which I refer to as the FM. The intersections of disability, faith and School Culture provide a new model of disability as an outcome of my doctoral research.

Disability is rarely discussed in Islamic Studies; although some examples can be found in the work of Bazna and Hatab (2005) and Ghaly (2016), these sources are not directly related to inclusion/inclusive education. Thus, my conversations with the SLs caused me to consider Islamic beliefs and how SLs interpreted them to create an Inclusive School Culture, which has not been studied before in terms of its effect on mainstream School Culture in the KSA. Moreover, some SLs and other educators expressed that whilst not everything should be adopted from Western countries, inclusive practice is good and should fit in KSA education context. FM, crucially therefore, can help in localising Disability Studies in the western world, in the KSA, and in other Islamic contexts.

In the KSA, religion is a highly important aspect of education, and all students study and interpret the Quran and Prophet Mohammed's Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH) Hadiths. As a result, many educational practices rest on Islamic principles as a foundation. As explained in Chapter One, the KSA led the Arabic world in including students with visual disabilities in mainstream schools. This was achieved by volunteers who believed Islam gave them a civic responsibility to help disabled students. However, as previously explained, by 1960, the MoE identified that students with visual disabilities should be educated in separate schools. They established the Al Noor ('Lights') Institute in Riyadh[9] for boys, and four years later, opened an institute for girls (Salloom, 1995; Almosa, 1999). Later, they established a number of other segregated SEN schools.

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[9] The KSA's capital city. For reasons explained in Chapter Three, it is the focus of my research.

For several reasons, the misinterpretations of Islamic teachings can have a serious effect on educational practices. The existence of several schools in Islam lead to misinterpretations of the Quran and Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) Hadiths, meaning some have different views that are mostly unacceptable because it reflects their own perspective. Another reason for misinterpretation, as Haegele and Hodge (2016) state, is that religious leaders (known as 'Sheekh' in KSA) in their higher social position, are believed to be able to cure illnesses and heal injuries associated with different body parts – this phenomenon is known as The Devil's Eye. Through this ability, religious leaders gained greater authority, allowing them to define the discourse within different fields related to disability of the mind and body. Both in turn led to the dominance of the biological (PMM) perspective in the conceptualisation of disability in most of the KSA society.

During the individual interviews, three Islamic concepts emerged, resulting from cultural misinterpretations of the Quran and Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) Hadiths, which have no relation to Islamic principles. These include the ideas that firstly, students labelled with ID are blameless and cannot be held accountable for worship; secondly, students with ID are a punishment from God; and thirdly, putting students with ID in special centres protects them. These three key concepts are outlined in greater detail below.

**1. Students Labelled with Intellectual Disabilities Are Blameless and Cannot Be Held Accountable for Worship**

The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) said,

قال صلى الله عليه وسلم : [رفع القلم عن ثلاثة عن النائم حتى يستيقظ، وعن الصبي حتى يبلغ وعن المجنون حتى يعقل]

This Hadith says that the 'pen' (representing accountability) has been lifted from three types of people—sleepers until they wake up, students until they grow up and insane people until they find relief, referring to those who have difficult mental health conditions and need time to experience relief and return to the routine day. Although IDs are not mental health conditions, some people say the pen is also lifted from people labelled with ID. However, if they are not accountable, this means if students labelled with ID are not accountable for worship, with the cultural interpretation that they are unable to learn.

One SL commented,

> *Accountability is for the day of judgement, not daily life...They won't be sinning if they don't do the acts of worship, but they will need to learn how to take part in Islamic social life and go to the mosque with their parents. We teach them how to be a Muslim, how to pray, about Zakat [charity].*

Another SL stated,

> *In Islam, these students are excused from the worship...God said,*
> ليس على الأعمى حرج, ولا الأعرج حرج *which means that we need to excuse them because their needs are different. We cannot ask them to do what normal people do.*

These SLs argued that God has excused students labelled with ID from engaging in Islamic acts of worship, such as praying and fasting; however, this does not mean they cannot learn. According to them, the students labelled with ID should be taught how to pray, reprimanded if they do something wrong and encouraged to carry out their duties as members of society; in their view, being Muslim means needing to learn how to be Muslim.

**2. Students with Intellectual Disabilities Are a Punishment from God (ابتلاء)**

I asked several SLs to describe how they conceived of their jobs differently than they did before the introduction of Aldamj. As a part of this, I asked, 'What about the people who see students labelled with ID as a punishment from God?' One SL responded,

> *I used to work at a private mainstream school, and we had a student with Down syndrome. We didn't have SEN teachers, but this student performed well... I remember how this student made the school staff feel rewarded, blessed and benevolent...People usually refuse them, but I go back and think of God; God is more empathetic than humans are, and students with ID are from God. When God puts them in this situation, He knows more. All things from God are good.*

Another SL said,

> *My first experience was different...I refused. I asked them [education authority] to create a hearing disability programme, which seemed easier... I remember praying to God that they would be removed, but when they arrived, my feelings changed... When they came, they brought goodness سبحان الله ادخلو البركه You can't imagine the goodness that we've experienced because we have them. If you find someone in public who needs help, you should help him, even if it's not your job. A salary is necessary but think about God's reward.*

Another SL said,

> *I always tell the mothers that students with ID are from God, that they're just like other gifts from God, and that God never gives people bad things. Just think of it positively. By taking care of them, you will be rewarded; God gave me this student to improve my position in paradise...I do it for God.*

These SLs also argued that students labelled with ID should not be viewed as a punishment from God (ابتلاء). The second SL argued with mothers who had this view and tried to explain that students labelled with ID are just like other students, gifts from God. She asserts that God never gives bad things, and we need to accept them like we accept everything that God has created; our patience and support puts us on the road to paradise.

The last SL preferred to have a programme that accepted students with hearing disabilities only; however, she said that later, when the students labelled with ID came, they were blessed. In using the Arabic phrases 'دخّلوا البركة ' and ' سبحان الله' she showed how students can bless us with their presence. She viewed her job as an act of human service that gave her much more than just a salary.

**3. Putting Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Special Centres Protects Them**

I asked the SLs if they thought that putting students labelled with ID in SEN school empathetically is what Islam asks them to do. One SL responded,

> *No, absolutely not. They won't be able to interact with their nondisabled peers. Our religion asks us to be proud and unashamed of our students because they are gifts from God, and we need to accept everything from God...It's a feeling that comes from what Prophet Mohammed says الراحمون يرحمهم الله.*

When this SL says that Prophet Mohammed says 'الراحمون يرحمهم الله', she is referring to treating students as he did, with caring and kindness because God promises that who provides that will have mercy in the day of the judgment. Another SL responded,

> *No, it is not Islamic to isolate them. It can be insulting. I want them to be with us, in front of our eyes. They need to interact and coexist with their mainstream peers. The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) exhorts us in many stories to show that the happiness of students is just like giving money for those in need...and about the students with ID, for them, God's reward will be double.*

According to theses SLs, the Quran and Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) Hadiths never said that students labelled with ID should be put in separate places for their protection. These SLs pointed out that students labelled with ID are human, and their religion gives them the right to an education. Putting these students in SEN schools would prevent them from developing normal social lives.

From the above examples the SLs following the FM showed that believing in Islamic principles means that schools should treat people/students labelled with ID in a Muslim manner; such behaviours should come from inside us, and thus, we should apply the Islamic concepts in School Culture. The individuals' interview conversations caused me to think about the Islamic concepts that appear in the Quran and Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) Hadiths. I thought about how Islam encourages the creation of Inclusive School Culture. Many of these principles can be found in God's verses and the Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) Hadith, for example,

- قال صلى الله عليه وسلم : [ إن الله لا ينظر إلى صوركم وأموالكم ، ولكن ينظر إلى قلوبكم وأعمالكم ]

- وقوله صلى الله عليه وسلم :[ أيها الناس ، إن ربكم واحد وإن أباكم واحد ، ألا لا فضل لعربي على عجمي ولا لأسود على أحمر إلا بالتقوى، خيركم عند الله أتقاكم ]

Prophet Mohammed says that Islam declares that everyone, regardless of gender, wealth or ability, is equal before God. The only legitimate differences between people are differences in piety, righteousness and manners (taqwa). No other factor, including race, nationality or language, affects human dignity. Although Islam affirms the equality of all people, however, this concept does not deny the existence of disparities in needs. It does so without contradicting the Islamic concept of non-discrimination. Equality does not mean that all people are the same; we can be equal but different. In the Holy Book, God states,

- قوله تعالى :{ ومن آياته خلق السماوات والأرض واختلاف ألسنتكم وألوانكم إن في ذلك لآيات للعالمين}
(Alroom, 22)

- وقوله تعالى : {ولو شاء ربك لجعل الناس أُمة واحِدَة ولا يزالون مختلِفين}
(Hude, 118)

This means that people should not be treated as though they are the same. Differences are evidence of God's greatness and omnipotence. God does not create anything unwisely, and we need to believe in His wisdom and accept His will, even if we are unable to comprehend it.

Islam asserts the existence of human equality, and it does not view differences as a sign of inferiority. As God says,

- **قوله تعالى :{ ليس على الأعمىٰ حرج ولا على الأعرج حرج ولا على المريض حرج ...}**

(Alnoor, 61)

God calls on us to treat disabled people/students without embarrassment or fear and talk to them like we would talk to anyone else. This argument is supported by the following verse from the Holy Quran:

- **قوله تعالى :{ عبس وتولىٰ *أَن جاءه الْأعمىٰ * وما يدريك لعله يزكىٰ * أو يذكر فتنفعه الذكرىٰ..}**

(Abassa, 1-3)

This verse came to the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) after a visually impaired man named Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktoum approached him for help. The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) was busy, and he turned away, not answering him. However, this incident caused God to reproach the Prophet for ignoring the man, which demonstrates that all people should be treated respectfully, and communities should appreciate disabled people/students without regard to physical, financial or social distinctions. Thus, Islam is a religion of equality and justice. Moreover, God and the Prophet Mohammed also said,

- **قوله تعالى :{ يا أَيها الناس إنا خلقناكم من ذكر وأُنثىٰ وجعلناكم شعوبًا وقبائل لتعارفوا إنَّ أَكرمكم عند الله أَتقاكم إن اللَّه عليم خبير}**

**(**Alhogoraat, 13)

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- وقوله تعالى : {وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلَتُسْأَلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ}

(Alnaheel, 93)

- وقوله تعالى : { لِيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُم بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ}

(Alzokhroof, 32)

- وقوله صلى الله عليه وسلم :[ ترى المؤمنين فِي تراحمهم وتوادّهم وتعاطفهم كمثل الجسد، إذا اشتكى عضوٌ منه تداعى له سائر جسده بالسَّهر والحمَّى]

Here, God says that he created people and made them different: Adam and Eve, male and female. He placed them in communities so they could know each other, not despise each other. This means that Islam recognises people's unique abilities and needs. In the last Hadith, the Prophet Mohammed says that God made people different along the lines of wealth, knowledge, skills and power so that they could draw upon these resources to help one another, promote social awareness and avoid injustice. This sentiment was also expressed by one SL who said,

> *God gave you your health and abilities, so you need to thank God for them and use the abilities that God gave you to help other people. The education authority doesn't know your students. It just provides rules and a guide. It is a general guide. You are accountable before God on the day of judgement.*

Moreover, in the Hadiths,

- قوله ﷺ [كلكم راعٍ, وكلكم مسؤول عن رعِيَّته...]

In the context of Islam, parents are required to take care of their children, who are gifts from God. SLs are also key contributors in each school and should be responsible for all the students in their school. Which means society is required to create the conditions under which they are valued and can pursue their lives to the fullest. In addition, God says,

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- **قال تعالى: {...فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ}**

(Alhaj, 46)

Here, God states that disability is not a congenital condition; rather, the disabled people/students are those who lack spiritual and moral values. This is also supported by the following verses:

- **قال تعالى: {يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَومٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ ۖ بِئْسَ الِاسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ ۚ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ}** (Alhojorat, 11)

Here, God confirms that, although people may think others are weaker than them, they do not realise that these people are better than they are in other respects within God's position. Islam emphasises that it is important to avoid ridiculing disabled people/students by labelling them (e.g. blind, lame, crazy, etc.). It also forbids people from using words that could hurt their feelings and lead to injustice; ridiculing disabled people/students would link pain to their disabilities.

Islam also stresses that all people who face difficulties should be patient:

- **قال تعالى: { وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ * الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُم مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ * أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ }**

(Albagra,155 – 157 )

- **وقوله ﷺ :[مَا أَصَابَ الْمُؤْمِنَ مِنْ هَمٍّ وَلَا غَمٍّ وَلَا حَزَنٍ حَتَّى الشَّوْكَةِ يُشَاكُهَا إِلَّا كَفَّرَ اللهُ مِنْ خَطَايَاهُ]**

Here, the Quran does not specifically refer to disabled people/students. God asks people to be patient, and believe they will overcome their misfortunes. The Prophet Mohammed said nothing should affect a person; they should deal positively with whatever troubles they experience, because even simple things, such as being pricked by a thorn, can clear one's sins or cause one to be rewarded by God.

Finally, God says,

- **قال تعالى: {لا يكلف اللَّهُ نفسا إلا وسعها}**
  (Albagra, 286)

- **وقال تعالى: { لَا يكلف اللَّهَ نفسا إلَّا ما آتاها سيجعل اللَّه بعد عسر يسرا }**
  (Altalag, 7)

Here, it is explained that God never asks anybody to do anything until he knows that the person is able to do it. Moreover, in this verse, the concept of 'differences' is embedded in the virtue of equal opportunity. In Islam, it is not necessary to be able to produce the same outcomes as other people. Although people may have equal opportunities, they are not necessarily able to produce the same result as one another, as when God puts a person in a situation, he does not ask people for more than what they are capable of.

From the verses and Hadiths above come many key Islamic principles that underline the FM and its influence on the School Culture. This can be summarised in one SL's comment:

> *We are a community that moves according to our Islamic faith. During a school meeting, I told the teachers that, as a Muslim, I should never feel bored, and praise Allah every day...Those who do not think they're up to the job should leave it because this is between you and God. You are the one who will be held accountable.*

However, from the study results, in some schools, problematic interpretations of the Quran and Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) Hadith in KSA culture have led to discrimination against students labelled with ID. This has also occurred due to the dominance of the PMM and NM in SLs' perceptions, and consequently SEN practices. The study results also showed that, due to having SEN programs in neighbourhood school, and therefore having contact with students labelled with ID, the SLs had become

aware of the problematic nature of the three misinterpretations outlined here, and thus, stopped believing that they represent Islamic principles. One SL said:

> *Before the ID students weren't seen as isolated in special schools, but Aldamj opened our eyes to things that we needed to change…Our daily behaviours should be Islamic. Unfortunately, sometimes we neglect them. If we all focussed on the Islamic aspects...mainstream students would learn from our behaviour.*

This SL argued that having students labelled with ID in mainstream school '*opened [their] eyes*', meaning that having the students in the schools alerted them to the need for change, and they believed that Islamic principles constituted the direction of this change.

***Overall,*** from the previous discussion, it is clear that there are intersections between the FM and other models of disability related to valuing and understanding differences; thus, the FM can be seen as contributing to Disability Studies by providing new meanings of disability. The Islamic SLs' beliefs can lead educators to promote Inclusive School Culture in mainstream schools to remedy any misunderstandings or misconceptions of disability. However, it should also be noted that the Islamic underpinnings of inclusiveness as a culture that values diversity were not present in the practical application of the students' rights in the schools. From the study results, this was found to be due to the dominance of the PMM and NM for SEN practices, showing that the KSA has not been fundamentally affected by the Quran and Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) Hadiths in this regard. Thus, more study in this FM is warranted.

## 4.2. Conclusion

During the individual interviews, the SLs used two terms to describe students labelled with ID—'trainable' and 'educable'. I was encouraged to explore why these two concepts emerged so frequently and how they were reflected in the School Culture. I asked

additional questions to prompt the SLs to explain their values, opinions and beliefs, and I encouraged them to think critically about their perspectives and share their thoughts.

The overall result showed that the SLs' conceptualisations, which were influenced by a combination of several disability models (*multiplicity perspective*), varied between seeing students as 'trainable' and 'educable'; their views could not be explained by a single unified perspective as they overlapped and constantly interacted. The intersectional perspectives include the Psycho-Medical Model (PMM), Social Model (SM), Normalization Model (NM), Affirmation Model (AM) and Faith Model (FM), meaning that the employment of a specific disability model, as well as particular model combinations, was influenced along the lines of these two groups (trainable and educable).

As the main aim of this study is to elucidate how SLs' conceptualisations of disability reflected on the cultures of mainstream schools, each disability model that emerged from the study was discussed in terms of how it reflected on the School Culture, and accordingly, how the School Culture influenced the school experiences of students labelled as trainable and educable. For example, the PMM holds that disability is the result of a bodily impairment, whereas the SM views disability as a social construct, and it does not centre on bodily impairment. The NM focuses on helping students labelled with SEN become 'normal', and although the AM recognises that many environmental barriers still need to be removed, it identifies a way by which students labelled with ID can have a positive self-perception/identity.

Building a new model of disability is the most important outcome of my doctoral research. It is interesting that all my participants were influenced by Islamic principles (which I refer to as the FM). Even the SLs who were influenced by the PMM were guided by the

FM at the same time. Some exhibited these beliefs unconsciously, while others spoke about them explicitly, but all were encouraged to promote Inclusive School Culture by this model. My discussions with the SLs caused me to consider certain Islamic beliefs and how SLs interpreted them to create an Inclusive School Culture. This has not been studied before in terms of its: influence on mainstream School Culture in the KSA; localising disability studies in the KSA and other Islamic contexts.

However, the study results showed that, due to *the dominance* of the PMM and NM in *most* of the SLs' perspectives, a '*dual practices*' approach emerged and that caused an Exclusion School Culture in mainstream schools. According to Thomas, Walker and Webb (2006), the early literature on SEN distinguished between integration and segregation; later, it focussed on inclusion versus exclusion. For Nutbrown and Clough (2009), inclusion is concerned with students having the ability to participate in particular affairs in particular settings, not merely sharing a specific space. Exclusion, in contrast, is the absence of opportunities to express oneself or participate. These considerations mean that, as my study's results confirm, inclusion is a double-sided process, not a singular event. It involves increasing inclusion and reducing exclusion, where Aldamj is defined as not merely *being* somewhere but also *belonging* there. In the next chapter, this issue is addressed via the second research question: '*How do SLs conceptualise inclusion (Aldamj) as the foundation of Inclusive School Culture?*'

*Chapter Five*

**Research Question Two: Results and Discussion**

*How do school leaders (SLs) conceptualise inclusion (Aldamj) as the foundation of an Inclusive School Culture?*

**5.1. Introduction**

During the individual interviews, all the SLs used the term الدمج (Aldamj). As explained in Chapter One, Aldamj is an Arabic term, introduced in 1996 by the education authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). This refers to the provision of special educational needs (SEN) programmes in mainstream schools in the *Least Restrictive Environment*.

The education authorities use the term Least Restrictive Environment, as discussed before, without clarifying in detail what this comprises (Alquraini, 2013). The concept of the Least Restrictive Environment *allows* schools to be more flexible (Weber, 2012). The flexibility of this concept is often misconstrued leading mainstream schools to adapt the term to the unique characteristics of each School Culture. This has practical implications for changing School Structure to provide multiple alternative placements, such as isolated SEN classrooms[1] in mainstream schools or SEN Recourse Room/Unit[2] without considering students' right/desire.

Another issue is that the term Aldamj, is frequently translated or derived from western disability policies meaning 'inclusion' *and* 'integration'. These two meanings have the same translation of Aldamj in Arabic. Thus, varying translations of Aldamj have given

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[1] In the United Kingdom, this is referred to as a self-contained classrooms model.
[2] In the KSA, the SEN Recourse Room/Unit is allocated in most preschools where a student labelled with ID has one to one support in no more than half hours with specialists including SEN teachers and psychologists.

the concept a certain degree of ambiguity, and consequently, have resulted in varying practices.

The education system in the KSA holds conflicting views in understanding Aldamj as inclusion alone, viewing it as a barrier for *leading school change*. As School Leaders (SLs) are crucial members of every school, how they perceive inclusion can considerably influence School Culture (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004). Their perceptions include the norms, beliefs and values that can affect how a school operates therefore influencing whole School Culture (see Figure 6).

Here emerges the importance of this question's findings, in defining Aldamj as Inclusive School Culture. Allan (2013) argues that inclusion not only needs to be accepted by mainstream schools, in the enrolment of students labelled with SEN/ID, but also that inclusion's complexities need to be understood by educational practitioners to avoid the emergence of different practices within and between schools.
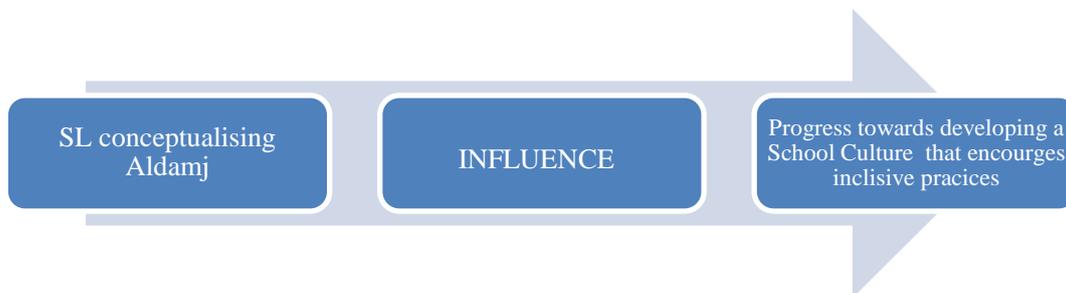


**Figure (6)** How the understanding of School Leaders influence the progress towards inclusion.

For this research question, I explored how SLs conceptualise 'Aldamj' to understand whether their conceptualisations promote the development of an Inclusive School Culture in which students labelled with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) feel included, not simply 'placed'. Consequently, during the individual interviews, I encouraged the SLs to be

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open, speak freely and interpret the term Aldamj personally, without worrying about trying to be academic or formulating a practical definition.

During the data gathering process, it quickly became apparent that SLs conceptualise Aldamj in many different ways. *Few* SLs, despite assuming that they worked in Aldamj schools, were unable to define the concept and struggled to explain what they thought Aldamj meant. Some tried to avoid the individual interview discussion by asking me questions, such as '*Do you like our school system?*' or '*What is your definition?*', or by offering to give me a tour of their school. It appeared that these SLs used the term without clearly comprehending what it meant in practice, and only had a vague and undefined notion of it.

In contrast, the *majority* of SLs offered definitions that focussed on placing students labelled with ID in mainstream schools that provided SEN services. It seemed that they had been influenced by the education authority's definition of Aldamj, as outlined above. This involved enrolling students labelled with SEN in mainstream schools and providing them with SEN services. These services included providing SEN teachers and specialists such as psychologists and speech therapists, as well as intelligence quotient (IQ) assessments, a bespoke SEN curriculum, behaviour modification plans, individualised educational plans (IEPs), SEN classrooms, Recourse Rooms/Units and so on.

According to these SLs, who focussed their definitions on a modification of the School Structure, having an SEN programme made a mainstream school Aldamj, as inclusive. It was evident that their understanding of Aldamj was narrowed, making it difficult to accomplish the practice of whole school inclusion responding to all student's abilities.

Moreover, their views seemed too static, as they assumed that once a SEN programme was established, no further actions would be needed to achieve inclusion. However, Allan

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(2011) used the term 'inconclusive education' to highlight its changing and unending state. Allan's definition 'contrasts with the static picture that is often presented of inclusion [as] being *done* to individuals' (p. 43). Ballard (1995), Sebba and Ainscow (1996) and Angelides (2011) also argue that it is necessary to identify inclusion as an *ongoing process* that meets all abilities over time and not a defined end product.

In addition, these views do not explain how to make students labelled with ID feel included, instead they focus on just placing them in mainstream schools and providing SEN services. This is not what Aldamj as inclusion means, and can reinforce other forms of integration and consequently, segregation. This confirms what was explained in the preface, introduction and Chapter One. Since 1996, when the education authority's definition of Aldamj was established, the KSA has structured mainstream schools with SEN services around this term. Many mainstream schools in the city of Riyadh remain underdeveloped, causing them to continue to struggle with Aldamj and continue to focus on the integration approach, rather than inclusion.

*Some* SLs, in addition to talking about SEN services as changing the School Structure, offered multiple, tangible definitions. Using their idiosyncratic conceptualisations of Aldamj, they spoke about moving beyond merely *placing* (integration) students labelled with ID in mainstream schools to focussing on the process of changing the School Culture for inclusiveness. It was clear during the individual interviews that their conceptualisations of Aldamj had gradually changed as students labelled with ID were included in their schools and, they started to become more familiar with them and their abilities.

These SLs' views confirm that neighbourhood schools not only require SEN services as part of the School Structure but should also be developing an Inclusive School Culture to

ensure that this structural change is implemented successfully; responding to the student's abilities. Loreman et al. (2010) argues that inclusion is not a fixed state; it requires struggle and continuous problem solving.

However, it is important to recognise that not all SLs who provided a definition of Aldamj, as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture, shared this with other school members, which was to be reflected in an Inclusive School Culture (see the first sub-question in Chapter Six). As Attfield and Williams (2003) state, SLs should support the development of a clear image of what inclusion is in the minds of teachers, unpack their beliefs about inclusive education, and as Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) argue, foster new meanings of diversity that are informed by social judgements.

Ainscow (2011, p. 41) reports that he experienced a major paradigm shift 'when he moved from being concerned with particular group[s] of children to being concerned with the school context'. He adds that inclusion 'is a social process [that] engages people in trying to make sense of their experience[s]…helping one another to question their experience[s] and their context to see how things can be moved forward'. It seems that Ainscow emphasises the development of an Inclusive School Culture, requiring school members to cooperate, commit to and act on a genuine belief in inclusion for the whole school.

The intention of this chapter is not to judge the SLs' perspectives, but rather, to use their views to develop a more defined understanding that makes Aldamj as *inclusion*, therefore my focus will solely be on the third group (the group with a tangible definition of Aldamj. I categorised the related data into several themes to link Aldamj to particular features/aspects of Inclusive School Culture, this was to place emphasis on the vast differences between inclusion and integration, and exclusion (see Table 1). Next, I will discuss the results for this question in detail.

**Table (1)** Research question two: emergent themes.

| Themes | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Theme 1:** Aldamj as Welcoming Difference and Valuing Diversity | **Theme 2:** Aldamj as Equality and Equity Opportunities | **Theme 3:** Aldamj as a Coexistent Place |
| **Theme 4:** Aldamj as a Sense of Belonging and Student's Voice | **Theme 5:** Aldamj as Transitioning into Society | **Theme 6:** Aldamj as an Enabling and Empowering Environment |
| **Theme 7:** Aldamj as Developing People and Changing Their Traditional Ideas | **Theme 8:** Aldamj as Part of the Mainstream Education System | **Theme 9:** Aldamj as Sharing Commitment and Ambition as a National Duty |
| **Theme 10:** Aldamj as Interaction and the Formation of Friendships | | **Theme 11:** Aldamj as the Rejection of Discrimination |

### 5.1.1. *Aldamj as Welcoming Difference and Valuing Diversity*

One SL described Aldamj as

> *a place that understands their [students with ID] needs...I should ask what I can do for them, so they don't feel that I view them as lesser.*

At another point, she stated,

> *ID students love the school; their attendance level is much better than that of their mainstream peers because they find all the things that encourage them to come, and the most important is a positive relationship with the school.*

In her view of Aldamj, she did not want to force students labelled with ID to try to be 'normal'; rather, from her perspective, Aldamj requires mainstream schools to understand and adapt to students' differences. Her view emphasised that school members should ask how the school could respond to students' needs in a way that does not distinguish any

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student from their peers and without placing them in a situation in which the students is belittled, which seem to a raise the idea of each students unique abilities.

This SL's view shows that, in Aldamj, differences among students are welcomed. This is especially evident in her description of the higher attendance rates for students labelled with ID compared with their mainstream peers as a sign of feeling comfort towards the school, which has a welcoming School Culture.

Her view mirrors that of Ainscow (2011) who argues that inclusion requires SLs to identify students experiencing learning difficulties 'as part of the diversity of the student population...[Inclusion] means we have to resist a division between them and us, normal and abnormal students and the us[e] of...euphemistic categories, such as learners with SEN, which obscure such a practice' (p. 41). Neighbourhood schools should then identify as schools with diverse abilities via a School Culture that goes beyond stereotypes of disability, assuming that all students belong in mainstream school from the start. Student's differences within a classroom shouldn't be identifiable; schools should be having fluid classrooms with mixed abilities rather than homogeneous (Hornby, 2001; McGlynn & London, 2013).

From these findings, I can infer that it should be asked "what needs to be the *same* for all students?" and "what needs to be *different* for specific students?" to create a place that welcomes differences. Shore et al. created a framework (see Table 2) that demonstrably improves work performance, I found that this could be valuable in making inclusion in the school setting feel concrete.

**Table (2)** Inclusion Framework (Shore et al., 2011, p. 1266).

|  | **Low Level of Belonging** | **High Level of Belonging** |
|---|---|---|
| **Low Value in Uniqueness** | **Exclusion**<br><br>Individual is not treated as an organizational insider with unique value in the work group but there are other employees or groups who are insiders | **Assimilation**<br><br>Individual is treated as an insider in the work group when they conform to organizational/dominant culture norms and downplay uniqueness. |
| **High Value in Uniqueness** | **Differentiation**<br><br>Individual is not treated as an organizational insider in the work group but their unique characteristics are seen as valuable and required for group/ organization success. | **Inclusion**<br><br>Individual is treated as an insider and also allowed/encouraged to retain uniqueness within the work group. |

Shore et al. (2011) explains that when a setting prioritises both differences (uniqueness) and similarities (belongingness), individuals feel included. To clarify this, the idea underlying this framework is that, to be included, individuals need to feel unique, and at the same time, feel that they belong. Fundamentally, from this framework, inclusion in the school setting can be seen as a process of accommodation, not assimilation; it does not aim to change students, but rather, to reconfigure the environment to accommodate differences (Dyson, 1990; Frederickson & Cline, 2009).

This is what I refer to as the 'Mainstream School's Needs', described previously. As Booth et al (1998) argues, we should not be asking whether a student labelled with SEN is capable of joining a mainstream school, we should be asking how particular environments can be adapted to facilitate their development. This will ensure the

recognition of any students' abilities in curricula, pedagogy and school activities (Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998; Loreman et al., 2010).

Another SL not only valued the meaning of welcoming differences; she also valued another meaning of diversity. She said:

> *Aldamj makes us [the mainstream school] more knowledgeable. Aldamj brings me closer to the mainstream students who have slight differences that we couldn't recognise before...That affects the students' life in primary school...Aldamj enhances the school so that it is able to support diverse needs.*

According to her, with Aldamj, differences are seen as a way of enriching a mainstream school. Her experience shows how Aldamj helped her school to expand their abilities to educate mainstream students and become more aware of differences amongst them that usually went unrecognised before the SEN programmes were established.

This SL perceived mainstream students as different in many ways, but mainstream schools do not recognise these differences enough. In her experience, before the introduction of SEN programmes, her mainstream school taught a set of standard skills to students across the board, regardless of ability. Now, however, her school can recognise and respond to various abilities and, support all students needs from an early age for their future in education.

Another SL stated,

> *Differences in schools change the performance of teachers; when all students have the same abilities that will become a routine...a teacher will start to think, change her plans, try to find solutions, contact parents, and when the student begins to improve, this gives her motivation.*

I asked if mainstream teachers took the students labelled with ID outside the classroom on the day of mainstream teacher evaluations. She responded,

> *No, that never happens...It is the opposite; she is working on the ID aspect more to show how she is excellent and can deal with all categories. The existence of these differences gave the teacher experiences, she became like SEN teachers.*

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In the discussion with this SL, she indicated that different needs positively changed her school. She highlighted how students with different abilities in one classroom encouraged the mainstream teacher to change their routine—to think and alter her approach to support all of the students. Moreover, when I asked her about removing students labelled with ID from the lessons when the mainstream teacher is evaluated by the education authority supervisor, she said 'this never happens' in her school, asserting that these differences allow the teacher to showcase how she has gained more experience and reached a higher evaluation level.

This perspective is shared by Kenworthy and Whittaker (2000), who asserts that 'the greater the number and variety of special [Educational Needs] schools that exist, the less likely we are to learn from [students] whose contributions may appear significantly different' (p. 220). Sebba and Ainscow (1996) and Kugelmass (2006) also confirm that inclusion causes teachers to view students labelled with SEN positively and not simply as problems to be fixed. They offer a unique opportunity to gain feedback on the effectiveness of classroom management and directions for expanding a 'school for all'. For example, peer reading and games that respond to diversity in mixed-ability classrooms are shown to improve the focus of mainstream students (Loreman et al., 2010).

From both definitions, the Aldamj concept as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture involves a mainstream school with members who are inclined to organise the school in such a way that the School Culture welcomes differences in students and values their contribution alongside their peers. Such a school perceives diverse ability as essential for maximising the potential of a learning community.

### 5.1.2. *Aldamj as Equality and Equity Opportunities*

One SL stated,

> *Aldamj is giving students with ID equal opportunities in receiving the appropriate education in close mainstream schools...like other mainstream students.*

In using the word 'close', this SL asserted how Aldamj works, by enrolling students labelled with ID in the neighbourhood mainstream school near their home with their siblings. As discussed in the previous research question, in some SLs' views, SEN schools offer more appropriate education than mainstream schools can. This SL, by using the phrase 'appropriate education' in tandem with 'close mainstream schools', asserts that mainstream schools can provide appropriate education for all students, including students labelled with ID.

The key element of her definition of the use of 'equal opportunity' works in tandem with 'appropriate education', which brings me to consider the difference between 'equality' and 'equity'. For this SL, equality is having the right to be in one place, but equity clarifies that having the right to be in the same place does not necessarily mean that everyone should have the same support—this is where appropriate education comes in.

To clarify, from the perspective of equality, inclusion is built on the principle that students labelled with SEN should not be treated differently than their peers (Wang, 2009), *but* they should also be treated fairly to reach their full ability (Hornby, 2001). This SL's view draws attention to the notion that including students labelled with ID in the neighbourhood school with their mainstream peers does not imply that they cannot receive the necessary support and that all students must exist under the same arrangements, such as a unified curriculum or rigid teaching strategies.

This means that students labelled with ID have the right to have more time and support, while meeting every student's ability and paying attention to the classroom community. Her view was echoed by another SL, who stated,

> *There is no need for them to leave [a mainstream] school to go to a special school. We provide everything that they need. I keep asking SEN teachers if they want anything, extra materials. It is their [the students labelled with ID] right to have more than others do.*

This SL seemed to grasp the difference between 'equality' and 'equity'. In her view, Aldamj means that all students should have equal access to mainstream schools and, practise equity for whom ever requires it, possibly offering more support.

From both perspectives, Aldamj as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture involves providing equality in educational settings and equity in receiving the support needed in neighbourhood mainstream schools.

### 5.1.3. *Aldamj as a Coexistent Place*

In one of the individual interviews, an SL said,

> *The word 'Aldamj' can be just a pretentious academic word that is used only for show. However, Aldamj for me is coexistence, indicating a peaceful and safe place where everybody can live together, share ideas and accept each other. This includes not only the students but also the SEN and mainstream teachers...The students with ID want this place; they don't want us just to put them in a single classroom with the mainstream students, jumble them together...Aldamj is a peaceful land that includes all of us, where everyone is involved in everything, where we deal with everything together.*

This SL did not like how the term was used, viewing it as an academic and pretentious word used 'for show'. She thought the education authority did not encourage genuine use of this term. She countered the status quo by placing great emphasis on assimilation,

commenting that Aldamj as an academic word means putting students labelled with ID and their mainstream peers in a single classroom and randomly jumbling them together.

However, she did suggest that Aldamj should be a form of coexistence. Although this term could promote two different cultures, SEN and mainstream, it can be viewed that she defined 'coexistence' from the perspective of the students labelled with ID. This was confirmed when she recommended making Aldamj part of the mainstream educational system instead of a separate service.

In this respondent's view, coexistence is the state of living together harmoniously, regardless of differences. She perceived that, in this place, students can peacefully interact with each other in a communal environment that is sensitive to their abilities. This SL also supports the idea of coexistence that refers to a dynamic collection of interrelationships that value citizenry in school communities (Grau, García-Raga & López-Martín, 2016). From this perspective that viewing coexistence is necessary in educational settings, Ekins and Grimes (2009) state that inclusion represents a shift towards thinking about schools as communities, nurturing a generation that positively respond to diversity. Here, the concept of coexistence has been transferred into educational settings to help teachers overcome the challenges of exclusion (Grau & García-Raga, 2017).

From the SL's view, Aldamj as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture represents coexistence, a concept that explains the types of inclusive settings that ensure the encouragement of changes towards a more diverse and accepting school community.

### 5.1.4. *Aldamj as a Sense of Belonging and Student's Voice*

One SL stated,

> *Aldamj is the acquisition of feelings of happiness and care. It represents the first exit of students with ID, the first entry into their lives, their first experience and their first contact with the world…This can be positive and good or negative and shocking, producing either bright and lasting light or darkness.*

When asked to explain this further, she said,

> *Even if the acquisition of occupational and academic skills is important, the need for psychological support for their emotional needs is also important to build their sense of identity…and that makes them eager to learn…The first five years are critical to the development of a student's personality, and schools need to take that seriously.*

This SL's definition of Aldamj identified school not just as a place that aims to raise students academically. Rather, her understanding is that during the first five years of a student's life, the psychological component is as important for development as acquiring occupational and academic skills. This SL knew that supporting the emotional aspect by creating the appropriate psychological conditions in making the students feel listened to, have a voice, feel understood and wanted is important for making a student willing to learn.

It is not possible, then, to create inclusion without including students' voices and ensure that they feel included. Vickerman (2012) outlines four key areas for establishing inclusivity within Physical Education in order for students labelled with SEN to access the same chances as their peers. The first and most important theme is listening to the voices of students labelled with SEN relating to their experiences during lessons. Vickerman's work centers on the need to ensure that the voices of students are heard, especially through consultation, so they are able to advocate for themselves and avoid discrimination. Discrimination could be peers holding negative views on their physical ability to participate; as well as in terms of embarrassment concerning their SEN – their feelings of self-doubt require intervention.

The SL emphasised the word 'first': *'the first exit...the first entry...first experience...first contact with the world'*. It appeared as though she wanted to imply that being present, being there, existing and the action of interacting was an important state of occurrence in early childhood. I can infer that the content included in this respondent's definition links Aldamj and the feeling of belonging. Nutbrown and Clough (2009) study how students gain a sense of belonging. Evidently, inclusivity is where students 'feel good and positive about themselves' and 'secure in their own sense of place' (p. 203).

To reach the feeling of belonging as described by this SL, Aldamj depends on the school's capability (referred to as the 'Mainstream School's Needs' as a term I introduce). This was apparent when she said, '*This can be positive and good or negative and shocking, producing either bright and lasting light or darkness*' and '*schools need to take that seriously*'. Reflecting on how the quality of belonging depends on the school community, Tassoni (2003) found that when teachers focus on their students' *abilities* rather than their conditions, the students are happier, more secure and learn more easily.

From the SLs' views, Aldamj as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture comprises belongingness, which means not just being in school but feeling a sense of belonging to it. Adding more depth, belonging refers to a student who has been treated as an insider with joy, care and happiness—a student who is an integral and productive member of the school.

### 5.1.5. *Aldamj as Transitioning into Society*

One SL said,

> *Aldamj is the opportunity for school staff to help students successfully transition from one world to another...removing barriers for students with ID, first to learn with their peers and then, later, in their society.*

In her view, Aldamj is a process of transitioning from a segregated world into society. Her view seems to be built on the assumption that being isolated in mainstream schools will also isolate the student from society. Her definition suggests that a successful school experience, for students with ID, enables a smoother transition into adulthood.

Her view is confirmed by Tassoni (2003), who argues that people are not born with self-esteem; it develops over time. Adding that developing low self-esteem can cause students to set low expectations for themselves and can reduce their confidence. Tassoni (2003) further explains that students labelled with SEN need positive feedback to avoid developing low self-esteem; otherwise, they may develop negative expectations about themselves as well as negative responses from others too, causing limitations in their initiative and abilities. This relates to the SL's description, in which the school members need to ensure that exclusion is not reinforced in any way during the school day.

Cambra and Silvestre (2003) report that students labelled with SEN included in mainstream schools have self-concepts that tend to be more positive than those of students in SEN schools. However, their focus is on the teacher's role to effectively interact to foster communication and cooperation between students. Similarly, Odom and Diamond (1998) argue that the teacher's beliefs can affect how students labelled with ID experience the school day, affecting how their mainstream peers treat them.

Another SL had a similar definition relating to the successful transition to society, she said:

> *Aldamj in school is the beginning...What I mean is that the mainstream students are usually afraid of the students with ID...Aldamj causes these fears to fade away...Every kindergarten should be the base for the seed to grow.*

From her experiences, Aldamj during the early years of education makes a difference in alleviating students' fears; viewing Aldamj as the beginning of the successful transition from kindergarten, as a small society to a larger one, also adding that it is '*the base for the seed to grow*'. Her view is confirmed by Avcıoğlu (2016), who notes that the aim of inclusion is encouraging society acceptance, and it 'can mark the beginning of an important opportunity for both [students labelled with ID and their mainstream peers]' (p. 464).

In clarification, Georgiadi, Kalyva, Kourkoutas and Tsakiris (2012) found that inclusive practices, such as planning for social contact between students, makes mainstream students more willing to interact with students labelled with ID. This planned contact helps eradicate the negative sociability caused by fear of the unknown. The researchers also observed that students from inclusive settings tended to use positive adjectives more often than students from non-inclusive settings to describe the students labelled with ID.

From these SLs' perspectives, Aldamj as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture is ensuring the successful transition into society/adulthood by creating an environment that corrects prejudices about students labelled with ID and encourages students to appreciate others' differencing abilities.

### 5.1.6. *Aldamj as an Enabling and Empowering Environment*

One SL said, '*I view Aldamj as a great opportunity to give to this group*'.

When I asked her to explain this further, she said,

> *Aldamj is the only real way for us to enable them to get to know their community, to interact with other people, and to have normal lives...In school, students with ID can learn about their society by interacting with teachers, the staff, their friends, and the parents who visit us.*

This SL identified how Aldamj enables students labelled with ID, considering Aldamj as a chance to enable students to *independently* interact with members of society, students, teachers, workers, parents and visitors. I can infer that her definition viewed Aldamj as an enabling environment, giving students labelled with ID 'normal' lives in the outside world.

Another SL went much further, using the word 'able' at multiple points in her definition to emphasise the process of empowering students labelled with ID. She said:

> *Aldamj, to me, is peer engagement…then the students with ID will feel that they are able to participate in everyday activities with their friends.*

Another SL agreed, saying,

> *I started to recognise that Aldamj gave students with ID confidence and taught them that being different was not a negative thing. They are able to have friends and good relationships, and we can see the benefits of this reflected in their personalities when they go into their third year of preschool.*

In both SLs' views, they refer to empowering students labelled with ID not to view their differences as hindering them but instead support them, their personalities and esteem. This is confirmed by Tassoni (2003), who views 'empowerment' as a way of ensuring that students labelled with SEN are not viewed as helpless, encouraging them to become more assertive and independent.

This is what Lunt and Norwich (1999) assert when describing inclusion as 'something which cannot be done to people, it is something in which people are actively involved' (p. 27), distinguishing between restructuring mainstream schools to provide opportunity for participation as opposed to enabling students to make their own choice for participation. This suggests that while the opportunity may be there, this may not take into account students' own desires. This is what 'empowerment' refers to in the SLs'

definitions; it does not seek to turn students into passive recipients of community norms (Florian, 2006).

From these SLs' perspectives, Aldamj as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture creates this environment that is enabling and empowering students labelled with ID thus, giving them confidence to engage in daily school activities freely.

### 5.1.7. *Aldamj as Developing People and Changing their Traditional Ideas*

One SL stated,

> *It used to be believed that students with ID need to be far away from us because we are a different type of people. This view is no longer common. Instead, it is believed that we can be together, this is Aldamj.*

When I asked her to clarify, she explained,

> *When I came to the school, they didn't give me the choice...an ID girl came to my office, and frankly, I was shocked. I couldn't even go near to her... But she just came to say hi, to hug me. I requested their teacher not to let them come...I spent three months refusing to have contact with them and even their teachers...I'd never contact disabled in my life, and I did not know how to deal with them...From the society around me I get think mercy what only they need.*

She continued,

> *We have the idea that they may hurt others, do stupid things...There are people who speak about them with pity, saying, 'Oh, poor student, her mother must feel sad'. What a strange world we live in; but Aldamj changes people and challenges the old ideas... Aldamj makes mainstream students accustomed to seeing the physical appearances of students with ID as something normal, not odd, understanding the differences...They are normal, but they have lower intellectual skills.*

This SL's definition appears to believe that Aldamj challenges and changes traditional ways of thinking, encouraging people to understand that being different is not fundamentally negative nor dangerous. She states that students labelled with ID are intellectually less capable than their mainstream peers, but highlights how Aldamj came to express that the difference is not a reason for separation.

When this SL discusses her reaction to students labelled with ID it occurred to me that some parents of students labelled with SEN try to hide their child's differences. Tassoni (2003) outlines a case study of a girl who used prosthetic limbs all her life to reduce her difference in appearance. When she became a young adult, she started to reflect on why she needed to disguise her disability. After starting a job in a clothing shop, she decided to remove her prosthetic limbs. This angered her employer, who claimed that her disability would make customers uneasy and 'drive them away'. However, this girl responded, 'If I had to cope without an arm, the customer could spend five minutes learning to see me without an arm, just like they already cope seeing his [the employer's] bald head!' (Tassoni, 2003, p. 10).

The traditional views and actions that this SL mentions have a negative impact as a form of violence on students labelled with SEN/ID. However, from her experiences Aldamj as inclusion helped educators move away from viewing students labelled with ID sympathetically and they came to understand that this was merely a label and not something that separated them from others. To elaborate, it is important to note the effect that prior segregated educational settings had on her beliefs and values. Kenworthy and Whittaker (2000) state that many practitioners accepted segregation and SEN schools because these practices did not require them to change how they thought. However, as Farrell and Ainscow (2002) state, inclusive language has challenged the dominant ways of thinking about students labelled with SEN, leading practitioners to reconsider the future of SEN pedagogy in mainstream education and question why mainstream schools fail to teach all students collectively and successfully.

Another SL used similar language, describing Aldamj as

> *Putting students with ID in a healthy society—a society that is healthy in all things, especially in its ideas…The SEN centre was a barrier between us and them.*

In another part of the individual interview, I asked her, 'If the education authority needed to move the SEN programme from your school, would you accept this?' She responded,

> *No, I see my school as an ID school. When I was a teacher, it was especially hard to work with the students with Down syndrome. At the time, we chatted about these students every day during our breaks, talked about their behaviours, just like they were an everyday story…The teachers who had students with ID in their classes would fight: 'Why? Why me?' It was like a war. I was one of them, to be honest.*

This SL emphasised that Aldamj nurtures a 'healthy society' moving away from stereotypes. She also argued how SEN schools represented a divide between 'us and them'. When she used the term 'healthy society' to describe schools now, she appeared to confirm that previously schools had been stereotypical in their everyday language and now with the Aldamj mainstream schools they have become community led with realistic and alternative story of disability. She also outlined, that now she cannot see her school without students labelled with ID, expressing how Aldamj challenged and changed the beliefs her School Culture and confirming that her viewpoint has changed over time.

From these SLs' points of view, Aldamj, as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture, challenges and changes traditional beliefs, confirming that the difference is not a reason for separation, where differences are seen as the normal.

### 5.1.8. *Aldamj as Part of the Mainstream Education System*

As I explained the idea of SEN as a system that is separate from what is provided to other students has been challenged by inclusion, where all students are part of a single educational system and classroom (Florian, 2005). One SL said,

> *Aldamj for me, is coexistence…a peaceful and safe place where everybody can live together, share ideas and accept each other. This includes not only the students but also the SEN and mainstream teachers…Under the Alnoor System[3], I had two schools, not one school, because the SEN programme was combined with my school…I had the mainstream T school and Aldamj T school…Why do they have a second programme and a different way of dealing with it? Why do you create a second facility for them when you believe in Aldamj? Why don't they include the students with ID?...Why isn't my school only a single school? They keep saying that the SEN programme has its own path, its own budget, its own policies, its own way of dealing with things, its own, own, own! So, where is the Aldamj?*

This SL was angry in her language, urging the education authority not to waste time seeing the SEN programmes as a separate service, with its own budget, system and education resources. This SL did not accept excuses for having two schools in the same building, believing they should make SEN like any other service in school. Clearly, she found it difficult to achieve Aldamj, as in separated practices, she could not see any sign of Aldamj. I can infer that SEN services will have limited influence if they are separate from mainstream schools, as Aldamj as Inclusion is not a programme. In that case, there is a need to incorporate new features in a complementary role in mainstream schools rather than as a substitute, meaning to take a feature from each to complete each other within the inclusion perspective.

Another SL agreed, saying,

> *I view Adamj as combining two different things that should be a single thing. When we combine them, we get a full item…perfect one…If we take the*

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[3] The Alnoor System organises a school according to the number of its students, teachers and administrators. It also includes a management framework.

*advantages from both sides when they come together, we'll see that they form a complete whole.*

This SL also viewed Aldamj as combining SEN services and mainstream services to become one service in the educational system. Her perception was that combining mainstream education and SEN would ensure cooperation and support, creating perfect services to benefit all students. This aligns with Sebba and Ainscow (1996), who state that, for too long, the field of SEN has operated as a separate endeavour, disconnected from the agenda of the general education community and precluding collaboration between the two fields. This 'moves towards inclusive education [to] necessitate the abolition of this traditional gulf' (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996, p. 6).

On the other hand, if mainstream and SEN education *are* unified, mainstream education may come to dominate and render SEN input/support less effective. This fear appeared frequently during the individual interviews, as the SEN programme was seen as exhausting practices, and it is much better to make students labelled with ID the minority in mainstream schools to better meet these exhausting practices. However, One SL said,

> *The education authority needs to be balanced...Aldamj is the ability to work equally for both groups. There should be similar numbers of SEN students and mainstream students. I have 400 mainstream students and only 22 ID students...Parents come from afar and want their daughters enrolled in our school, but the number is limited.*

This idea was also expressed by two other SLs, as in the KSA school system, it is mandated that students labelled with SEN should constitute no more than 20% of the school population in mainstream schools (Regulations of Special Educational Programmes and Institutes, 2001). From their suggestions, I can infer that, when having a similar number of mainstream students and students labelled with ID together in a single

facility, the best features of SEN provision are combined with the best features of mainstream education. This creates a 'school for all'.

Ensuring a 'school for all' and moving away from some the view that SEN programmes exhaust practices, it is crucial to focus on Aldamj as a process that involves the whole school as a community. This practice is distinct from the integration approach, which focuses on a specific group of students; inclusion requires that all school members work together to create effective, tolerant schools for all students (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996).

From the SLs' views, Aldamj, as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture, means including SEN services through mainstream service not as programme (integration) but by unifying them in a single educational system for all stopping grouping or categorising.

### 5.1.9. *Aldamj as Sharing Commitment and Ambition as a National Duty*

The conceptualisation of Aldamj as sharing commitment and ambition as a national duty seems to represent the highest peak of inclusive practices as an Inclusive School Culture. One of the SLs stated,

> *The government provides schools with the necessary support: teachers, financial, and other kinds of support. So Aldamj is, for me, a national duty; I expect it to be a patriotic commitment. If there are any difficulties, they are caused by people who refuse to do the work, who I like to describe as careless…Aldamj is an endless process.*

When I asked her to explain how inclusion could be an endless process, she responded,

> *Aldamj, as an ambition, can be achieved day and night…The closer we got to the finish line, the farther the line moved away from us and the greater our ambitions became…For me, Aldamj is the existence of shared responsibilities and ambition…to make the school a place of joy and happiness for the students.*

In this view, Aldamj within mainstream schools is a national duty. It is a never-ending process aimed towards a shared goal. Per this respondent's description, any neglect faced by Aldamj is due to inaction; nationally, it implies that everyone—stakeholders, parents, teachers and school

workers—is responsible for the inclusion of students labelled with ID. Frederickson and Cline (2009) use the phrase "barriers to learning and participation" when following inclusion in place of SEN (p.72). This understanding is based on the belief that all students belong in the school and all school members should create a School Culture that does not exclude them. This is aligned with the perspective of another SL:

> *Our school has had its SEN programme for many years, and we are from the pioneer school…I'm proud of it; it is a human right for them, it is one of the community's duties. I don't like to use this term [Aldam]. It's just like mixing two different and strange things. I prefer to use 'our country's children'.*

I asked her why she chose that term. She said,

> *Because they are our children, they are not an extraneous thing. Students with ID should not be a distant thing. Aldamj, as a term, means putting this distant thing with us.*

This SL pointed out that Aldamj should be defined as 'a country's children', not separated people. Her experiences as a mother of a child labelled with ID caused her to want School Culture that is like the environment she creates for her son at home. In her view, it is a national commitment that requires everyone to include all students in the same school setting. She commented that Aldamj as a term seems to add one thing to another; however, to her, students labelled with ID are not an added thing, but already part of us.

From these SLs' views, Aldamj, as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture, is an endless process of shared commitment and ambition as a national duty, placing great emphasis on the student's positive view of their school.

### 5.1.10. *Aldamj as Interaction and the Formation of Friendships*

One SL stated,

> *Aldamj to me, is peer engagement…I mean, when I give an activity to a mainstream and an ID students, just look at how they play together. You will see that interacting makes them happy…Aldamj really helps them develop relationships.*

This SL's main point is that, through Aldamj, all students have opportunities to meet other students and develop relationships. Cameron and Rutland (2006) find that extended contact between students labelled with ID and their mainstream peers improved the latter's perceptions of the former, eradicating prejudicial attitudes, and diminished the idea that students labelled with ID cannot interact or are inadequate as a 'full people'.

A study by Avcıoğlu (2016) also shows that inclusion improves the quality of interactions between students labelled with ID and their peers. However, the study emphasises that improvement depends on the teacher's behaviour. Thus, Avcıoğlu recommends that teachers should pay attention to how they act and behave in a way that builds an inclusive classroom environment, supporting positive interactions. Some teachers and teacher assistants in this study provided individual support and encouragement for mainstream students and students labelled with ID, teaching them how to interact with each other. This kind of collaboration was inherently inclusive. Similarly, El-Daw and Hammoud (2015) find that interactions between students labelled with SEN and their peers improve when teachers actively try to encourage them.

This was confirmed by one SL, who commented as follows while telling me about her School Culture:

> *Do you know that the students, mainstream and ID, have much better relationships than they [SEN and mainstream teachers] do? Their beliefs and values have gathered for years with all their polluted ideas, their prejudices and their limitations—oooh, the students are really different; they are white pages. In the classroom, they support their friends with ID and feel happy about their progress…Why do the adults make it such a big issue?*

This SL was unhappy with the relations between mainstream and SEN teachers if she did not interact to solve the conflict between them. Her main point was how Aldamj creates

a peaceful environment between students, blaming teachers for making collaboration an issue. Mainstream students, in contrast, demonstrate inclusive practices, support their friends and celebrate their progress.

Another SL defined Aldamj as follows:

> *I see Aldamj as the formation of partnerships between students with different skills. Mainstream students see other students with different needs…The students with ID can learn more, and faster, from their mainstream peers than they can from SEN teachers in SEN classrooms.*

This SL also viewed Aldamj as the formation of friendships between students who have different skills. She emphasised that Aldamj involved the creation of a mutual learning environment where students labelled with ID could freely and comfortably interact with mainstream students and vice versa.

In her definition, she made an important point regarding Aldamj when she said students '*can learn more, and faster*' from one another than they can from teachers. Tassoni (2003) agrees that education often happens through the development of relationships, and segregation perpetuates myths about students labelled with SEN because mainstream students grew up without meeting them.

The validity of this observation was apparent in this SL's comment that she viewed Aldamj as not just benefitting students labelled with ID but also giving mainstream students opportunities to recognise their friends' diversity, which expanded their knowledge and understanding of the world and the people around them.

In these SL's views, Aldamj, as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture, is the interaction and the formation of friendships where all students have opportunities to meet others, learn skills, and feel happy and supported.

### 5.1.11. *Aldamj as the Rejection of Discrimination*

The final conceptualisation that emerged from the individual interviews was Aldamj as the disapproval of discrimination, which is a critical aspect of an Inclusive School Culture. In their definitions, some SLs state that the separated SEN classrooms in mainstream schools or Resource Rooms/Units did not affect the Inclusive School Culture; however, others did not agree with this view.

During the individual interviews, this idea and the responsiveness to the students' differences were complicated. There were some who did not see this practice, of having separate SEN classrooms, as segregation and others who did and argued for eliminating it.

As one example that was mentioned in relation to the previous research question, an SL said:

> *What happens in some primary schools takes us back, wasting the efforts that we made in the kindergartens. I don't feel that this includes them; it is just a sign of having Aldamj not a real Aldamj.*

When I mentioned that the students play together during school breaks, she commented,

> *They are still separated from their peers. What about other periods of the school day? The student will be confused—who is he? Who are his friends?*

This SL implied that their preschool had worked hard to build a School Culture that valued diversity, calmed apprehensions, taught acceptance and helped students become accustomed to each other. She insists that the process of moving students labelled with ID to SEN classrooms was not the real practice of Aldamj; she maintained that separation made the students confused and withdrawn.

This SL drew attention to what is referred to as the 'pull-out' strategy, this is where students are removed from their mainstream classroom in order to receive alternative

specialised instructions. The 'pull-out' strategy is based on the following common assumptions: the segregated system has evolved by best practice, separating students will not damage their self-confidence, social disadvantages will be outweighed by the advantages of 'special' support as mainstream classrooms lack the resources to make inclusion possible and; segregation is the creation of a 'safe' environment (Kenworthy & Whittaker, 2000). Due to these assumptions, some mainstream schools contend that classifying students according to their disabilities is to enables them to get the support needed in SEN classrooms.

Bunch and Valeo (2004) conducted individual interviews assessing how and why friendships were made with students labelled with ID. One example from their study was the interview with a respondent called Katie, who 'stated that she had a friend labelled with ID: "Because she's with us, so we consider her our friend, and she considers us her friends"'. In contrast Lorne, who attended a school that had SEN support classes, responded to a question about why he did not interact with specific students labelled with ID as follows: 'I think they spend all their time there [in the SEN classrooms]'. Taylor, another student from the study, also related that 'two students…always go out [Resource Rooms/Units] and read different books than us' (p. 37). These are all example of segregation in practice.

Then, eliminating segregation is a complex problem; the question 'How can neighbourhood schools that believe in providing extra support outside the mainstream classroom still try to make students feel included?' stands out. A School Culture based on the 'pull-out' strategy is different from an Inclusive School Culture. The term 'special' can often be misinterpreted as moving students with ID away instead of developing strategies to support them as a part of the mainstream classroom. To clarify, inclusion, does not imply that students with different abilities should not receive external support;

rather, this support should aim to help them *participate* in mainstream classrooms (Loreman et al., 2010).

For more clarity, Lunt and Norwich (1999) argue that, if a student labelled with SEN wishes to be individually taught inside or outside the mainstream classroom, this is acceptable in inclusion. This means that students labelled with SEN have a right to be part of the mainstream classroom, increasing participation and reducing exclusion; however, if required, they should also have a right to individual learning. It is not about refusing to provide individual support; in both actions having Inclusive School Culture is important to ensure inclusion practices.

The importance of defining Aldamj as an Inclusive School Culture is addressed by Kenworthy and Whittaker (2000), who argue that when students labelled with SEN enrol into mainstream schools we move away from segregation and onto a risky and difficult path towards an alternative approach (for example integration). Lunt and Norwich (1999) also comment that inclusion is 'a kind of purist either-or thinking which can end up condemning any form or degree of separate provision' (p. 33). This view is mirrored by one SL, who said,

> *Aldamj is a great programme, but the SEN programme, including the SEN teachers and their supervisor, is not trying to achieve what they called Aldamj; they continue to base it on individual statuses.*

This SL asserted that Aldamj needs to avoid turning schools into tools of alienation. She is against merely the placement of SEN schools, highlighting how the current situation is *merely* transforming SEN and traditional ways of thinking into mainstream school settings, as though there are two separate entities under one roof. She also remarks that there is a need for unending efforts to increase fluidity and whole school participation and, the removal of exclusionary factors, which in reality, is often not achieved.

From these SLs' views, Aldamj, as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture, comprises increased full participation from every student and the rejection of discrimination. Aldamj practices should reject discrimination based on differences which frequently cause students labelled with ID to feel isolated and alienated.

## 5.2. Conclusion

Aldamj is an Arabic term used by the education authorities in the KSA. The provision of Aldamj is defined as SEN programmes in mainstream schools in the *Least Restrictive Environments.* However, no clarity is given in defining the requirements and conditions of the Least Restrictive Environment (Alquraini, 2013). This means that Least Restrictive Environments could be adapted differently depending on the context of each School Culture. Another issue is that there are varying translations of Aldamj which has given the concept a certain degree of ambiguity, and consequently, has resulted in varying practices.

Then, viewing the term Aldamj as a barrier to leading for change, this chapter explored how SLs conceptualise this term to understand whether their conceptualisations promote the development of an Inclusive School Culture. Across three groups' definitions, one of the study results show that some of my participants (SLs) gave one or more definitions of Aldamj that were premised on more than School Structure changes alone. They viewed inclusion not as merely sharing or placing a particular space (integration) but as concerned with a School Culture that goes beyond that, showing that there are several elements in defining Aldamj as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture.

For Aldamj as inclusion, here emerges the importance of this finding in defining Aldamj as an Inclusive School Culture to avoid exclusion. The aim of this research question is to identify several ways to make Aldamj a more tangible continuum framework for

practitioners. Each element should build on the other to formulate a definition of what successful Inclusive School Cultures require in order for the process, of students labelled with ID, to feel included and avoid exclusion.

I conclude that, to challenge the idea of SEN and make Aldamj a process of the Least Restrictive Environments, it should be interpreted as the foundation of Inclusive School Culture. Making Aldamj depends on the school's capability, referred to as the 'Mainstream School's Needs', rather than SEN. Next will be discussed the research question three.

*Chapter Six*

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**Research Question Three: Results and Discussion**

*What Leading for change actions are taken by the SLs to promote Inclusive School Culture development?*

**6.1. Introduction**

For the analysis, this research question has two sub-questions, and the results are described in turn.

*Sub-Question One: How do SLs conceptualise school changing actions (Culture versus School Structure) while supporting inclusive educational reforms?*

To answer the main research question I need first to explore what form SLs use to promote inclusivity in their schools. The individual interviews showed that, from their perspectives, there are two groups (see Figure 7). The *first group* of SLs, the *majority*, were not aware of the concept of School Culture or Inclusive School Culture as an action to lead for change, encouraging inclusiveness. These SLs continued to emphasise structural changes because they believed that inclusion is part of special educational needs (SEN) services, and it is the only thing that students labelled with ID need to be included.

They focussed on aspects like educational policies, school budgets, individualised educational plans (IEPs), assessments, modifying physical factors and classroom organisation. Consequently, I refer to these SLs as *Structural SLs*. During the individual interviews, once these SLs were made aware of changing School Culture to lead for

change, *most* of them were willing to support it, but some considered changing the School Culture to be less effective than changing School Structure. Bearing in mind I ensured credibility in this research question I need to establish common language, encourage more conversation, to gain further unknown information. I also waited until the end when I felt that the SL had said all she wanted me to know. Sometimes it was difficult not to get involved in order to reach deeper into their perspectives.

*The second group*, comprising a *smaller* number of SLs, had already started utilising the actions outlined above. I refer to these SLs as *Cultural SLs* because they believed and witnessed that working to change their School Culture to be inclusive was necessary for the Aldamj in their schools.

**Group (1)** the *majority* of SLs who were not aware of this reform action

Once they were made aware of this this reform action, *some* SLs considered it to be less effective than changing School Structure.

Once they were made aware of this reform action, *most* SLs were willing to support its employment.

**Group (2)** SLs who were aware of this reform action

A *smaller number* of my participants believed and witnessed this this reform action to be advantageous.

**Figure (7)** Research question three groups and their perspectives.

### 6.1.1. *Structural School Leaders*

During the individual interview, I asked one SL about her daily routine. She said,

> *Students' registration procedures, distributing the student's cases to SEN teachers, attendance, preparing teachers' schedules, allocating the SEN*

> *programme budget, providing a nanny, moving students from one grade to another.*

In another part of the individual interview, she said,

> *I am not happy about having students with ID in my school, Aldamj isn't a successful approach in the KSA'. but this isn't because of them. It is because of the school, especially the refusal of mainstream teachers of ID students...I've spent 11 years fitting in, and I want to change the school.*

When I asked about building an Inclusive School Culture to solve mainstream teachers' refusal, she said,

> *Well, this is the first time I have heard of this term...We cannot live without system; to live with each other, we need to have rules. Not everyone has these beliefs or shares similar values, or, as you said, values diversity.*

By describing her daily routine, this SL showed that she was focussed on managing work as a part of structural action for the SEN programme. Although this is an important aspect, she explained that she had spent 11 years with the same difficulties, showing how these structural actions had lost their meaningful benefits. Her sole focus on structural action makes it possible to infer that ignoring her School Culture could be a reason for the limited success. This SL was not interested in hearing how School Culture could be achieved, viewing the School Structure as the most important factor. From that, it can be stated that not valuing School Culture has led this SL to what she considers failing Aldamj.

Another SL responded,

> *Teachers[1] assume that we have achieved Aldamj, but what I see is not Aldamj in any way. I am not sure how to provide SEN services in my school without facing difficulties every day...I let them sign a form, letters, to follow the system.*

I asked her if that guaranteed the teachers would follow these systems; she said,

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[1] When the word 'teacher' is used, I refer to both ID and mainstream teachers.

> *No, not all the time, they will do what benefits them, whatever is in their favour, and they will ignore the rest.*

This SL was not happy with the daily situation and did not agree with teachers who thought they were applying الدمج (Aldamj) as inclusion. By using the system, she tried to force the teachers to do their job, which was not guaranteed in her experience. From her example, I can argue that these teachers work in a School Culture that does not believe in inclusion, where their interest is more important than that of the students.

Another SL responded to the question, 'How do you conceive of your job before and after Aldamj?', by saying,

> *It's just more responsibility. I don't feel comfortable until they [the students with ID] go home, as a job, the Aldamj programme doesn't add anything to me...I have two schools; we have a budget, but we need more to prepare their classrooms...There are more problems between the teachers and students. This is why I have a vice-principal who's responsible for their issues. She allows me to focus on my school.*

Discussing some issues related to their School Culture, she said,

> *No, not all people have this belief; we need to have one, two, three rules, or they will not work...Sadly, many ID students leave my school without receiving enough education.*

This SL highlighted some examples of her difficulties, viewing having students labelled with ID in school as worrisome and a burden. She tried to solve the difficulties by focusing on structural actions, such as asking for more financial support to prepare the classroom. This SL spoke of how she ran two schools under one roof, giving one of her vice-principals responsibility for the SEN programme to allow her to '*to focus on...[her] school*', clearly showing how she viewed the SEN programme as not being part of her school, affecting her School Culture.

When I suggested the importance of changing her School Culture to be inclusive to solve the problems at her school, she did not agree that this would work. She commented that not all school staff believe in inclusion, and emphasised that school rules would help the input of Aldamj. However, it is evident that, even with the structural support that the education authority provides to her school, she still felt that many students labelled with ID left school having received insufficient support.

*Overall*, these examples show that the SLs were unfamiliar with the concept of School Culture/Inclusive School Culture as leading for change. It was evident that they did not perceive that cultural aspects could be significant in solving some of their difficulties. Instead, they talked mainly about structural changes, especially those involving the school system and financial support. For example, one of the SLs mentioned that the SEN programme needed financial support, but the education authority did not provide much money to prepare the classrooms. Another complained that SEN and mainstream teachers do not care about the benefit to students and will not do anything without receiving letters from the educational authority.

In several parts of the individual interviews, these SLs described Aldamj as a burden and spoke frequently about their frustration. Although they worked to make some structural changes, the meaningful benefits of these SEN services seem to have been lost. They treated inclusion as a programme, approach or strategy, and they could not see that they were neglecting a crucial component, such as the School Culture, which is more a way of thinking of disability and inclusion. The importance of the Inclusive School Culture became evident as this group of SLs frequently stated that their schools failed to meet the varied *abilities* of the students labelled with ID.

This is not to say that these SLs were not good leaders or even judging them. Stoll (2003) outlines that most school improvement efforts focus on changing School Structures because structures are visible and easy to change. Similarly, Whitaker (2010) writes that structural changes are easy to implement because they simply require that SLs meet certain criteria. However, inclusion makes me at points critical of ableist practice, viewing inclusion as a human right that should not be debated, and as explained in the literature review Chapter Two, Whitaker (2010) argues that the outcomes are hard to achieve in most schools that do not try to develop cultural change.

However, it was clear in the previous examples that SLs still wanted to engage in *more structural* support, explaining their view that actions of structural change are the reason for not making Aldamj successful in their school. It was unclear exactly what kind of structural changes they wanted, and whenever they were asked to identify what structures they needed, their responses focussed on School Structure, which had already been addressed by the Ministry of Education (see Chapter One). Even if there really are issue related to the lack of School Structure support, these should not be an excuse for compromising the rights of students labelled with ID to be included. More examples related to this will be outlined in relation to the next sub-question.

Then, if schools want their educational reforms to be more effective, SLs need to recognise that School Structure is not enough. According to these SLs, schools expect a new School Structure to produce a new School Culture, and thus, new school member behaviours; however, this is not the case. These schools will discover that a new School Structure does not fit the school's orientation (School Culture; Fullan, 2001). As Leithwood (1994) argues, this means that successful structural changes correspond to efforts to transform School Cultures because School Cultures regulate the success of new structures.

Many studies have identified the development of a School Culture as an important component of successful reform. According to DuFour (1995) states, sustained improvement cannot happen until schools transform their cultures. Which mean in case of inclusion, Doyle (2001) found that the SLs in his study preferred a form of integration that merely enrolled students labelled with SEN, where actions adopted to meet this challenge were focussed on changing the School Structure. Doyle study shows that, if these actions are not combined with efforts to change School Culture, it is not possible to make the changes necessary to enhance inclusivity. In addition, Stoll (2003) highlights how a school may place different subject areas (changing School Structure) in the same corridors to encourage these departments to collaborate. However, Stoll confirms that for these structures to produce change in cooperation, it is also necessary to change the School Culture and instil the community with new values, norms, terminologies and beliefs.

In contrast to this, *many* of the first group, once they were made aware of this strategy as a way to make a School Culture more inclusive, were willing to support its employment. Some already use this strategy randomly or without considering its importance. For example, one SL said,

> *I can't say that I have given what you call 'school culture' [School Culture] any thought; rejection is very popular in my school. Most of the teachers have said, 'This is not my responsibility; I shouldn't do it'…Whenever a teacher is absent, I need to solve this problem by myself…I hope there is a way to become a one-hand school.*

Another SL commented,

> *Well I didn't think before about the reason for their behaviours and why they keep refusing…Okay, yes, that is something related to School Culture that affects teachers' enthusiasm for the work…Then my School Culture needs a lot from me; they are still stuck in their ideas and I am just in high and low tides with them.*

These SLs explained how the term School Culture was new to them, which encouraged me to take the chance to discuss the term as an action towards leading of change. Most SLs in the first group found it interesting to know more about this concept and how to employ it. For example, one SL wanted to understand more about correcting teacher's beliefs and resistance towards Aldamj practices in order to create an inclusive school.

Below, I will discuss the second group, that of the Cultural SLs.

### 6.1.2. *Cultural School Leaders*

As explained in Chapter Five (research question two), not all SLs who provided a definition of Aldamj, as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture, shared this with other school members. Thus, in the second group, a *smaller* number of participants knew about School Culture/Inclusive School Culture (or its synonyms) and worked to employ it in their schools because they considered it advantageous. This section includes seven examples, each describing the different experiments of Cultural SLs.

Discussing her school day routine, one SL said,

> *Work is people, not paper. If I deal with a machine, I can deal with certain systems and rules, but it's absolutely different with people...Even if you give a teacher more lessons in her schedule, she'll still come to you and suggest new ideas.*

I asked her if the education authority moved the SEN programme to another school. She said,

> *It is an encouraging experience [having the SEN programme], but for me, nothing will change. I am responsible for my school, with or without the SEN programme. Even mainstream students need care and attention.*

This SL used the term 'work is people', emphasising that the passion for the job is the most important thing for school members to have. At the same time, she believed in the importance of a school system as a changing structure for the success of Aldamj. She

asserted that work is 'not paper', rejecting bureaucracy and referring to the system as comprising its people. The most important point is when she expressed that she was not working with a machine. Here, she highlighted that a good way to ensure the success of the Aldamj was to develop relationships with staff, students and parents as an important component of School Culture.

In another part of the individual interview, the SL seemed happy with the experiment of having the SEN programme in her school. From that, and from the other SL's views, it is possible to infer that SLs who focus more on their School Culture show more acceptance of the programme and are willing to do more.

During the individual interview, another SL provided an example of two teachers. She commented,

> *I remember two teachers who had the same teaching materials and used the same strategies...While they both achieved the required goal, one simply fulfilled the goal, while the other fulfilled the goal and had a positive impact on the students [including those labelled ID]…As soon as they believe in it [the job], they will do the impossible to achieve it.*

In her view, providing teachers with enough materials alone will not produce benefits—the teachers in the example acted differently, one adhering to the system and going farther due to her sense of responsibility for the students' achievement. One cannot deny the importance of structural change, but in the SL's view, this is not as important as the teacher's values. The results, from her experience, were different because she worked with belief, faith and love. Having these values ensures a positive and productive School Culture with visible contribution from everyone at all times.

Another SL gave an example of school administration staff in her school. She said,

> *The school admissions team have an activities day; it was a school system before the education authority cancelled it, but they keep it active.*

From this SL's example, it was clear how her School Culture played a role in admissions team initiative. Her viewpoint was that when you put a system in place, you should believe in it; otherwise, it is just being forced. The admissions team continued with the activity programme that the education authority stopped requesting, as they believed it was benefitting students. This example showing how people's values and beliefs are what distinguish them and make them more creative.

During another individual interview, I asked one SL if she expected to find links between the concepts of Aldamj and School Culture. She said,

> *When you think of a school as a community, you see that all members need to think a certain way...If I focus only on applying the system, then this is simply just empty talk on paper...The problem is that our society resists any differences. Aldamj as a procedure requires a strong School Culture...I expect this to be present in all schools.*

She explained that the school system is just 'talk on paper', meaning that the system means nothing if the people who implement it do not believe in it. From her perspective, a school is a community, and the critical point in her example is that, as a community, there is a resistance to differences; if Aldamj wants to be successful, it needs a School Culture consisting of beliefs and behaviours that value differences. These should be held by all, including teachers, administrators and other workers directed by the SL.

When discussing with another SL about her School Culture, she confirmed that knowing more about the school is more important than the school system. She communicated,

> *I had the SEN programme before the SEN guide; everything comes from inside us.*

This SL showed how school members' values and sense of responsibility are above the system. She showed that they had the SEN programme before the SEN guide was handed to schools, and their work was directed from inside—referring to teachers' values and their sense of responsibility above the system.

Finally, one SL linked the School Culture to a religious aspect. She said,

> *If I focus on job structure, I will never reach my aim. We had a programme for literacy for one year then the education authority requested to stop applying it as a system...but it became part of us, we felt it would help students, especially ID with many skills. We kept it and most of the teachers are happy with that...The system serves us, and we do not serve it, whatever is in the SEN guide. This what I said to the education authority supervisor...I keep reminding them, our Islamic principles are above every law; after that, the system comes to organise the work.*

In another part of the individual interviews, she said,

> *We build our organisation on valuing of this group of students...I keep saying to them, 'God sends the reward to you, how do you refuse it?'*

This SL explained that, although the education authority requested that the literacy programme be removed, the school decided to keep it. This School Culture was built for the benefit of the students, confirming that it is stronger than the system. She emphasised how the real employer is the one who has self-censorship and ethical and professional values—the one who uses the system to serve her/his aims and not vice versa. She expressed that self-censorship is stronger than the system. I infer that, because the education authority is not present in the field, it cannot understand what is good or bad for the school. In the SL's view, she needs to build an organisation with shared values and beliefs over time, which will improve the people's performance.

The most remarkable point in her example is that the SL linked the Inclusive School Culture to religion, which crucially shows the effect of holding a Faith Model (FM) on

leading for change. As explained before, the Islamic principles underpinning equality and diversity outstrip the practical application of these rights; specifically, they dwell in the Islamic community, which she often needs to remind teachers of. She works to ensure all school staff believe they are there for the students and that having students labelled with ID in their school is like God delivering rewards to them for good deeds.

*Overall,* the above examples show that this group of SLs, who knew about School Culture concept, saw it as an action for leading for change and considered it advantageous. These SLs believed that Aldamj was supported by the education system as structural changes (based on the education polices). However, in practice, they viewed themselves as the executers of it. Here, it is interesting to highlight a study that found that teachers in the KSA usually knew about the regulations and systems for inclusion, but in many cases, did not implement them, either because they did not know how to or because the SLs did not encourage them to (Alqahtani, 2005).

According to these examples, the education system cannot be successful unless it is complemented by an Inclusive School Culture that does not cause the exclusion of students labelled with ID from the school. Having an School Culture of inclusiveness encourages school members to believe in their work and act inclusively, even without being obliged to by an SL. Avissar, Reiter & Leyser (2003) find that most of the SLs whom teachers perceived to have management styles and who sought to change structures implemented integration, not inclusion. This shows how the SLs' understanding of inclusion influenced how they viewed a particular way of working as inclusive.

Doyle (2001) discusses the relationship between School Culture and inclusion, identifying the existence of a movement seeking to change the School Structure — however, this reflects the *integration* approach, not inclusion. Inclusion, as Doyle (2001)

and Ainscow and César (2006) describe, requires a change in thinking and desire to understand the cultures that exist in certain educational contexts. Although it is necessary to ensure School Structure stability (e.g. regular attendance and adequate resources), SLs should predominantly focus on creating a School Culture for inclusiveness that articulates a clear vision with defined aims (Bush, 2007).

To this end, SLs need to reconceptualise their roles as facilitators for inclusiveness by changing not only the School Structure but also the School Culture. Building on this, in order to have an Inclusive School Culture, leading for change is a necessity; viewing inclusion as a process of transformation confirms that SLs should adopt a perspective that encourages school members to become more committed to inclusion (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Accordingly, Carrington and Elkins (2001) and Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) state that transformational leaders focus on people's values and beliefs. This leads on to the second sub-question.

***Sub-Question Two:*** *How do SLs for leading for change employ Transformational Leadership to operationalise Inclusive School Culture aspects?*

## 6.1. Introduction

The intention of this sub-question is to explore how SLs, as leaders for change, embody their roles in promoting Inclusive School Culture aspects. These aspects are reflected in the SLs' understanding of Aldamj, as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture, (see Chapter Five, research question two).

As explained above, Disability Studies seek to destigmatise disability and interrogate socio-cultural practices to challenge societies that value health and ability and, refuse to see the absence of these attributes as defective (Goodley, 2014). Connor et al. (2008)

also state that Disability Studies in Education reach beyond the boundaries where disability is conceived to a deeper understanding within a school's daily experiences with the aim to create and sustain inclusive schools.

Thus, I use Transformational Leadership theory to interpret the data regarding how SLs can act as leaders for change. By using the responses of several individuals' interview questions on how the SLs in the second group (Cultural SLs) acted, I was able to create a broad picture of an Inclusive School Culture in practice.

Some of the individuals' interview questions were posed during a tour around the school, which helped me to see school artefacts and observe school members' actions, leading to further questions.

The Cultural SLs, as they explained, did not know about Transformational Leadership as a theory, especially considering that their educational backgrounds were in teaching, but their stories focussed on their actions when leading for change. However, the Cultural SLs were in a position to share their styles in terms of how they promoted a School Culture of inclusiveness and provided several experiential stories that related to teachers, other school staff, students labelled with ID, parents and mainstream peers of the students labelled with ID.

To clarify these results, I worked on these overlapping aspects to support Inclusive School Culture practice by breaking them down into Transformational Leadership theory elements (see Figure 8 and 9).
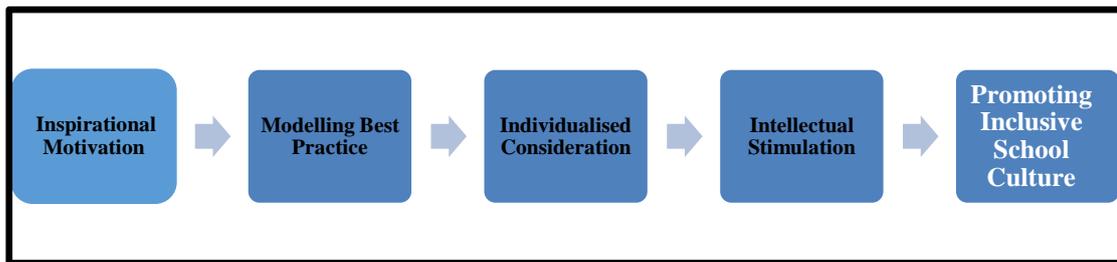
**Figure (8)** Elements of Transformational Leadership theory led to promoting an Inclusive School Culture.
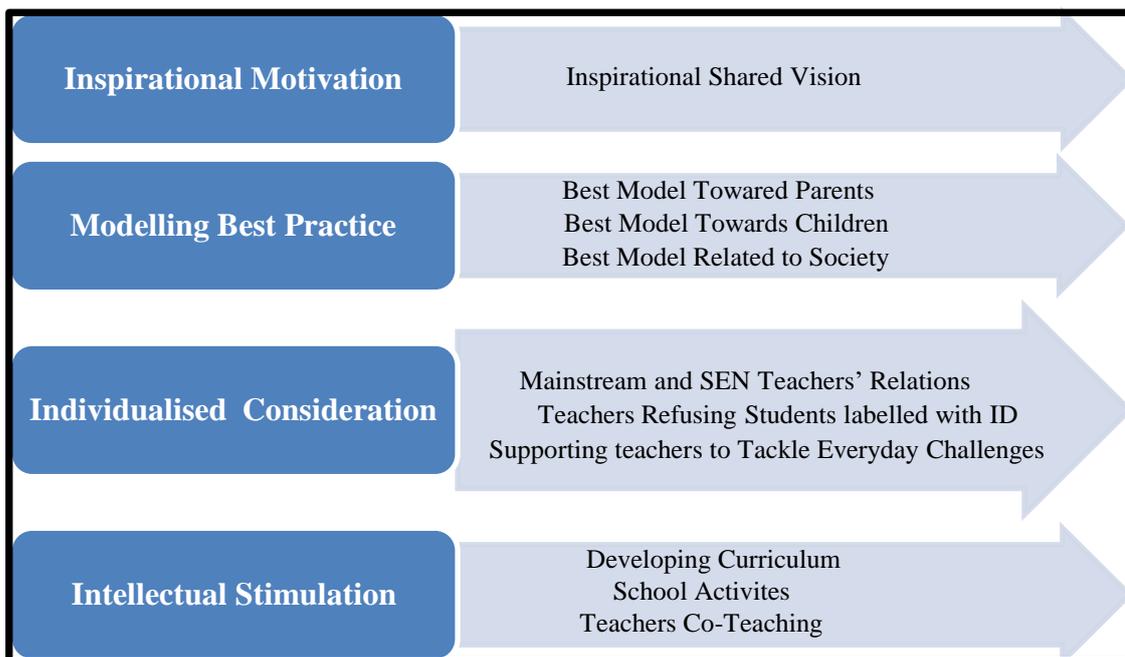


**Figure (9)** Breaking down the elements of Transformational Leadership theory.

The final results for this sub-research question show a correlation between Transformational Leadership theory elements and Inclusive School Culture aspects, that will be discussed below.

### 6.1.1. Inspirational Motivation

Transformational Leadership theory centres on inspiring school members to be more motivated to achieve organisational goals (Bass & Avolio, 1994), which is done by articulating a clear vision to them (Bass, 2000). DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014)

confirm that the values of SLs in social justice work affected the success of transforming their School Culture. Thus, SLs should inspire school members by *articulating a clear vision* to generate energy towards school aims, not just to encourage following the rules. This vision is significant, as Stockall and Gartin (2002) emphasise, for inclusion in school is defined as more than just a focus on physical placement, and instead, viewing the student as an active participant.

**6.1.1.1.** *Inspirational Shared Vision*

During the individual interviews, some SLs recounted imbuing their school vision with a sense of purpose, communicating their vision and describing how it informs everyday actions for inclusiveness. For example, one SL said,

> *To make them feel that they are part of the school...The teachers were so careful in attempting to be a link between the mainstream students and them, and that has fostered a strong relationship even with the loss of language.*

This SL's vision is to make students labelled with ID feel that they are part of the school and belong to it. She provided several examples that show how teachers form links between mainstream students and those labelled with ID who have other physical and communication difficulties, helping to strengthen relationships even in the absence of language. She continued providing examples to describe how a bond developed between them, even with the language difficulty, which also highlighted their vision:

> *Once, one of the ID girls was playing on the playground…Her mum came to collect her; one of the teachers was pushing the trolley. She was waving to show her mother, 'Wait, I need to say 'bye to my friend'. Without using words, we know when she's happy or upset.*

Moreover, during her individual interview, this SL shared another story that seemed to reflect how her vision became part of the School Culture:

> *One morning, an ID student was screaming…Her mother tried to take her inside; 10 minutes went by without any success. Suddenly, one of the mainstream students came and told 'A' to come inside, holding her hand; it was magic.*

Another SL shared her school vision as follows:

> *I am trying to create a safe school environment. Providing only material things doesn't necessarily mean that the student will be happy...Some mainstream students are a little intolerant of ID students, so we invite ID mothers to bring photos of their ID students when they were babies...That makes the other students see that they are all similar…The ID students are so happy and have a chance to express themselves...I encourage teachers to be open with them [mainstream students]and explain that, in one way or another, some friends may need more support.*

In another part of the individual interview, she expressed some examples that showed their vision and how they had achieved it. She said,

> *The mainstream* students *were so curious to know where their friends go. I asked the teachers to take them to the SEN resource room and take some individual lessons…They stopped asking, just wanted to make sure that their ID friend was in safe hands [laughing].*

In her vision, the SL aimed to provide a safe environment for all, including students labelled with ID, with the focus on psychological support for their emotional needs to build self-confidence and a sense of identity. With her school vision, she could see what the student labelled with ID needed to focus on in school activities. The individual interview highlighted several instances that reflected this vision, for example, when the mainstream students found similarities in appearance despite differences between them and their peers. This allowed the students labelled with ID to express themselves and feel positive about their identity. This also pleased the parents, who could see how the school society accepted their children. This SL's vision focussed on creating a caring community that encouraged students to care for others away from the established negative ideas about their peers labelled with ID.

She also highlighted the idea that, even though the students labelled with ID had to be taken from the mainstream classroom to the SEN resource room, the school worked with them on their self-confidence. By communicating her vision, she encouraged teachers to be open with mainstream students, and in this way, she made students labelled with ID feel welcomed by the school. This was an achievable goal because students are easily shaped in their early years when others answer their questions and use stories in a way that values differences, understanding and acceptance.

Another SL described her school vision as follows:

> *The goal is to work on the same page. I want school members to believe in what I believe in. When we're all on the same page, we'll achieve more. When I started to work in this school, I recognised that…teachers seemed to be focussed on what time school would be finished and when they could go home. There was no way they would cover each other's lessons. In the beginning, I avoided conflict with them...Now I have a school with a culture of cooperation, a culture of acceptance, with new things that benefit the students.*

In this vision, the SL articulated agreed-upon assumptions beyond self-interest that aim to achieve the organisation's goal of inclusion. I can recognise that the school members spoke different 'languages', meaning they thought differently. With a shared vision of not being separated into two worlds, however, they started to cooperate and use the language of achievement in this case. With similar expectations from all, they began to accept new things, and by doing so, saw some improvement over the way things were previous years. This made an obvious difference for the students, who no longer suffered from losing a period of the daily schedule. It also enabled teachers to avoid arguing: A colleague would amicably cover each teacher's position if needed. Such a new School Culture was made possible because the SL aimed for better cohesion than had existed in previous years.

The SL expressed an experience reflecting her vision during a different part of the individual interview:

> *Some systems with their school had been neglected for 6 years; however, now, these systems are constantly developing. The staff work even if I am absent from the school.*
>
> *We have a speech therapist…She takes both students with ID and mainstream students…I recognised that some mainstream and ID students have communication difficulties…If the speech therapist has time in her schedule, I ask her to take one of the students. Before, she refused...Now, she has started to organise her schedule; any day that she is free, she will give an ID or mainstream student a session.*

An education authority school system cannot provide any SEN specialist services to students in the resource room without first contacting them to give a SEN statement; thus, the SEN specialists cannot spend time with any student who is not on their list. However, schools with this SL's vision work to provide support for any student who shows some difficulties, preferring not to prevent them from accessing the school's facilities and believing in taking care of them without relying on classification. This vision enables school members to cooperate and move away from self-interest to benefit students, caring for the students so that they finish preschool with good communication skills. Moreover, most SLs refuse to view the resource room as a general support room to avoid discrimination. In this school, in its Inclusive School Culture, the resource room has been used for mainstream students too, even though the speech therapist did not initially view this as part of her job.

Finally, one SL shared a similar vision:

> *They thought that I didn't understand SEN [teachers] and argued with me...School is for all students; I don't want to be separated into two worlds...I refused to have the ID students in separate files...I am going to take care of them without these things; it's adding more pressure and taking us far from the aim.*

This SL expressed her vision from the start of the individual interview; that is, school is for all students. Later, during the school tour, she showed me that she posted the school's vision statement on the front of the door. This SL showed how this type of School Culture benefits the students more than previously thought. She showed school members that special support did not need to be treated as a separate vision. These students should be part of the school—this is why she refused separated files. I can infer that she felt that these separated file customisations were just for show to indicate 'special' students, and she preferred this to stop because this practice made the staff feel that students labelled with ID are less or not similar in the school position to other mainstream students.

***Overall,*** the examples detailed above show how the SLs each had a specific vision. As discussed in the literature review (Chapter Two), this vision is an important aspect of building an Inclusive School Culture. Houser et al. (2011) confirms that an effective leader in an inclusion setting can be described as a visionary leader that staff admire in the path to effective educational reform. Bush (2007) agrees that SL can be understood as influencing school member with a clear 'vision' for the school, a process of leading based on values and beliefs. Bush describes more that, this vision is articulated to gain the commitment of school members, including students, to the ideal of a better future for their school.

To make the vision fully apparent to all school members, the above examples also show that these SLs communicated their visions and discussed their beliefs within the school community, where inclusion should be part of daily school actions. Some, as per the above example, explained that this occurred by SLs reminding school staff in every meeting or by posting messages to the school board, and with time, the vision became part of the school. It can be seen that the school members' behaviour gradually changed

as they faced traditional exclusionary practices, without the need to redistribute the vision statement message. Bush and Middlewood (2013) state that the main difficulty arises when school members do not support the values of leaders; thus, SLs are expected to develop goals underpinned by explicit values and link them with the vision to produce higher levels of commitment. SLs need to ensure that the their schools vision is not imposed but is rather the product of a shared process where the teachers continue to work hard even when the SL is not in the school; as Bass (1985) states, targeted to specific actions that overcome barriers to stimulate a school environment supporting achievement for all students.

In terms of measuring the direction towards the school vision, it was clear that the SLs in the above examples were aware that this would not be easy and would take time, but it was worth it to be committed to meeting the long-term challenges, with the need to adopt a definition of inclusion based on this vision to ensure working together towards a common goal; as McGlynn and London (2013) state, the inclusion process needs an SL to ensure that school members all agree with the purpose of including all students and exhibit willingness to share, challenge, explore and restructure their beliefs.

The next section will be discussed the second element of Transformational Leadership theory.

### 6.1.2. Modelling Best Practice

To enable school members to trust leaders and reach peak performance, changes should begin from the top by modelling and articulating best practice (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Pounder, 2008) to enable them to tackle daily challenges (Stewart, 2006). The SL's words, behaviours and reactions to the school SEN services can affect the School Culture,

and these then become symbols by modelling desirable behaviours to build an Inclusive School Culture.

When I asked one of the SLs why she had such a School Culture of inclusiveness, she stated:

> *I don't just give orders and do nothing...If we work together...we will continue to provide the result needed.*

Some stories told during the individual interviews showed how the SLs serve as role models in embodying inclusive values in their daily practices with parents, students and society. This is will be discussed below.

### 6.1.2.1. *Showing the Best Model Towards Parents*

One SL said,

> *Teachers were resistant to the idea of having a WhatsApp group between them and the mothers...I am not happy when teachers speak with parents and complain about their children...They have enough to deal with, and that kind of attitude just makes them more frustrated. I always smile at them; even smiling is a support...So, I started to contact the mothers on WhatsApp independently. It was difficult to be positioned between the mothers and the teachers... However, the good results helped establish 10 more groups...It has become one of the most beautiful things for both the mothers and the teachers.*

Another SL commented,

> *Many mainstream students' parents came to the school and expressed discontent about the SEN programme. They said that I was ruining my school... Are the ID students germs?...It would have been easy to forget about them, but I needed their support...We planned a day to answer the parents' questions...I asked the mothers to explain why they felt this way and to put themselves in the position of the ID parents. Discussed some of the behaviour their children show towards ID peers...I also asked them to consider how they would feel if other students viewed their children that way.*

These two stories show how SLs behaved with parents in ways that reflected the School Culture of inclusiveness. The first SL expressed the importance of building a home–school relationship and tried to convince teachers to contact mothers and smile to encourage them to feel welcome and elicit their support. With the good results from updating mothers with news related to their children, providing answers to their queries and learning how that encouraged cooperation, eventually, this idea was taken up by the teachers. The teachers were not forced, but a new School Culture was built, and the parent–school relationship became part of the School Culture. The SL's school now understands the importance of communicating with parents as a part of the school's success.

The second SL, to show the best model—which is what the Aldamj is for—and send positive messages to others, held a day to discuss the mothers' concerns. She argued that students labelled with ID have the right to be in school, and she tried to show that if it was unacceptable to ask a mother to remove her student from a public place, it is the same in a school, clarifying that school is for everyone. The SL also explained that mainstream students misbehave and provoke students labelled with ID. She moved away from focussing on behaviour modification for the students labelled with ID to working on mainstream parents' awareness. She also demonstrated that peer relationships can be good, but the problem for some mainstream students was the mothers who expressed discomfort and prejudice about the students labelled with ID. She learned from her experiences that the students accepted each other more easily than their parents did. However, mainstream parents would keep giving their children the message that it is acceptable to refuse their peers labelled with ID.

### 6.1.2.2. *Showing the Best Model Towards Students*

One SL said she worked to be a model to SEN teachers in her interactions with students labelled with ID, taking them into her office to support them:

> *Other neighbourhood schools, when they face any difficulty with the ID students, directly send them to us. I remember one student who refused to go to the classroom all day. I took her to my office for a few weeks...I gave her some jobs to do as an assistant [smiling]; with time, she became calmer...I refuse when teachers say, 'I am not able to support her; she is difficult'. The programme is for serving them—any effort you* do with a student is *a step for his or her life.*

Although this SL's school had no more resources than other schools in the neighbourhood, the teachers achieved good results with very difficult students labelled with ID. Models for best practice towards students labelled with ID gave the teachers the motivation to act in the same way towards the challenges they face, especially when she said, '*The programme is for serving them*', demonstrating that school is here to support them.

Another SL shared the following information about her experiences:

> *I recognise the problem is from the new mainstream students, so we focus on them...They spray water on the ID students, try anything to provoke them...The psychologist and the social instructor established a three-step programme for different channels of contact that takes around three months...I take mainstream students by myself to ID classrooms to spend the day with them...Now they even go to them [SEN classrooms] to ask an ID student to come to play; ooh, this is the beautiful thing we made in the Aldamj.*

Even having a separated SEN classroom, this SL also models best practice towards students labelled with ID, focussing on how modifying mainstream students' behaviour more than that of the students labelled with ID, since the latter students' behaviour is seen as a reflection of discriminatory practices. When the psychologist and social instructor established a programme, the SL worked to support it. It is clear that the Inclusive School

Culture encourages the psychologist and social instructor to work on addressing this problem. As explained above, this shows how the psychologist holds a new role for inclusion practices. Rather than focussing on determining intelligence quotient (IQ) scores to label the students, she works on developing the School Culture towards inclusiveness.

By supporting the SL as a model of being around in each step, the programme showed a positive result, encouraging mainstream students who would never come close to the students labelled with ID to develop friendships with them. In my interpretation, the SL was an effective role model. She shared lessons to try to persuade the mainstream students to think critically about their behaviour, reminding them that some people are different, but they can be with us and we do not have to show any discrimination.

### 6.1.2.3. *Showing the Best Model Related to Society*

Many examples outlined by the SLs show how they acted as a best model in the relationship between school and society. This part was exciting for me due to the sentiment they expressed in their individual interviews. One SL said,

> *I take the ID students along with their arts and crafts to many exhibitions…I try to find any occasion that can provide the students contact with society outside school...Our ID students have Instagram and Twitter accounts that the SEN teacher established; we want to communicate with others outside school and show them our students...We conduct workshops for ID parents, not just the ID mothers in our school; the programme is now available to the school district.*

Another SL with a good plan with SEN schools to support each other said,

> *I am thinking about contacting the SEN centre, just like the Desca centre[2]. Your question encouraged me to invite them to our preschool; we want to learn from*

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[2] A private early intervention SEN centre in Riyadh city for students labelled with Down's syndrome.

*them, how they support their students, what we need to add...I also want to send our teachers to take training there and to gain more experience.*

Another SL expressed her story as follows:

> *I learned a lot from the SEN programme. They [the SEN programme, SEN teachers and students labelled with ID]were another world to me; now it's my turn...We participated in an activity last week named 'cohesion and compassion'; we took a group of ID students to visit another secondary school— the school that the ID students may transition to...They don't have an SEN programme yet…It was really a beautiful day; they interacted with them in some activities and during the break time...We returned with big bags of gifts [smiling].*

These three examples from SLs working in schools with Aldamj, show that the SLs were mediators between their schools and society. When I asked them about their school–community relations, they explained how they think that schools need to provide and receive society's support. Through different creative ideas, these SLs showed that an important part of inclusion is connecting their schools with the outside communities, confirming that the success of inclusion is interdependent, not just within schools; this enables them to raise awareness in their local communities.

***Overall,*** the above examples show how these SLs' modelling of best practice seems to naturally build an IS. When leading for change, SLs articulated what was required by taking responsibility for the values introduced in daily practices, thereby encouraging school members to follow specific behaviours. Praisner (2003) confirms that for SLs to encourage a school to dramatically improve for inclusiveness, the leader should have committed to its philosophy by adopting new models to clearly conceptualise diversity.

As the above SL's behaviours become symbolic of the school's new culture (Bass & Avolio, 1994), positive and inspirational stories about the SL's practice will develop which in turn improves general communication.

In the next section, the third element of Transformational Leadership theory will be discussed.

### 6.1.3. Individualised Considerations

Transformational Leadership theory is also characterised by leaders who give personalised attention to their school members' concerns (Stewart, 2006). Transformational leaders understand that different teachers have different abilities, and they refrain from criticising their mistakes (Bass & Avolio, 1994). When SLs recognise their needs, this makes them offer a more successful commitment to achieving school vision. The examples below relate to teachers refusing students labelled with ID in their classrooms, fostering mainstream–SEN teacher relations and supporting teachers to tackle challenges.

#### 6.1.3.1. *Refusal to Teach Intellectual Disabilities Learners*

I asked one SL what would happen if a teacher refused to accept a student labelled with ID who had enrolled in her classroom. She said,

> *I face a lot of mainstream teachers who refuse ID students…I would ask them to change their classrooms, not the student…but you can't use force with this group of teachers. In Islam, God says* فبما رحمة من اللَّه لنت لهم ولو كنت فظا غليظ القلب لانفضوا من حولك*, which means that being tough never helps...The smart principals are flexible...I told them that policies are in place for people that have no mercy, not for people like us. They [mainstream teachers] may not have experiences in teaching ID children, but I see how they learn from SEN teachers with time.*

The individual considerations clearly show this when she uses God's verses, which talk about Prophet Mohammed, Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH), asking people to talk with each other in a kind way so they respect his Hadith. Then, this SL shows how to address individual considerations when a teacher does not demonstrate inclusive practice. She may able to force the mainstream teachers to accept the student labelled with ID through the education system or changing her classroom. It seems that she experiences teachers

who try to find a gap in the system, so she aims to avoid conflict and prefers to focus on the 'human' side to persuade them. From her experiences, mainstream teachers learn from SEN teachers and gain experiences when they are willing to work in one classroom.

When I asked another SL about how to persuade mainstream teachers to engage the students labelled with ID in the mainstream curriculum, she responded,

> *It depends on the person; human relations with respect...If the employee is comfortable, this reflects on the student...With time, you start to know your school members' personalities; they have different ways of persuading and personal iteration styles. As a leader, it's your job to know about those differences and to be able to change their views.*

This SL seemed to think that one-to-one support is not enough, and for the students labelled with ID to be included, they need to engage in the mainstream curriculum provided by the mainstream teacher. Thus, this SL focussed on understanding the mainstream teachers' personalities so that she can persuade them. She used different methods depending on personality, responded to circumstances and provided maximum support, believing that when the teachers are comfortable, this will be reflected in the students' performance. In another part of the individual interview, she showed how she would go beyond the education system even though she might not be accountable for it:

> *Sometimes I go beyond the system rules to reward them as long as my teachers are happy. I have a gold card; any teacher that does any activities to support Aldamj can have this card…Teachers can use it to leave early from school.*

The SL has found that rewards to encourage teachers were effective, so any teacher facilitating activities that promoted inclusion are provided with a gold card, allowing them to leave work early on a day they want. Although she did not have the authority to do this, she accepted responsibility for it as long as her school members were happy and developing.

### 6.1.3.2. *Teachers' Relations*

One SL shared her story about building teachers' relationships as follows:

> *The SEN teachers had a separate breakroom…I recognised that the problem was that the SEN teachers thought that they were better because they were specialised…I tried to get close to them to understand them more. Opened up my office to discuss any personal issues...I wanted to cultivate the idea that we are in one school, meaning we are one, and that we need to support each other.*

She continued,

> *I explained that I need their room for open new classroom, and they need to be with other mainstream teachers...when they refuse, I understand their worries, I said to them I put a small partition in the room between the SEN teachers and mainstream teachers, it just a separated room…if they face any difficulties my office is open to here you...At the end of the year, the SEN teachers seemed to me to feel uncomfortable with the partition...Some conversations started between them; later, they started to recognise that we are all teachers…Now, after a long, rocky journey, the SEN and mainstream teachers cover each other's lessons when they are absent; it is not their job, but they feel that the ID students are also their students.*

This SL recognised that it is difficult to force teachers to do something they are not comfortable with and that she needed to take small steps to persuade them. Despite many disagreements, she tried to consider teachers' needs individually in her attempts to reach the aim of good relations and to encourage cooperation as an important aspect of Inclusive School Culture. This SL thought creatively, moving SEN teachers into the mainstream teachers' room without pressure by using a partition. The SL also preferred not to request SEN supervisors, which is easier following the school system, but she believed that this would have increased resistance. She also kept her office door open to discuss any concerns with them. Eventually, the SEN teachers removed the partition, and more interaction occurred as they began to believe in thinking together.

### 6.1.3.3. *Supporting Teacher Resilience*

One SL shared her story about how she supports teachers in dealing with the frustration they face with students with substantial needs who take more time to react and learn:

> *One of the SEN teachers moved to another school. I asked another SEN teacher to host the other ID students in her classroom, and she refused, expressing concern that these student's cases were severe...I didn't contact the education authority supervisors because I know that she tough with them...I preferred to solve the problem by myself... I said to her, I know SEN teachers have great skills; teachers need principals who smile and thank them...I understand the hard work you face...I kept reminding her not to waste the other teacher's efforts...to give the student time...be happy with the small steps that they achieved.*

Another SL had similar issues:

> *I have the right to ask to move frustrating teachers who refuse ID students to another school, but this is not a solution. How can I solve my problem and create a problem at another school?... For me, I put the best teachers in each classroom with other less enthusiastic teachers so that both have the same cases...Even when one refuses, the other pushes her. I explain that their success is clear in both cases because of the students' development.*

At another point, she stated:

> *I have a reward board; teachers want to have their name on it, even though they don't care in the beginning. I keep rewarding them...We see the happiness in the mothers' eyes and how they pray to God for the best teachers.*

The two SLs' stories show how they support the teachers' individual strengths, while refraining from criticising them. These SLs are not specialists in the field of SEN, but they have been successful in creating the kind of Inclusive School Culture that encourages teachers to work and grow stronger in the face of everyday difficulties. Their actions show how individualised considerations operate, as Transformational Leaders can make every school member feel more comfortable and more willing to tackle difficulties and help the students succeed.

*Overall,* the above examples show SLs actions when leading for change and working towards an Inclusive School Culture. These SLs have to deal individually with different aspects related to teachers refusing students labelled with ID in their classrooms, mainstream and SEN teachers' relations and cooperation and SEN teachers' willingness or lack thereof to tackle the challenges and responsibilities of the job. I prefer to refer to them as emotionally intelligent leaders who have acknowledged some of the challenges by considering teachers' needs while encouraging inclusion practices.

In trying to encourage a culture that is willing to change emotionally intelligent leaders as Kirby, Paradise and King (1992) describe, these are SLs who strengthen school staff by understanding their desires and responding to them with simplified emotional persuasion. Moolenaar et al., (2010) declare when the SLs understood the school staff and addressed their individual needs in a psychologically safe school environment without fear of reprimand or ridicule, they increased their school's intrinsic motivation and creativity to innovate.

In an Inclusive School Culture, then, emotionally intelligent leaders, through individualised considerations, fostered a culture in which staff were willing to take risks and accept failure with the confidence that their endeavours would ultimately lead to a better School Culture. They also made each school member feel comfortable and able to express their difficulties because of the trust they felt in requesting support. As Bass and Avolio (1994) state, when SLs have a good relationship with school staff by focusing on reinforcing innovative efforts, new behavioural models will grow into symbols of the new School Culture.

Moreover, although some SLs in this study refused to implement the open-door policy, and preferred a more formal environment, those who did open their doors were trying to

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show their staff that they were valued and that the SLs were available to provide support. These SLs found ways to encourage staff to understand their roles in inclusion practices and supported their commitment to it. Bass and Avolio (1994) and Hallinger (2003) outline, despite the necessity of the school changes, the SLs' individualised support was not based on controlling staff to make them do what the school desired; rather, it showed respect for their past and current situations away from public criticism. Bass and Avolio (1994), add that when working to promote cultural change, transformational leaders first understand and appreciate the existing principles of school members, using them as a source of stimulation.

The final element of Transformational Leadership, as explained in the literature review in Chapter Two, is intellectual stimulation. This will be discussed in relation to Inclusive School Culture in the next section.

### 6.1.4. Intellectual Stimulation

Although Transformational leader seem indulgent in terms of individual consideration, as I outline above, they provide an environment for innovation; this stimulates teachers to rethink their assumptions and problem-solving methods (Pounder, 2008). Bass and Avolio (1994) declare that, in a highly innovative School Culture that nurtures a culture of inventive transformation, there are transformational leaders who see their school members as trustworthy. They empower them to take ownership of realising the vision, making unique contributions to managing complex issues at the lowest levels by developing their potential.

During one of the individual interviews, an SL remarked,

> *I always tell school staff that I hate two phrases: 'It is not my job' and 'I don't know how to do it'. I encourage them to start to work, try hard, read more and get educated…It is strange how SEN teachers refuse to work...how they are able*

*to leave at the end of the day and they don't put effort into supporting the ID students.*

Although this SL seemed to base her leadership on encouragements, she refused to let down her expectations and accept laziness. For example, she did not accept a teacher waiting for a training course to be offered from the education authority to solve a barrier that she faced in her classroom; instead, the SL would encourage the teacher to identify a solution independently through self-trying and learning. Thus, in an Inclusive School Culture, transformational leaders challenge teachers' thinking and assumptions from many angles to find solutions that are beneficial for all students.

During the individual interviews, some SLs described stories that showed how they worked to intellectually stimulate teachers, as well as how other school members also needed to be innovative when working towards achieving inclusiveness. The examples below relate to developing the curriculum, supporting school activities, and finally, fostering SEN and mainstream teacher co-teaching.

### 6.1.4.1. *Developing Curriculum*

One SL explained how she would ask teachers to add new ideas to their curricula:

> *They called her a SEN teacher; I don't see anything that shows the specialist part. I need to see development in the SEN national curriculum; it is a booklet, so I printed the same aims for all the SEN teachers...When they finished the lesson, some even left the classroom and went to have coffee.*

I asked if the budget was an excuse. She replied,

> *No. The low budget is not an excuse...They should be creative…Teaching strategies don't require money.*

By using intellectual stimulation, this SL showed that, when developing an Inclusive School Culture, staff members can deal with issues that arise. She provided an example that illustrated how teachers should maintain their motivation without excuses even when

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they do not receive the desired SEN programme budget. In her view, staff members who work in a school with an inclusive culture are characterised by believing in Aldamj, that ensures that quality is driven by unwritten systems—not, for example, by requesting more financial support.

Another example showed how small ideas in one classroom can spread throughout the school:

> *One SEN teacher said the Year 6 SEN national curriculum just focuses on getting the ID students to read two sentences, but she gave some of them more, even in the Quran. Some of them memorised long Sorah...If one of them showed me a new teaching strategy, I encouraged others to visit her classroom. Teachers felt more excited when I requested their advice and asked them to show me new things.*

Similarly, another SL expressed how she acted to stimulate other teachers:

> *We have three ID students with physical difficulties...The SEN national curriculum doesn't have anything related to their needs, so I encouraged the teacher to develop their occupational skills. I wanted the ID students to feel that they'd accomplished something...No need to spend money, even if a student brings a tissue box and decorates it, I will put it in our school offices...I encouraged other schools to come and copy what we do...Even though the education authority doesn't evaluate this.*

These SLs stimulated the SEN teachers to think outside of the curriculum, rather than simply following it. In their view, the curriculum is based on a general standard, but students labelled with ID are not all the same, and some could do more. She made it clear that teachers should think creatively to support learning differences.

### 6.1.4.2. *Schools' Activities*

One SL argued that school should not only be about the curriculum, and those students labelled with ID need to be more included in school activities. She commented,

*The teachers said to me that we should evaluate IEPs and we should not do more; school is not just about the curriculum...I want the SEN teachers to be kind and productive... Don't say that this student can't understand; the student's thinking gives them a chance to move and to interact.*

She continued,

*We had an open-day breakfast...Students went to other classroom tables and shared food with them. At that time, teachers tried to encourage communication between students so that they would feel comfortable with each other. We did that for one week; it was a good time for achieving the goal...All school member interact a worker in the canteen asked the ID students to help her.*

This SL continued to encourage her teachers to achieve more rather than focussing solely on curriculum and classroom paperwork. From her example, I can see how she did not think just of the evaluation or take photos of the students during the activities merely to show the education authority supervisors and use the students labelled with ID for show. Her School Culture was based on working for improvements for students; even the worker in the canteen asked some of them for help to sell snacks, and I assume, helped them to pronounce the words of the food, develop their interpersonal skills and practise counting money.

Another SL also encouraged mainstream teachers to use different styles to employ the Fatten Programme (one of the national programmes for students labelled with ID and their mainstream peers). She stated,

*In the Fatten Programme (برنامج فطن) the ID and mainstream students were separated, but we decided to join them. One mainstream teacher was afraid that they would not be able to successfully explain the ideas to the ID students, but it was great... The ID students made a lovely contribution in the group discussion, showing them that both had some similar issues...and they became friends...They [mainstream peers] even helped them [students labelled with ID] with their homework, treating them as a big caring sister.*

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In this way, the Inclusive School Culture fostered the belief that all students should participate together in the same activities, where the mainstream teachers are required to offer activities that are suitable for students labelled with ID with their mainstream peers.

### 6.1.4.3. *Teachers Co-Teaching*

One SL spent most of the individual interview describing her experiences in working to reduce exclusion. She related,

> *Last term, in Year 4, the SEN teacher explained to me after several lessons that one student didn't show any signs of ID...It's really sad that some students are put in the wrong place because of IQ [intelligence quotient] results. We worked hard to move her to the mainstream classroom, but the mainstream teachers didn't want her...With many attempts to persuade her...at last, this year, she is fully enrolled in a mainstream classroom and gets some individual consideration from one of the SEN teachers...The mainstream teachers work with her too and follow her plans in the classroom.*

I spent one hour speaking with this SL and hearing her story. To focus on the main point in her story, she worked on stimulating the teachers to think in a way that would make the girl labelled with ID feel included. She worked hard to ensure the girl received the correct education from cooperative teachers, despite a lack of systemic support from the education authority for this student, whose status in the school did not reflect her low IQ result.

Another SL also used intellectual stimulation to find a way to encourage the cooperation between mainstream and SEN teachers in the classroom:

> *SEN teachers in the SEN classroom keep teaching simple math skills to the ID students, even though some of them have excellent math skills. They explained to me that they were following the SEN national curriculum...I made the mainstream math teachers teach Year 6 ID students in their SEN classroom to support the SEN teachers' math skills...Later, I asked to move some of the ID students to mainstream classrooms...I asked the teachers to put the ID girls in different groups and encouraged the mainstream students to support them.*

This SL showed how having differences in one classroom has a positive impact and how teachers need to keep thinking and working to develop, adjust and modify things. In her view, teachers have become more aware that the school is for the students, and they are all responsible for cooperating. She encouraged teachers to share ideas and think in a way that would ensure the success of mixed-ability lessons. It can be seen how SEN teachers learn from their mainstream teachers, and as mentioned above, mainstream schools simultaneously learn from SEN teachers when they are in one classroom.

***Overall,*** the above examples show that, in an Inclusive School Culture, teachers do not only need to hold university certificates as SEN specialists; they also need to be creative and flexible, thinking outside the box to value diversity. They need to explore and critically interpret their patterns of thinking that may promote exclusion and recognise the invisible practices that hinder change towards schools becoming inclusive. According to Moolenaar et al. (2010), SLs stimulate innovative teaching strategies as an integral part of their teachers' jobs to build their confidence in implementing these new ideas.

For example, in relation to developing curriculum discussed above, inclusion makes schools responsible for reconsidering their curricula so they are able to respond to the abilities of students labelled with SEN (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996), and several authors have argued that engaging students labelled with ID in the curriculum is a necessary step towards making them active participants in the classroom. Dyson and Gains (1993) describe inclusion as a broad framework that does not follow a pattern, and while some solutions are standardised by educational authorities, inclusion transfers power from the authorities to the schools, allowing them to interpret the framework according to their students' (abilities and) needs. Which mean, the framework does not prescribe curricula

for different categories of disabilities; rather, it guides them while they create meaningful curricula that respond positively to diversity.

In addition, as Kirby et al. (1992) and Hallinger (2003) illustrate, Transformational leader concentrates on building the organisation's capability to transform rather than specifically on undeviating coordination, control and instruction of the status quo requirements tasks. Thus, Transformational Leadership theory seeks to build the school capacity to support the development of needed changes. To confirm this, Ainscow and Sandill (2010) note that teachers in some school environments that are poor in resources (which can be seen as an important structural need) have shown that they can overcome this and develop inclusion. They argue further that these schools have developed *social learning* that brings teachers and administrators together around a common purpose.

## 6.2. Conclusion

The results for the first sub-question contribute to a better understanding of the leadership style in the KSA mainstream schools that have SEN programmes. Through exploration, the forms of leadership have become apparent, including more structurally-oriented leaders than leaders who work to influence the culture of their school, to whom I refer as Cultural SLs.

Over many years, the KSA neighbourhood schools have changed structurally, providing SEN services and with SEN teachers graduating from university every year[3]. These School Structure changes, however, have been insufficient to make lasting change, with the need for other aspects that encourage commitment to the change needed for including student labelled with ID, such as developing Inclusive School Culture. However, as

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[3] More information on the SEN services provided by the KSA Ministry of Education can be found in Chapter one.

explained above, if there really are issues related to the lack of School Structure support needed for SEN programmes, these should be solved within the context of the school by establishing the School Culture of inclusiveness in the way of leading for change, without compromising the rights of any student to be included.

The results for the second sub-question also contribute, as this study sought to explore the effects of Transformational Leadership theory on Inclusive School Culture to understand additional forms of leading for change in mainstream schools that have SEN services. The first element of the theory is inspirational motivation, which involves a leader promoting change by communicating a shared vision that inspires and forms a consensus among the staff members as they pursue a clearly defined mission. The second element, modelling best practice, relates to adopting inclusion practices, making parents of students labelled with ID feel welcome, helping students labelled with ID realise their right to attend their neighbourhood school, developing a sense of belonging and establishing society–school relations. The third element, individual considerations, involves the role of the SL, who creates a comfortable school environment, values staff work and understands different staff needs. Finally, the fourth element is intellectual stimulation, where SLs support teachers who are willing to respond to challenges and prompt them to take the initiative and understand that false beliefs can hinder student achievement.

The results show a relationship between the four Transformational Leadership theory elements and Inclusive School Culture aspects (see Chapter Five). This means putting Disability Studies and Transformational Leadership within the SEN practices to make a lot of changes in school action for inclusion. Thus, in leading for change, this study could be used as a reference to inspire and guide SLs on the appropriate role of leadership, while

adapting to new challenges in an era of educational reform to reach the '*Least Restrictive Environment'* in the mainstream school, as outlined in the KSA and international education policies.

# *Chapter Seven*

*From the SLs' perspectives, what issues do they face while developing Inclusive School Culture aspects?*

## 7.1. Introduction

This research question aims to gain data from SLs about the obstacles they faced while enhancing their Inclusive School Culture. There were several issues I noticed during the individual interviews conversations with the SLs, which I used to help to direct the SLs' attention during the focus groups to initiate discussions; this encouraged SLs in the two focus groups to talk in more depth about their concerns for particular situations they experienced. However, for addressing this research question, I primarily used data gathered from two focus groups, which, as explained in the methodology, is a method providing the opportunity to foster discussions among participants and encouraging them to articulate their opinions (Berg, 2001).

Each focus group included preschool and primary school SLs. To promote more discussion, as underlined during the individual interviews, the preschool and primary school SLs seemed to be unfamiliar with the practices of other schools. In Chapter Three, I explained that in preschools, students labelled with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) study alongside their mainstream peers. They may have individual sessions in the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Recourse Room/Unit with their SEN teacher or psychologist for no more than half an hour each day. In primary schools, students labelled with ID are taught primarily in SEN classrooms, and they may be brought into mainstream

classrooms for only a few lessons. In my doctoral research, this lack of familiarity with each other's school practices engendered further debate and promoted the exchange of opinions, helping to raise questions and discuss different issues.

To organise the discussion, a data collocation guide (see Chapter Three) was created as emphasised in the methodology, including: **Step 1**, which is an introduction reviewing the FG instructions explained in the information sheet. **Step 2** gives directions for facilitating the interaction using discussion cards 1, 2 and 3, which include a set of questions used to prompt the participants. **Step 3** is using discussion card 4, which included video discussion. **Step 4** is concluding with closing activities as a way I view as effective for gathering more data to end the focus group discussion. Matthews and Ross (2010) confirm that a focus group discussion can use some additional materials to help stimulate the dialogue. Thus, in the last step I used photos, activities and videos before some of the questions were asked to encourage group discussion rather than individual interviews.

This chapter's discussion focuses on two of the focus groups' results, pulling together broad themes from across the focus groups. The focus group discussion results show that, while trying to reform their schools, the SLs were confronted with multiple challenges, consisting of the following 11 issues (see Table 3).

**Table (3)** Research question four emergent issues.

| Issues Raised | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Issue 1** | **Issue 2** | **Issue 3** |
| The education authority focused on office work, not on figuring out how to make School Cultures more inclusive. | The education authority did not account for the SLs' efforts to change the School Culture when evaluating the SLs. | Incentives to build an Inclusive School Culture consisted of monetary bonuses for SEN teachers but not for all other school staff. |

| Issue 4 | Issue 5 | Issue 6 |
|---|---|---|
| The education authority's understanding of Aldamj was confusing. They encouraged SEN and mainstream teachers to act independently. | The SLs did not consider the practical meaning of the new job title 'School Leader'. | The SEN teachers did not accept students with substantial needs. |
| **Issue 7** | **Issue 8** | **Issue 9** |
| The SLs found it difficult to change staff's beliefs and thoughts. | The parents were uncooperative. Their sole aim was to enrol their children in a mainstream school. | The SEN Procedural Guide hindered efforts to build Inclusive School Culture. |
| **Issue 10** | | **Issue 11** |
| Specialised Knowledge for School Leaders | | New staff came from schools with different cultures. |

### 7.1.1. *The Lack of Focus on Inclusive School Culture*

The study found that the popular consensus was that the education authority focused on office work, not on figuring out how to make school cultures more inclusive. The two focus groups raised the same issue, discussing how the General Directorate of Special Education [GDSE] as the education authority focussed on office work, hindering other efforts to create an Inclusive School Culture. One SL stated:

> *Is filling in files what the students need?...We need to focus on how to help ID students develop in our school. I do not have a problem with planning any project on paper, but I object to using paperwork to see the results of a programme...Do you know that I still have to tell them how I spend 25 riyals and use 50 pens? The SEN programme budget reports are wasting my time... I really want something like a School Culture and to figure out how to solve the problems in the field.*

This SL expressed that office work does not benefit students labelled with ID. On the contrary, it takes too much time that should be allocated to them. She viewed paperwork as abstract work that cannot effectively evaluate the SEN programme. For her, the focus

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should be on giving more time to the School Culture since each school has unique problems. She preferred to spend her time investigating what barriers there are for the students' achievements and feelings of inclusion. In leading for change, she seemed to prefer a school to have general aims set by the education authority, allowing her to act on them in ways that were appropriate for her school.

Another SL agreed, preferring to self-organise paperwork for her own benefit, not for the education authority. She commented,

> *In reality, some schools do less than what they write...This comes from within us because people who want to work will do so honestly. I like to organise my work in files, for me, not for the supervisor, not by following their timeline and structure...She visited me only to say a few words and read my files to make sure that they were complete.*

This SL underlined how, as SLs, they are being forced to waste time that should be devoted to the school, viewing office work as just a personal organisation system, not something the education authority needs to see. She critically raised how School Cultures characterised by people who believe in their aim will achieve them honestly, and she showed how these files and paperwork may not represent reality.

Another SL also shared her experiences with what is called Almanthomah (المنظومة) as a group of inspectors. She stated,

> *All schools know that groups of inspectors are visiting; therefore, they try to change the school image: They clean, they plant, they do everything to make the school shine...Those inspectors just go over the paperwork...When my teachers asked me what they should do when they came, I told them, 'We work here for the students, not for them, so act as you usually do…They come for one day, while we are here for the whole year, so everything we do, we do for our school'.*

This SL asserted that the education authority encouraged some illogical practices, refusing what usually happens in a school for a one-day show. She believed in

encouraging her school members to follow their usual routine, and in this way, building a School Culture that values working loyally for the school.

The discussion during the focus groups showed how SLs would prefer for supervisors to spend time with them outside of the office, emphasising that the education authority does not focus on Inclusive School Culture, especially regarding the teacher–leader relationship. Their views were supported by one of the group discussions, which emphasised what should be done instead of spending time on paperwork away from the office routine and discussed how the burden of this administrative work does not offer a chance to follow up on the teachers. One SL, for example, stated,

> *We need to leave our offices...I wish that I had time to work with the teachers and develop creative ways to encourage and help the students with ID. This is much better than office work…They [education authority] said they want us to focus on these aspects [encouraging teachers], but in reality, when they visit the school, they do not care about these parts.*

Not only does paperwork prevent any catch-up time with the teachers, during the focus group discussion, one SL provided examples of a school programme that made me consider that focussing on paperwork also hinders the great aims of any programme. She related,

> *The Fatten Programme (برنامج فطن) is a really great national programme for mainstream students and ID students...Some schools think that this failed...the main issue being that some principals do not understand what we are talking about [referring to School Culture]. They are concerned only with completing the necessary paperwork for the supervisor; taking photographs of students while taking part in school activities...They use the students as tools.*

She added,

> *They [education authority] should give us the freedom to act in the best interest of our school…If the teachers believe in it, they will work hard to achieve it.*

This SL explained how schools have forgotten about the main aim of the Fatten Programme because of the effort involved in filling in evaluation papers to demonstrate the programme is active, with the result that her school is not interested in it and has become detached from its central aim. It can be clearly seen how paperwork hinders the greater aims of this programme as the education authority is ignoring the importance of the School Culture in terms of believing of the programme to achieve the aims. It can then be argued that this may be why some SLs in the individual interviews evaluated the SEN programme as a failure: Their School Culture did not believe in الدمج (Aldamj).

From the above examples, and as explained in Chapter One, the education authority has sought policies to reform schools to make them more inclusive. These policies have used the language of change to achieve Aldamj's objectives. However, the SLs demonstrated in their examples that the education authority is more focussed on paperwork as School Structure than enhancing School Culture to be inclusive, which limits the effects of transformational education (Bottery, 2004).

The SLs perceived that paperwork could be beneficial from an organisational point of view, but this took up the lion's share of their most valuable time—time when their schools needed them to perform leading for change. They highlighted that the paperwork does not reflect what is really happening in the schools, and they wanted the education authority to know that they are being forced to waste time on office work away from working on their School Culture, which they considered more important.

Moreover, the SLs seemed to feel that they were losing control over their schools, wanting a balance between the elements of the School Structure (i.e. organising paperwork) and School Culture. The above discussions made me consider whether schools with a lack of decision making can run according to their *needs*. Their view suggested how devolution

from the national to local authority would help spur the initiative to enhance their School Culture to be inclusive.

By observing the current supervisors' statuses (how they only focus on paperwork and how the supervisory role given to SLs is limited), the SLs found that schools need more flexibility to take the initiative in reform – they wanted to be given more flexibility, not to abolish it entirely. Stoll (1998) and Finnan and Levin (2000) state that School Culture is influenced by external factors, such as the local educational authority, which is oriented towards language, proposing changes that do not fit their School Culture. This creates a sense of powerlessness among school members.

The key element in their view was that mainstream schools need to develop a programme or project locally to meet the students' abilities, emphasising that each school has a different situation. From that, I can assert that the traditional authority used in the current education system is not suitable for inclusion practices.

However, from the previous research question individual interviews (the third research question in Chapter Six), I reached the understanding that this depends on the education authority supervisor. In other words, if she trusts the SL or does not care what happens in the school, assuming she just want to fill out paper evaluations, she may give the SL the authority and flexibility to change the system. Some examples were outlined for the third research question in terms of how some SLs exceeded the system for one goal in the interest of the students' support, which also confirms that systems were interpreted differently depending on the School Culture. This also underscores the issues related to the failures in the SEN guide, as discussed later in this chapter.

Related to this, Caldwell and Spinks (1992) argue that the success of the reforms depends on the nature of the SLs' practices, and in the Transformational Leadership style,

successful educational reform depends on having decentralised power in self-leading schools. Bush and Middlewood (2013) also state that the interest in self-management in education is reinforced by the notion that each school has a unique culture.

### 7.1.2. *Evaluating Efforts to Change the School Culture*

The education authority did not account for the SLs' efforts to change the School Culture when evaluating the SLs. This issue supports the validity of the previous discussion. One of the focus groups talked about how the education authority did not account for the SLs' efforts to change their School Culture when they were evaluating the SLs. One SL said:

> *The evaluation criteria from the education authority focuses on the files: 'Why is this not written here? Why did you not record that?' They come and hunt for mistakes…There are no criteria related to improving the culture; there may be one or two elements, but the evaluations rely on my files.*

Another SL stated,

> *I visit many students at their homes. I cover teachers' lessons. Unfortunately, I have the same evaluation score as an SL whom I know well, just because she finishes her paperwork. Sometimes, I even scored lower than others just because I had not done my files in the way they wanted.*

These SLs were displeased because the supervisors see only their mistakes in the files, and they do not evaluate the hard work conducted out in the field, particularly the efforts towards improving the School Culture during school difficulties. For them, it seemed illogical to evaluate the schools on one day, focussing on office work for accountability[1]; they asserted that files cannot show the SLs' real effort in the field.

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[1] The accountability process for any school staff, including SLs, involves the following: First, the teacher is given a verbal reprimand and the supervisor discusses the reasons with the teacher. Next, she is given a formal letter. If she does not follow her assigned role, her evaluation score will decrease.

Their contention was that the supervisors are not at all familiar with the situation, and as they usually arrive in a hurry, they evaluate SLs based on school files, signing off on the paperwork just to finalise their job as fast as possible.

Another related issue was that the SEN programme was not included in the administration evaluation. One SL commented,

> *Who said that they even evaluate us for the SEN programme? They evaluate us for the mainstream school. If I show my supervisor anything related to the SEN programme, she will say, 'I am here for general administrative purposes. This concerns the SEN supervisor'. And if I ask the SEN supervisor for advice, she will say, 'I am here for the SEN teachers'...So who supports me in relation to managing the SEN programmes?*

Another SL agreed:

> *Advise me in what? [with a sassy voice] Not even a single administrative supervisor, ever since the beginning of the SEN programme five years ago, has given me a compliment or even one extra point on my evaluation because we have a SEN programme.*

These SLs not only emphasised the education authority's neglect of the School Culture aspect in the SL evaluation, but they also talked about how the admission supervisors did not discuss the SEN programme with them. Unfortunately, the admission supervisors do not view the SEN programme as part of the school, expressing that this is the responsibility of the SEN supervisor. Yet, the SEN supervisor came to evaluate the SEN teachers and demonstrated a lack of familiarity with any leading SEN programme practices.

The SLs continued sharing their views in the group discussion, on the same issue but related to the need to obtain feedback on their practices for the SEN programme. One SL stated,

> *The evaluation criteria for the SEN programme are no different than the criteria we had before the programme...How can they compare me to SLs who do not do not oversee a SEN programme? How can I know how well I am performing?*

Another SL commented,

> *Yes, I agree, not because of aiming at being the best, but how can most of the SLs have the same evaluation result? We need to see a model for the best practices of Aldamj.*

These comments reveal the SLs' discontent regarding the lack of a re-evaluation of the criteria tailored to the Aldamj. From their observations, the evaluation criteria were not changed when the programme was established in their schools, even though the SLs perceived that they had to work harder than SLs who did not oversee SEN programmes. Thus, they wanted the evaluations to account for their additional responsibilities related to SEN services.

The most important and interesting part of their discussion was how clearly the SLs expressed their great concern with their evaluations, although their evaluation scores did not affect their salaries. However, it can be seen from their comments that these scores reinforced how they perceived their performance in the SEN programme for inclusion practices.

### 7.1.3. *Monetary Bonuses for Special Educational Needs Staff*

Another issue centres on incentives to build an Inclusive School Culture, consisting of monetary bonuses for SEN teachers but not for all other school staff. As explained in Chapter One, SEN teachers receive a 30% bonus as encouragement from the Ministry of Education (MoE). When a mainstream school has 12 students labelled with SEN, the SL, vice-principal and some of the employers receive 20%, both in preschool and primary school. Mainstream teachers can also receive 20% if they have at least six students labelled with SEN in their classroom *without* SEN teacher support.

In one of the individual interviews, an SL described her experience related to the beginning of the establishment of the SEN programme in her school. She related what seemed to me to be a big problem, where the education authority used the bonus to encourage the SLs to accept the SEN programme to be open in her school. She stated,

> *A group of supervisors from the education authority told us to accept the SEN programme…They said, 'we'll give you a bonus, you and other employers…We will provide a playground and a sports room'.*

I believe that the approach adopted by the education authority to encourage this SL to accept and become involved in the SEN programme was not beneficial to the Aldamj; the programme was designed around an aim that does not encourage an Inclusive School Culture, and this is why when these are not provided the school complain not believing of the students labelled with ID right to be part of the school, which is the main aim of the SEN programme that been neglected from the beginning of opening the programme from the education authority.

During the individual interview discussion, I also realised that the incentives consisted of monetary bonuses for SEN teachers and certain school staff but not mainstream teachers, which has been a barrier to building an Inclusive School Culture. I raised this issue in the two groups to hear their views. One SL said,

> *The extra salary plays a crucial role...Mainstream teachers never complain, although I feel it in the school.*

This SL showed how her School Culture was affected by the bonuses, and although mainstream teachers did not complain directly to her, she could sense their unhappiness in the school environment as a reflection of the School Culture. This issue provoked a heated discussion, so I asked the SLs in one of the groups, 'Do you believe that the extra

salary (bonuses) makes the SEN teachers more enthusiastic about doing their work?' One SL responded,

> *Not that much. Some, maybe, they are motivated by it...I think they see it as a right, [in an unhappy voice] not as something to encourage them...I still cannot see any extra or special work that they do as ID teachers on the child's improvement.*

Another SL stated,

> *Yes, they said that to me, 'If they [education authority] did not think our job was difficult, they would not give us the salary bonus'...But, in practice, they do less than you would expect [unsatisfied tone]. Is this worth the reward?*

These comments show that the incentives provided to SEN teachers do not showcase results in the field. The previous SLs expressed that the lessons did not include something that would make the students think and act. In fact, they both agree that the SEN teachers considered this bonus as their right, not as an incentive for them to make more effort. These SLs made me think about how to use the bonus on the development of the child, rather than on the completion of the Individual Education Plan as what the SEN supervisor evaluates the SEN teacher on.

The education authority also encouraged other school members to view the SEN programme as a separate service. One SL stated,

> *The school guard gets a bonus. I do not know why? It is his job to look after the gate. So, the nanny refused to take care of the ID students, accompany them to the toilet or hold their hands to the gates until she received a bonus as well.*

As explained above, the SLs raised the issue of how incentives consisting of monetary bonuses for SEN teachers and certain school staff could potentially lead to the development of an Inclusive School Culture. The bonus benefit created issues between

school staff members because anyone involved in the development and support of students labelled with ID would consider themselves entitled to this reward.

In the focus groups, the issue related to the bonuses led to the idea of removing these rewards, which was highly supported in the debate. However, others would be against this removal, supporting the idea of awarding it to *all* school staff involved in the SEN programme in their school.

Although there were clearly different opinions about this issue, all the participants in both groups agreed that the monetisation of disabled learners seemed to create a lot of internal conflict. It seemed to affect the work and cooperation in a School Culture that believed in inclusion and sought to focus on blending SEN and mainstream education into one education system.

I encouraged SLs to articulate a solution for this issue. One SL commented,

> *Abolishing the reward is the solution, but it should not be done now. They have had it for a long time…All the undergraduate students need to be told that there is no salary bonus and that, if they want to work in this field, they are equal to the mainstream teachers.*

Another SL had a suggestion:

> *I think that we should employ more SEN and mainstream teachers and get rid of this bonus. A lot of graduate teachers do not have jobs. We have 30–40 pupils in one classroom supervised by one teacher; each classroom needs to have one main teacher and two assistants; it would help all the students.*

To this end, the education authority offered the reward to encourage undergraduate students to enrol in the university department. However, the number of graduates from the SEN department is now much higher, and it is clear how this bonus negatively influences the Aldamj as inclusion rather than inspiring more effort.

In this sense, Transformational Leadership theory regarding inspiration is one of the key theory elements to encourage changes in schools. Ingram (1997) states that inclusive practices challenge the status quo, which may frustrate teachers because, for example, changes to instructional methods may require additional planning. Transformational Leadership focusses on an SL's ability to motivate teachers, and the rewards linked to this leadership practice have more affective motivators than tangible rewards because teachers' efforts become self-directed and internalised, providing personal rewards (Ingram, 1997). Bass and Avolio (1994) explain that the assumptions, norms and values that the theory of Transformational Leadership is based on do not prevent teachers from pursuing tangible and financial rewards, but they do make teachers look beyond self-interest and act for the benefit of the organisation.

### 7.1.4. *Understanding of Aldamj as Inclusion*

The education authority's understanding of Aldamj as inclusion seems confusing. As discussed in the second research question in Chapter Five, inclusion needs to be practised by supporting the idea of the preservation of SEN services, such as incorporating new features as support services with cooperation between all school members, and not as complementary additional services just for SEN. Unfortunately, at the individual interviews stage, many SLs described mainstream teachers' support for the students labelled with ID with the phrase '*be thankful to do that*'; in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) culture, this phrase suggests that mainstream teachers should not have a role in supporting the SEN programme; they are volunteering, and the school, SEN teachers, students labelled with ID and their parents should be grateful for it.

The SLs' input in the focus groups discussions led to the interpretation that this issue is encouraged by the education authority. One SL said:

> *The teachers keep saying, 'This is my student, and this is yours'.…Who is the victim when the SEN teacher is absent? [with a sad expression] The students with ID and their mothers. The ID student gets a feeling—she feels that the mainstream teacher rejects her.*

Another SL also indicated the same concern, but related to SEN teachers. She said,

> *The students are confused; they do not know who their teacher is. If the* mainstream students *ask the SEN teacher for anything during lesson, she says, 'Go to your teacher'. They feel that she is not is not part of their classroom.*

These SLs described the effect of a School Culture of uncooperativeness on the classroom culture, where the teacher puts up barriers between her and the students, which affects how the students feel. I expect this makes them think that the teacher dislikes them. This is the case not only for the teachers but also other employees who perceive that they only support specific groups of students. One SL said in the individual interview,

> *There is a gap between the social instructor and psychologist because one of them thinks that she should only be responsible for the mainstream students. Just because the psychologist is employed in the SEN programme. But all the students need her support.*

These significant obstacles to cultural change were created due to the separation instituted and encouraged by the education authority. The education authority's confusing understanding of Aldamj as inclusion seems unclear, and it encourages school members to work separately—especially the SEN and mainstream teachers. However, the previous example in question 3 shows how both can work together, where the SEN teachers learn from the mainstream teachers, and at the same time, mainstream teachers with less experience can learn from SEN teachers and from the students labelled ID when they are in one classroom.

Based on my interpretation, both in the focus groups and individual interviews, several reasons for this developed thereafter. These are described below.

*First*, the salary bonus for SEN teachers and not mainstream teachers, as previously discussed, is an incentive that could be awarded to a mainstream teacher only if a SEN teacher is not present in the same classroom. For example, one SL said,

> *The SEN teachers are not allowed to be with the mainstream teacher if she is receiving the salary incentive...I visited one of the lessons, and the ID students either sleep or misbehave because the mainstream teacher ignores them; she cannot cope with all the students by herself.*

Another SL commented,

> *The belief behind this statement was that it was not beneficial to have two teachers together, as she [the supervisor] preferred to divide the lesson to limit teachers' work hours.*

*Second,* having two supervisors from two separate education departments is a further issue. Each supervisor comes on a different day and gives the school members different instructions. The limited communication between the SEN and mainstream supervisors affects the Inclusive School Culture, leading to an exacerbated separation between mainstream and SEN teachers. One SL, speaking angrily, remarked,

> *The preschool supervisor came to the school and gave mainstream teachers instructions, and then the SEN supervisor came and gave teachers different instructions. Why?! Why aren't they the same? How can they believe in Aldamj but act in ways entirely opposed to it?*

Another SL commented,

> *A few months ago, mainstream supervision visited one of my classrooms, and she was not happy that two ID students were in the class because they were not behaving well...That affected the mainstream teacher's evaluation...requesting their relocation to a separate classroom.*

*Finally*, the education authority differentiates between SEN and mainstream teachers in holidays and school time, as explained by one SL in her individual interview:

> *How do you want them to cooperate with each other if the education authority treats them differently? Last week, the ID teachers left for an early summer holiday. Why don't the mainstream teachers get that? They both teach in one classroom.*

She added,

> *The ID students leave one hour before their peers because of the crowds, but why does the SEN teacher also leave early?...If the ID students are absent, the SEN teacher refuses to enter the classroom...They keep saying, 'Their students, our students'. This is the phrase that the SEN supervisor used with them.*

Another example in the individual interview showed how the education system can affect the cooperative School Culture. The SL stated,

> *It was the recommendation of the SEN supervisor that the new vice-principal was to be responsible only for the SEN teachers; she calls her the 'Aldamj vice-principal'.*

Focusing on the language used by SEN supervisors to reflect the school system, evidently it can be argued that if someone believes another person is responsible for carrying out an action, then it may never be executed (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). In such situations, Ingram (1997) argues that inclusion depends not only on the commitment of individual teachers but also on mutual support, a commitment to find creative solutions and the desire to form collaborative relationships and share ownership. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) and Miravet and García (2013) state that an efficient method of building an School Culture was through Transformational Leadership motivating teachers to work together to exchange ideas, support innovation and observe each other's lessons, which differs fundamentally from the isolation of teachers in the traditional organisational School Structure.

### 7.1.5. *Consider the Practical Meaning of 'School Leader'*

The SLs did not consider the practical meaning of the new job title 'School Leader'. As discussed in the literature review, there are significant differences between *leading* and *managing* a school. As Doyle (2004) explains, school administration was developed on the foundation of management theories, causing certain school principals to think that their primary responsibility was to *manage* the school. However, as leadership theories have become more commonly adopted, principals are increasingly seen as community builders. Doyle (2004) emphasises more that the transition from 'manager' to 'leader' is marked by a radical shift in how principals think and act.

In this study, the SLs were responsible for being the cultural leaders of the school and developing it into a community of learners. Since terminological misunderstandings (i.e. 'leader' vs. 'manager') can affect how people act, I sought to explore what the SLs thought about this change. I asked, 'Now that the education authority has changed the school principals' titles from "managers" to "leaders," have you found that the change has affected your roles?' The group discussion raised different views on the issue, and the responses are outlined below.

One SL focussed on how the leader's job title marginalises others, perceiving that each school employee has her own roles, and they focus on managing their work. She said,

> *Leading them means that I am controlling them. I do not accept that at all…I found that the title 'school manager' has a lot of credibility; the school is a place I have to manage, and everyone has his or her own work.*

Moreover, another two SLs focussed on how the term gave them social benefits, but this had negative results. One said,

> *The term 'leader' implies that you are a person with power, and it makes the people around you worry.*

Another SL related to this. She said,

> *I think the change is to improve the principals' social status, as 'leader' is a nicer word than 'manager', but where are we? Are we in a war? [dissatisfied tone] It distracts us from the educational aspect.*

Another two SLs expressed the same idea when I asked about the change in the evaluation criteria. One stated,

> *Nothing has changed, not even the evaluation criteria. They just asked us to go through the school files and change the term 'principal' to 'leader'.*

The other SL said:

> *The education authority suddenly changed it two years ago, without providing any explanation or training…Yesterday, they called me 'principal' and now they call me 'leader'.*

The above examples from the focus groups demonstrate that the new job title was unclear; for them it was just a name. It seemed that they did not have a clear conception of their roles as leaders; for some of them, it was just hard work, going through the school files and changing the term 'manager' to 'leader' on the paperwork. Some thought that it offered them more in terms of ability, improved their social standings, made them more distinguished and would increase their salaries. Others, however, perceived that the job title gave them a power that marginalised the people around them.

Unfortunately, the new job title did not reflect most of the SLs' practices, because the education authority focussed on paper and names, and as they said, if they were aiming for an educational reform, they should have guided them on the characteristics of a leader.

Another two SLs—although they were unhappy with how the education authority changed the name without giving any explanation or more authority—had the divergent opinion that leading a school is more than simply managing. In my view, this is more related to encouraging Inclusive School Culture. One said,

> *I like to be the leader. I see myself doing humanitarian work. I am not just a principal.*

The other SL agreed with this:

> *I prefer the term 'leader'. In one week, I learned the organising job, such as the receiving and sending formal letters. School principals need to lead people; this is the hardest work we do.*

These two participants were more open to the new job title. To them, the notion of a leader makes the role seem different; it becomes more practical because it highlights the importance of their roles in leading people. They preferred to hold the new title as a 'leader' as a more inclusive understanding that SLs were responsible for leading work *and* people.

From the previous study results, responding to changing needs requires transformational models of leadership, not the traditional (management) forms of leadership (Angelides, 2011). Thus, to reform a school and make it more inclusive, a school principal needs not only to be an administrator/manger but also the leader. This dual role is a critical part of reforming a school's beliefs to create a hospitable environment for SEN services (Hudgins, 2012).

### 7.1.6. *Accepting Students with Substantial Needs*

The SEN teachers did not accept students with substantial needs, as explained in the response to the first research question (in Chapter Four). I raised this issue in the focus groups to further understand it, and some of the SLs' responses are discussed next.

The education authority made the positive step of removing the intelligence quotient (IQ) assessment, moving away from unfair treatment according to test results. One of the most shocking findings from the individual interviews was that many of the SEN teachers refused to teach students who had been diagnosed with or demonstrated more substantial (severe) needs rather than merely mild ID or students who took more time to react and learn.

One SL indicated how she did not expect SEN teachers to refuse students labelled with ID, explaining how they gave many excuses. She thought that this was correct as the SEN teacher is the specialist in the field; she trusts the SEN teacher to know if a student is beyond her abilities in her role, however, she did share that she viewed it as a rejection. She said,

> *I had expected that rejection would come from the mainstream teachers. They [the SEN teachers] said this is not the place for them, or they are not suitable for Aldamj, or that they did not know how to teach them...I personally thought that what they said was correct.*

During the individual interviews, some SLs used the phrase 'slightly severe'. One SL commented,

> *They [SEN teachers] sometimes gave a diagnosis at first sight if the student showed a slightly severe form. At the first meeting with the student...they say, 'She is autistic', even if they see only one sign of autism.*

The use of the phrase 'slightly severe' puts the student labelled with ID in a position of personal interpretation due to the subjective term 'slightly'. This SL said that, when the SEN teachers recognised that a student had different abilities than the students they had accepted before, they would view the student as someone else's responsibility.

Another SL indicated that if the students does not fit in the SEN teacher's mould, she would refuse him. She stated,

> *Every morning she kept complaining about the student...pointing at the student with unaccepting voice, saying he cannot understand...then how do you want him to achieve...She [the SEN teacher] try to show that I don't have knowledge in the SEN field, and I should not to accept the ID students...You are not just a curriculum, you work with human beings...Simply, she doesn't want the headache.*

This SL thought that the SEN teacher's way of dealing with the student labelled with ID was the reason for not being able to make any progress. The SL even tried to explain that teachers are not responsible for the curriculum only – *'you work with human beings'*. This seems to me to place importance on treating the student labelled with ID with care and kindness in order for them to be able to achieve. The SEN teacher kept rejecting this, expressing simply that she 'doesn't want a headache'—referring to not wanting to take on too much work.

During one of the individual interview discussions, questioning me, the SL said:

> *Are they actually taught at the university how to teach girls like they do at the special schools? Answering herself, she said, Yes, some of our SEN teachers did teach at SEN schools for severe SEN before moving to a mainstream setting.*

This SL later recognised during the individual interview that some of the SEN teachers in her school were qualified to teach 'trainable' students, as they worked at SEN schools, and contradicted her earlier statement that not all students labelled with ID could be taught

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in mainstream schools, because SEN teachers are not sufficiently qualified for students labelled trainable.

Based on the individual interviews and the examples provided above, I noticed that some SLs had the idea that SEN teachers in the field of ID are not prepared to teach students diagnosed with various forms of ID, from mild to "severe". From my university lecturing experience, I can see that the SLs were not aware that every SEN teacher who graduates in the field of ID has studied all forms of disability, even the most substantial (severe) needs. More specifically, SEN/ID teachers in mainstream schools and SEN/ID teachers in SEN schools graduated from the same university courses, and therefore, are equally trained.

Moreover, as explained in relation to the first research question (Chapter Four), the education authority's SEN supervisors encourage those who hold traditional ways of thinking about SEN, believing that students labelled with moderate to "severe" ID should be placed in their own SEN setting. Due to the fact that just parents who have students labelled with mild ID usually request to enrol their children in mainstream schools, and the number of SEN students in mainstream school should not be higher than 20%. This is why students with substantial (severe) needs, in most cases, are sent to SEN schools.

Therefore, it is possible to infer from the results of the study that some SEN teachers prefer the mainstream setting because they prefer teaching students with mild ID needs only, which is less effort for them.

What is especially confusing, as the first question showed, is that even in primary schools with separate SEN classrooms, the SEN teachers refused to teach students with more substantial needs, who they refer to as having 'slightly severe' ID. They unfortunately not valuing their abilities, requested to send them to the SEN school, although there are no

meaningful differences between the SEN schools and the separate SEN classrooms in mainstream schools.

### 7.1.7. *Changing Staff Beliefs and Thoughts*

The SLs found it difficult to change staff beliefs and thoughts. As outlined in the preface, the most challenging question is whether SLs have an entitlement to intentionally change school members' beliefs and to control the School Culture. Such control has often led to violent measures against cultural properties; sometimes, cultures are so entrenched that change for the better seems impossible, unpredictable, and often, uncomfortable. However, as I explained from a social justice perspective, issues like inclusion are not personal issues—they are human rights that are applicable everywhere, and schools need a culture that believes in that.

Elaborating on the relationship between inclusion and social justice, Kenworthy and Whittaker (2000) outline human rights as self-evident, meaning that they do not require regulation, policies or proof. Students should be granted these rights irrespective of their gender, race, religion or needs. This means that human rights are moral principles that should be seen as natural rights for all, solely because they are human. Tassoni (2003) also argues that students labelled with SEN should not have to hope that a school accepts them; all students' (abilities and) needs should be valued from the beginning. This means Aldamj as inclusion then refuses the idea of students labelled with ID being seen as a burden or as wasting teachers' time; neighbourhood schools are schools for all learners.

As explained many times in this thesis, inclusion is not like integration as a programme or approach, but a way of thinking, in changing the School Culture to become inclusive. Theoharis (2007) states that transformation involves change, which can in turn create destabilisation and stress. McMaster (2013) also explains that the term inclusion is a

spectrum rather than a target, it encompasses all members of society, continuing to explore meanings, deepen values and dismantle ways of thinking to create a vision for creating their own model, based on specific needs. McMaster argues that this should move away from concepts, such as 'normalisation' and past ideas that separate education is acceptable, instead valuing social justice as the vital component that steadily expands perceptions and changes thinking.

During the individual interviews, many SLs expressed their displeasure with the behaviours of some of their teachers—such as disagreement with the SLs' ideas; refusing to be active in their work; and the issue that appeared most throughout the individual interviews and the focus groups, the reluctance of some of the teachers to make any changes or work harder towards a common goal (even their normal jobs). This is seen as a further barrier to building Inclusive School Culture. Which mean that SLs need to work on their school members' ways of thinking of disability and inclusion to achieve inclusive practices.

However, one part of the focus groups result has caused me to infer that some SLs are just focussed on expressing to these teachers what behaviour is expected from them. They did not think that their teachers' behaviours were a reflection of more than merely a pattern of thought of disability and inclusion; missing the aspect of focussing on enhancing their belief in the importance of changing their actions in a way that encourages inclusive practices. Their inaction allowed the School Culture to deteriorate.

The focus groups participants had conflicting ideas about this issue; some indicated that it was difficult to change what their staff believed. For example, one SL said,

> *It is difficult...the problem is that I agree that I can't succeed if she keeps behaving in this way...When she 'believes' in her own rules, she will act on her own initiative.*

Another SL shared the same idea, stating,

> *There are impossible personal patterns that I cannot change...I prefer to remove the teachers than try to change their attitudes.*

This SL found it difficult to change personal patterns of thinking, and would prefer to move the teacher to another school than try to change her way of thinking. With wishing to move these teachers, I can highlight her concern: SLs may ignore some of their school staff who are unresponsive to the effort of change, but the crucial problem is that they may spread their negative rejection and ideas to others, and this will become a part of the School Culture.

Some other SLs in the focus groups disputed this view. For example, one stated,

> *It is more difficult to change the systems, but it is possible to change ideas. We are religious people; our Islamic faith should change us...It is not easy, but it is worth it...The more you know about your school, the more you deal with it.*

This SL agree that beliefs can be changed. They point out that it is not easy, but it is worthwhile. She views systems as harder to change than patterns of thinking, which elaborates on how changing School Culture can be controlled by the SL; however, the school system controlled by education authority takes longer to change. This was especially clear when she said, '*The more you know about your school, the more you deal with it*'. Her statement declares that a deep understanding of the School Culture can help deal with everyday difficulties, and make them more able to develop.

The discussion made the participants share examples with one another. Some SLs shared their experiences on how resisting change is a barrier to inclusive practices with the group.

One SL shared her experiences of how communication can help to find the best way for each school member to support change. She commented,

> *I have a teacher who does not act like a SEN teacher. She just wants to leave school early…This affects the entire school, not just me…I tried to understand her behaviour. People have different ways of thinking, and I kept trying to understand her, and what exactly she prefers. I asked her for advice about school activities for me to gain her trust... I saw some change, but I am hoping for more.*

She shows how communication with the teacher is necessary to benefit the student with ID. Her story shows that the SL believe School Culture develops and changes while the members of a school interact, exchange and reflect on their interactions with others. This is also confirmed by Fullan (2001) and Gruenert and Whitaker (2015), who state that an School Culture develops as the group responds to daily challenges in its environment. Moreover, Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) emphasise that a deep analysis of the reasons behind certain behaviours is the answer to School Culture development; these behaviours should be rewarded and encouraged to acquire effectual results. This is reflected in the SL's statement, '*I viewed some change but I am hoping for more*'.

From the above discussion, I can infer that using forceful pressure may not be desirable and is beyond the philosophy of inclusion. This means using persuasive methods to implement Inclusive School Culture, discussing it with those who are opposing collaboration.

Accordingly, SLs should be at the forefront in making schools more equitable (Theoharis, 2007). However, not every SL is capable of engaging in this social justice perspective. For cultural change to be inclusive, it requires risk-tasking for as long as is needed. Thus, from the second sub-question within the third research question results (Chapter Six), Transformational Leadership can be seen as a leading style that focuses on how norms,

beliefs and habits of thought can gradually change practices; and it can be adopted to overcome resistance and drive reforms.

### 7.1.8. *Weak Parent–School Relationships*

Many SLs during the individual interviews argue that, unlike in the past, parents who have children labelled with ID want their children to be included in mainstream schools. This occurs for several reasons, as SLs explained: because they want them to interact with mainstream peers away from isolated schools; because they see it as beneficial for them to be with their siblings; or even because they want the people around them to know that their children labelled with ID are attending a mainstream school. This issue has not been considered from parents' perspectives but have been inferred by some SLs' responses during the individual interview's conversation. For example, one SL said,

> *A lot of parents have asked me to open a SEN programme in my school because my school is closer to them. Not only that, having their sisters in the same school helps the ID student a lot...Seeing their daughters happy with their sisters around, they reflect on them as well.*

This SL shows how parents who have students labelled with ID want their children to be with their siblings in the same school. From her view I can see that this helps their children to become more confident and make more friends during breaktime. This example also shows how this reflects positively on parents.

In another example, the SL said that, for some parents, to have their children in a mainstream school is what they desire, viewing inclusion as a cure and referring to it as a way to support their children to learn quickly from mainstream peers. She explained,

> *Even if we do not have a psychologist or any other specialist, communication, they don't care; they say they can provide other services after school just to accept their children Aldamj with mainstream peers is a cure to them.*

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Another SL also indicated how some parents take a long journey everyday if the school is far from their homes. She explained,

> *Two students with ID have physical disabilities…If I don't accept them, the parents will move them to a private mainstream school, and that is so expensive. Their neighbourhood is very far away…The mother views her experiences in the SEN centre as unjust.*

As explained in the first research question in Chapter Four, some individual interviews illustrated that some parents who showed concern about accepting their children labelled with ID in a mainstream school often do not try to become involved in their children's school or advocate for more support to be provided. This is because they are afraid that the school would retaliate by moving their children to a SEN school. To them, enrolling their children in a mainstream school is the only sole aim, it is like going to war with the school. During some individual interviews, some of the SLs stated that they occasionally contacted parents and tried to persuade them to transfer their children to a SEN school. Naturally, this attitude affected school–parent relationships. For example, in the individual interviews, one SL said:

> *We have a girl that we are not able to categorise; we have contacted the mother several times, and I feel that she is lying. Thus, we put the girl under the microscope. She attended a special centre for one year. Her father went to the education authority to ask for place in our school in Y4 as we have an SEN classroom in our school…In the first few months, the girl was calm, without showing any issues, but now she hits both students and teachers; the SEN teachers started to fear her. The psychologist has repeatedly asked the mother to come and provide information on any kind of treatment she may be on…but she refused…We are insisting…that our school is not good for her, to take her back to the specialised centre.*

This SL emphasises that her school assumes that the parents are administering medicine to the student to calm them down during the school day, waiting for any signs of hyperactivity to support their decision to transfer them to the SEN school. This SL in

saying, '*I feel that she is lying. Thus, we put the girl under the microscope*', reveals the School Culture in this school. It is not inclusive in any way to put a parent in a position of refusing to be clear about their child's health and worrying that the school would reject their child, working hard to disguise any signs of disability. From my point of view, parents are wrong in doing this, as they prevent their child from accessing the support they need and are entitled to, but in reality, this is out of their hands.

This story provides another example of the Affirmation Model (AM) of disability, in terms of the need to make parents accept their child's disability, feel more confident in speaking, be proud and happy about their child's abilities, and request the support needed. Loreman (2007) states that one of the most core part in the school community are parents and to creating the School Culture of inclusion, with an important to change in the beliefs held by school staff, who should not just accept but actively *welcome* parents as decision maker. Doyle and Doyle (2003) focus on empowering parents in schools as caring communities by allowing them to share decision making, Then, if mainstream schools want to meet each students own abilities, Wang (2009) argues then teachers and parents should make decisions together, where parents are having an  influence on educational outcomes of their children and support their inclusion.

From the above examples, and from the third research question result in Chapter Six, one aspect related to Inclusive School Culture concerns the parents of students labelled with ID. In Inclusive School Culture, parents should not feel discriminated against; they should feel as welcome as all the other parents. In addition, from my experience, parents are more likely to support the education of their children if they have the chance to be active contributors in education practices. They become happy to participate in the planning process, and subsequently in implementation. Therefore, as explained above Francis, et

al. (2016) declare, for inclusion to be successful, parents should be motivated to talk to the school about their children, express their feelings and participate in making decisions.

### 7.1.9. *The Procedural Guides*

The SEN and Mainstream Procedural Guide (2013, 2014) can hinder efforts to build an Inclusive School Culture, as mentioned in Chapter One. A review of the KSA's SEN policies towards inclusion (see Chapter One) shows the contradiction between the orientation in these policies and the procedures used in the SEN and mainstream schools Procedural Guide for schools with a SEN programme. More specifically, one of the focus group discussions has led me to consider how the SEN Procedural Guide can hinder efforts to build Inclusive School Culture. One SL commented,

> *The guide is just a structural organisational document. What about where I am in the field?...Every mainstream teacher teaches 24 lessons per week. For me, that is too much. I wanted to reduce this number, so I tried to swap the ID teacher with one of the mainstream teachers, but she [the supervisor] refused because of the guide… I also have more SEN teachers than students with ID. Why can't I give them a few mainstream classrooms? Because of the guide.*

This SL seemed to find that, for the School Culture to be inclusive, it needs to be more flexible. This underlined that she usually faced problems not covered by the guide. She saw it as a structural guide, not including all aspects required, and provided an example of where the guide was not helpful in solving a certain issue in her school.

Another SL stated,

> *The guide is just a few pages with general information about Aldamj and the roles of the teachers and staff...The two guides do not agree with each other [referring to SEN and mainstream preschool guides]. If they do not agree with each other, how do they want us to agree? For example, the preschool guide says that there should be 24 students per classroom. The SEN guide says there should be only 15 students.*

This SL explained how the SEN and the mainstream preschool guides are in conflict, and how this can affect leading for change. Thus, the study result shows that for School Culture to be inclusive, it cannot be based on one the guide, but on the SL as a Transformational Leader (see Chapter Six, research question three), She continued, saying,

> *The education authority will hold you accountable if you do something that is not in this guide…They will explain it as if they want to make it illegal. 'Who allowed you? Who told you to do that?' I did what I did for the good of the school.*

She added that the guide does not provide in detail about Aldamj, but the supervisors interpreted it as a means of accountability. The SL underlined that the guide does not suit the principles of a mainstream school but more those of an SEN school setting; as a consequence, this may lead to school members having to *personally interpret* and adapt based on their School Culture, which may not suitable for inclusion practices.

Another SL agreed that if they do something without the educational authority's permission, the measure will be rejected. She remarked,

> *If a teacher comes to me and says, 'I want to add something new in the curriculum, the supervisor will say that she needs to follow the SEN national curriculum, or the teacher and I will get a negative evaluation'.*

This SL also shows how her staff did not have the chance to show initiative. Her example critically shows that she should become the guide for the other school members, depending on her school's *needs*, not on a guide that inhibits their action. As previously stated, Dyson and Gains (1993) argue that the inclusive moves power away from educational authorities to schools, allowing schools to interpret and adapt the curriculum for their students.

Unfortunately, towards the end of the discussion, some SLs in the group underlined their preference for separated SEN classrooms to prevent these conflicting issues. One SL said,

> *I prefer the SEN classrooms, each teacher in her classroom, to being confused between the contents of the two guides.*

From the discussion above, it is clear that the guide prevented the school staff from reforming the school and limited the extent to which SLs could independently control their schools. It is possible to infer that the education authority's SEN supervisors, by having this guide, wanted to create a single standardised school system that would be easily controllable. However, in the case of inclusion, *no single recipe* (or guide) can be used.

Moreover, the education authority needs to focus on the quality of a School Culture, as the guide diminished the SL and staff enthusiasm and motivation. Nobody wanted to be accountable for advocating for the rights of students labelled with ID or for being creative. The guide has cultivated the idea that doing nothing is better than doing something that could garner negative attention – the language of 'just do your job' is far from inclusive practice. Providing education for all requires initiative.

In a similar sense, McMaster (2013) states that SLs, in attempting to restructure their schools, are affected by external systems which may act as a barrier to the inclusive practices advocated in the Salamanca Statement. Thus, for educational reform to be inclusive, SLs should not wait for instructions from the authorities; they should act independently and respond to local circumstances (Bush, 2007), as sometime external system restricts the changes needed.

Angelides (2011) states that forms of leadership to support inclusion, attempting to understand the local context, facilitate and accommodate the needed for school

inclusiveness. Which mean that decisions should be made in response to the particular school context/idiosyncrasies (which I refer to as 'Mainstream School's Needs').

### 7.1.10. *Specialised Knowledge for School Leaders*

The SLs lacked knowledge about SEN services, and consequently, did not feel confident enough to discuss ID issues with the SEN teachers. As explained above, sometimes, when the education authority supervisors trust the SLs—or just want to complete paper evaluations—they give SLs more flexibility for leading for change. This therefore led me to ask why SLs waited for instructions and the permission of the education authority and do not act for leading for change.

During data analysis I found that this may be because of the lack of knowledge of SEN services, which is the final issue that emerged. Some SLs did not feel confident enough to discuss ID issues with the SEN teachers, and this affected their ability to make a decision.

In one of the group discussions with the SLs, I encouraged them to speak more volubly and provide various examples that helped me to see the lack of experiences which can affect leading for change. One SL said that she wanted to see a sign of SEN in the classrooms. I tried to encourage the discussion by asking her to explain what kind of SEN teaching she meant. She said,

> *I want to see a sign of SEN in the classroom, beautiful activities that would grab your attention, such as SEN technology, tangible things…I do not know, special teachers need to provide special services.*

This SL seemed only to focus on the material provided rather than the SEN teachers' skills for learning. I kept asking the group participants to give a more detailed explanation, but they were not confident enough to explain further. This interaction led me to suspect

that some of the SLs used the term 'specialised' without considering its meaning. Another SL responded frankly:

> *Most principals are not able to lead Aldamj because most of us were originally mainstream teachers. I do not have much experience in individual plans or how they should teach, so I cannot assess their work...I do not have a form to evaluate the SEN teachers.*

This SL was clearly not happy because she did not have enough knowledge about SEN services. She described the lack of evaluation forms or adequate experience as unjust not only for the teacher, but also for the school and the students labelled with ID, because the situation means SLs are unable to follow their progress.

Other SLs confirmed the need to be more controlling in their schools, stating that evaluation forms give them a chance to have a role in SEN services. One SL commented,

> *How was I supposed to know that they learned how to plan, manage behaviours, and teach group lessons? I thought that they did individual special teaching and nothing more…Do not say [education authority supervisor] that we have Aldamj and then leave us without the ability to control our school…Luckily, I sometimes know about the things I am supposed to do.*

Another SL remarked,

> *A few days ago, the SEN supervisor called and told me to let the ID teachers know, so that they could prepare their individual plans to evaluate them. I let them know, and suddenly, one of the SEN teachers said, 'How can she come when we have not started yet?' I asked her, 'Why haven't you started?' She said, 'She did not give us the students' reading assessment'... Really, I did not know what she was talking about. I was shocked. 'This is the end of the first term. How haven't you started? Why did you not say that before?'...How can I, as you said, improve my school if I do not know what they are doing?*

This again confirms the SL's lack of experience due to not being involved in SEN services. In this SL's situation, the scales are part of the university curriculum and training

models. It was unacceptable to her to consider how these teachers are able to graduate and still not have this assessment scale.

It can be seen that the dialogue in the focus groups showed some paradoxes: the SLs wanted the authority to run their schools as they see fit, but they also did not feel confident or knowledgeable enough to run the Aldamj as inclusion. However, from the above discussion, it is clear that although they had had the SEN programme for a long time, these SLs did not have enough involvement in the SEN services, since the education authority's SEN supervisors were the ones to evaluate the SEN teachers. The lack of knowledge did not just cause the SLs to lack confidence in leading for change; it could be a reason why some SLs denied any responsibility for the success of Aldamj in their schools.

During the individual interviews, I asked the SLs to explain who, from their point of view, is responsible for the success of Aldamj. One SL said,

> *The ones most directly responsible are the ID teachers, who are specialised.*

Another SL stated,

> *Without the ID teachers and the psychologist, I would be lost. The problem is that the SEN teachers know that we do not know as much as they know; they try to show that we are not capable of leading the SEN programme.*

However, another SL in one of the group discussions highlighted that SLs do not need to leave the responsibility to teachers and other members of staff, and they do not need to depend on self-development. She commented,

> *Everything has a leader…What I feel bad about is that we need to know more and to do more; it is all about lack of knowledge. I was not provided any kind of training [in leading for inclusion], but I keep reading…asking people in the*

*school or outside about ID and what I should do as a leader in Aldamj...These students make me feel happy and are the source of most of the job satisfaction.*

With regards to leading for change, this statement showed that SLs should not depend on SEN teachers or other specialists; they need to take the initiative to encourage inclusive education.

**7.1.11.** *New Staff with Different School Cultures*

During the individual interviews, the term 'delegate teacher' was frequently used, designating a teacher who usually stayed for a year to provide support, then returns to her home school. These new members of staff arrived from schools with different School Cultures. The SLs found that they faced many issues caused by these new members of staff, who came from different schools with markedly different School Cultures. Thus, during one focus group, the SLs shared some example stories. One stated,

> *I had two new teachers that came with ideas that were different from our schools. They did not want to do anything, and they kept pushing other teachers to do the same. They understood that moving to a different school as delegate teacher allowed them to go on the Delegate Mission[2]...The problem is that they are here for only one year, how can they send a SEN teacher for one year and then, when the students have finally become used to her, send her back to her school?*

She added, in an unhappy tone,

> *They move her to another school because she is not comfortable. Please, this is not right. The education authority needs to know that she works for the students. I can handle her behaviour, but the ID students should not have to. She is not there to enjoy her school day...This is where the teacher's manners and values are important. She is their second mother. In this way, we neglect the students that we have built the SEN programme for.*

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[2] This refers to a salary increase and two-week holiday.

This SL was concerned about students labelled with ID, viewing the delegate teacher measure as not suitable for these students. She showed strong views when she said she may be handling the delegate teacher's behaviour, but the student labelled with ID should not. With that, she was requesting that the education authority employ teachers that stay with the students labelled with ID rather than moving from one school to another just because they are not comfortable in their school. She concluded with a reminder to the education authority that '*we neglect the students that we have built the SEN programme for*', suggesting that the education authority does not care if she actually helps the students labelled with ID.

Another SLs also conveyed her concerns, showing how they are not accepting when the SEN delegate teacher disrupts their efforts by making comparisons with their previous schools. For example, one SL said,

> *The School Culture can really be affected...the problem is that I need her [the delegate teacher]. I requested a SEN teacher. They [education authority] should send the best to me. They just sent any SEN teacher...She came and kept asking for many things, for example, 'If you want me to teach your students, you should change my timetable so that my classes are in the morning and I leave school early'. We requested her to help, not to change the school timetable.*

Another SL described her situation, worrying that the delegate teachers make her school just like the schools in the villages:

> *Usually, the delegate teachers come from the villages around schools. One teacher asked me, 'Do you really have lessons in this preschool for students with ID?' Can you believe that they treat the school as a playground?' I do not care for my sake, I am worried about the students, especially the ID students. They treat the ID students as though they are nuisances.*

Another SL provided her story concerning delegate mainstream teachers rather than delegate SEN teachers:

*My school was running well until the delegate mainstream teachers came… They want to follow their own routines. They think that we should not have the SEN programme because it creates more work…They do not say that to me, though, they say it to other teachers. 'God help you! Oooh, how you are handling having them'.*

The above examples demonstrate that SLs were worried about delegate teachers coming from other schools, which may confuse their School Culture of inclusiveness. From this, it is possible to infer that, despite the *unified* character of the KSA national education system based on educational policies, the delegate teachers who come from other schools have a different job orientation. This confirms that the School Culture is crucial in school members' actions, more so than the unified school system is.

Others worried that the delegate teachers were not chosen based on their experience, but simply because they wanted to spend some time away from their schools and receive the benefits of the Delegate Mission. This shows that the education authority does not care if they can support the education of the students labelled with ID with this measure. In the same sense, Bass and Avolio (1994) state that schools sometimes have no choice but to accept these teachers, who may not have similar values to those in the organisation's culture. However, they add that changing relies on the SLs' ability to guide the evolution of their teachers' assumptions and values. As Finnan and Levin (2000) illustrate, new participants in the school—with certain expectations of their role—will leave if they do not accept the School Culture and cannot adapt; this is because a school has *great stability* in its School Culture, which protects the school from changing their values and beliefs.

### 7.2. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the main issues affecting practices related to encouraging Inclusive School Culture when leading for change. SLs were seen to become aware of the importance of their School Culture for inclusive practices, and of the development of

School Culture as complementary to inclusion. SLs also encountered obstacles while trying to reform their schools, leading to significant difficulties and conflicts, and creating complex relationships between the education authority, SLs, SEN teachers, mainstream teachers, and parents. This make students labelled with ID are caught between mainstream schools' refusal, parents' wish for including and education authority practices.

The study found 11 issues in the mainstream school setting that affected inclusion. The education authority, for example, ignored a key element of the SLs' evaluation criteria that was not changed when the Adamj was established in their schools. This reinforced their perception of their performance in the SEN programme for inclusion practices. Moreover, the education authority's misunderstanding of inclusion affects cooperation between mainstream and SEN teachers in an inclusive classroom culture. As illustrated in their examples, this encourages other school members to work separately and refuse to be part of including students labelled with ID. One factor contributing to the misunderstanding is the education authority having two supervisors: SEN and mainstream. Each supervisor attends on a different day and gives school members different instructions. This limited communication affects the Inclusive School Culture, exacerbating the separation of these teachers.

Other issues that are seen as crucial included parents' cooperation, which is fundamental for achieving inclusive education. Many parents of students labelled with ID were seen as uncooperative, however this could be indicative of a School Culture that makes parents feel unwelcome. The unwelcoming School Culture may cause parents to be less involved in their children's education.

Moreover, SLs are expected to understand the meaning of leading a school to promote a culture of inclusive practice, which seemed to be a huge challenge for many. SLs did not consider the practical meaning of the title 'School Leader', but there are noteworthy differences between leading and managing a school in promoting School Culture; the leaders offer direction and some level of control, ensuring inclusivity is realised. The final issue to emerge is that new staff came from schools with different cultures, assumptions and beliefs, which affected how a School Culture for inclusiveness was promoted. This can affect the Inclusive School Culture, and the school experience for students labelled with ID.

This brings my thesis to the final review of the study's results, a discussion of the contributions to the literature and practice.

*Chapter Eight*

## Study's Conclusion and Contributions

### 8.1. Introduction

In this study, I sought to explore the School Culture of mainstream schools with Special Educational Needs (SEN) programmes named Aldamj in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for students labelled with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) from the School Leaders' (SLs') perspectives by accomplishing the following:

- Exploring how the SLs conceptualise disability and inclusion and how this influences the school lives of students labelled with ID (whether their understanding is robust enough to ensure an Inclusive School Culture) where students labelled with ID are not just placed but, also feel included;

- Exploring how the SLs operationalise aspects of Inclusive School Culture when leading for change according to Transformational Leadership theory and;

- Exploring the issues that SLs have faced while developing their Inclusive School Culture.

These study aims are addressed through the questions and descriptions outlined below.

*Q1: How are the cultures of mainstream schools with SEN programmes influenced by SLs' conceptualisations of disability?*

This research question's aim was elucidating how SLs' conceptualisations of disability reflected on the cultures of mainstream schools. In other words, I wanted to see if SLs' conceptualisations of disability encouraged the achievement of inclusive practices.

*Q2: How do SLs conceptualise inclusion (Aldamj) as the foundation of an Inclusive School Culture?*

Seeking to address the issue related to the focus on achieving an *integration* approach (physical placement) in mainstream schools in the KSA rather than inclusion, this research question aimed at exploring how SLs conceptualise الدمج (Aldamj) to understand whether their conceptualisations promote the development of an Inclusive School Culture in which students labelled with ID feel included.

*Q3: What Leading for change actions are taken by the SLs to promote Inclusive School Culture development?*

This research question aimed to view how SLs conceptualise School Culture versus School Structure changes while supporting inclusive educational reforms. To encourage Inclusive School Culture when leading for change, this research question also encapsulated the aim of employing Transformational Leadership theory to operationalise aspects of Inclusive School Culture.

*Q4: From the SLs' perspectives, what issues do they face while developing Inclusive School Culture aspects?*

This final research question aimed to gain data from SLs about the obstacles they faced while enhancing their Inclusive School Culture.

This chapter illustrates my study's contributions that have been afforded in answering the above research questions and identifies many significant areas where gaps in the existing literature, as reviewed in Chapter Two, have been filled. This includes key contributions to the literature, undergraduate university modules, 'leading for change' practices and future research.

## 8.2. Contributions to the Literature

Once published, this thesis will be accessible by the public to view the theoretical findings. The theoretical findings can enhance researchers' understandings in Disability Studies, SEN and Educational Leadership. The theoretical findings can also be utilised by policymakers in the educational authority and key educational practitioners like SLs to enhance inclusive education practices. These theoretical implications are as follows:

1. In the Literature Review in Chapter Two, a theoretical framework explains the research problem under study related to School Culture, School Structure, Inclusive School Culture and Leading for Change was presented; these topics have not been studied in the KSA's SEN literature before in the context of mainstream schools that provide SEN services for students with SEN/ID in the KSA; this is therefore a key contribution to the literature;

2. The term 'mainstream schools' as used by SLs was found to be working against the promotion of the Inclusive School Culture. This is because, as my study found, it has supported having two separate schools under one building and views SEN services as an additional programme. My study, then, introduced the term *Neighbourhood Schools*, referring to schools that cater to all students (including students labelled with SEN), to the Disability Studies in Education literature. Encouraging all schools to be named *Neighbourhood Schools* allows them to be named as 'inclusive'. However, despite the introduction of this neologism, the terms 'SEN' and 'mainstream schools' were employed in this thesis; these are the common terms used by most authors and participants, and thus, they were used in this thesis to link the present study with other literature and conceptualisations;

3. The SLs' use of the terms 'trainable' and 'educable' to describe students labelled with ID were also found to work against the promotion of Inclusive School Culture. As the term 'trainable' refers to students with moderate to "severe" ID who are viewed as unable to learn, while 'educable' refers to students with mild ID who are considered able to learn. These terms encourage: categorization, labelling, promotion of negative expectations of student abilities and therefore lead to exclusion practices. My study also introduced the term *Differing Intellectual Abilities* to the Disability Studies in Education literature. This term refers to each student being viewed as an individual with unique abilities, which are valued with the assumption that all students are able to learn. At the same time, 'ID' and 'SEN' are employed in this thesis rather than Differing Intellectual Abilities because they are common terms used by most authors and participants referenced in this thesis;

4. For destigmatising disability and interrogating exclusion practice in the KSA's SEN literature, my study found that most SLs' definitions of disability could not be explained by a single unified perspective, but rather, represented a combination of several disability models in which students are labelled with ID. Their perspectives were located between the Psycho-Medical Model (PMM), Social Model (SM), Normalisation Model (NM), Affirmation Model (AM) and Faith Model (FM). Although the intersectional perspective is seen as being able to address the limitations inherent in each model in one way or another (Hutchison, 1995; Skidmore, 1996; Bricout et al., 2004; Frederickson & Cline, 2009), it can then be argued that the intersectional/mutability perspective can help encourage the development of Inclusive School Culture. However, due to the predominance of the PMM and NM in most cases, a '*dual practice*' emerged that led to an

Exclusion School Culture, viewing inclusion as a double-sided process: Specifically, inclusion involves efforts to both increase inclusion and reduce exclusion;

5. My study also uncovered that the way 'disability' is defined strongly influences Inclusive School Culture. Thus, it contributes to Disability Studies in Education understandings by elucidating the ramifications of applying the disability models, described above, on the School Culture. This links SLs' views with specific models of understanding disability and discusses how it reflects on the mainstream schools' culture. For example, the views related to how the SLs conceived of 'categorisation' and 'labelling', how they conceptualised students' behaviours, how students' differences were perceived and how specialised services were conceptualised. Specifically, the study discussion clarified how the SLs' understanding of disability influence the school experiences of students labelled with ID;

6. The SLs in my study were found to be substantially affected by Islamic principles through a new model of understanding disability—what I refer to as the Faith Model (FM). This new model of disability shows the intersection of disability, faith and School Culture. However, the Islamic underpinnings of inclusiveness as a culture that values diversity (Quran and Hadith) were *not* present in the KSA's practical application of the students' rights. The study results suggest that this is due to the dominance of the PMM and NM for SEN practices in the KSA mainstream schools. Thus, the contribution to the SEN literature in the KSA by this model, based on Islamic SLs' beliefs, can lead educators to promote Inclusive School Culture in the KSA's mainstream schools to remedy any

misunderstandings or misconceptions of disability explained above and localise Disability Studies, as a Western term, in the KSA and other Islamic contexts;

7. By seeking to address the issue related to the focus on School Structure rather than School Culture changes in providing SEN services in KSA's mainstream schools, my study contributes to the SEN literature in the KSA by showing that Aldamj is more than just for achieving integration practices (physical placement). That is, reforms in school should involve developing School Cultures arguing against ableist ideologies to ensure that true inclusion is achieved. Thus, to emphasise the difference between inclusion and integration, my study formulated a framework of 11 themes used to identify several ways to make Aldamj a more tangible continuum for practitioners in the KSA regarding the unclear term *Least Restrictive Environment* in KSA education policy;

8. The term *SEN programme* was used frequently by SLs to describe steps towards Aldamj taken by the education authorities. However, my study also contributes to the SEN literature in the KSA by illustrating that, for leading to change, Aldamj depends on the *school's capability*. Thus, my discussion of Aldamj re-focusses inclusion as responding to the 'Mainstream School's Needs' instead of the traditional SEN approach that centres the focus around a student's adaptability. Moreover, as explained before, inclusion is not a programme or approach like integration; rather, it is framed as a way of thinking that should be part of mainstream school;

9. The results for my study contribute to the Leadership/SEN literature in formulating a better understanding of the leadership style in mainstream schools with SEN programmes for students labelled with ID in the KSA. Through

exploration, the forms of leadership became apparent, including more structurally oriented leaders than leaders who work to influence their Inclusive School Cultures. This confirms the finding described above in terms of how the KSA's mainstream schools have changed structurally, but this is insufficient to make lasting change; and

10. The study also contributes to the Disability Studies in Education literature by linking it to educational leadership, where transformational leaders focus on people's values and beliefs. Few studies have examined Transformational Leadership theory elements for inclusion, and most that do have used quantitative methodologies, such as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (see Preface). Therefore, by using qualitative methods, my study expanded the scope of the existing literature by analysing Inclusive School Culture and the link between its components and Transformational Leadership theory.

## 8.3. Contributions to Undergraduate University Modules

I have learned a lot about inclusion in relation to Disability Studies and Education Leadership, and I still want to learn more. I view this project as the basis for future study, and I am planning to read more to support undergraduate curriculum modules as a lecturer at King Saud University in the KSA. The King Saud University SEN department has several committees, one of which has the mandate of developing modules. The results and literature review of my study demonstrate the importance of addressing traditional SEN assumptions in university modules.

For example, 'Teaching Abnormal Students in Normal School' - the core module of most education majors - should be addressed according to the results identifying inclusion as a foundation of Inclusive School Culture, moving away from the traditional SEN

understanding of disability and inclusion. Another module, 'Educational Leadership in SEN Schools', should be reoriented to focus on understanding the role of SLs not only in SEN schools but also in mainstream schools with SEN services for leading for change, moving away from focussing on students who are labelled with SEN to understanding School Culture for inclusiveness (Mainstream School's Needs).

## 8.4. Recommendations to 'Leading for Change' Practices

My doctoral research broadened my knowledge about the field of Disability Studies, which is still extremely new in the KSA, for those who interact with improving the lives of students labelled with SEN/ID. Such professionals include SLs, SEN/mainstream teachers, psychologists, SEN directors, occupational therapists, and most importantly, the education authority. Some recommendations to the education authority as General Directorate of Special Education (GDSE) in the Ministry of Education (MoE), are as follows:

1. The GDSE should *review* the SEN and Mainstream Procedural Guides, as the two guides seen to hinder efforts to foster inclusion practices. Moreover, a review of the KSA's SEN policies towards inclusion (see Chapter One) showed the contradiction between the orientation in these policies and these two guides. Thus, the new documents need to be unified and become more flexible, where no single recipe (or guide) is used in each school, but at the same time, it needs to lead to personal interpretation and adaptation based on Exclusion School Culture. Moreover, the new documents need also to encourage leading for change responding to what my study refers to as 'Mainstream Schools' Needs'. For that, the document should be by committee comprising of people who are experts in policymaking who formulate policies and legislation, not just professionals in the field of SEN and inclusion;

2. As explained in the Preface, many studies have shown how mainstream schools still struggle to include all students. Due to this problem, it is time for the GDSE to *revise* the definition of Aldamj based on Inclusive School Culture aspects. The term Aldamj has been based on the present definition since 1996, which involves enrolling students labelled with SEN/ID in mainstream schools with SEN programmes. However, this definition, with the unclear meaning of Aldamj, only focusses on School Structure changes, and since it reaches a stable state after the SEN programme is established, it tends to lead to *integration* as opposed to inclusion;

3. My study found that SLs need to reconceptualise their roles as facilitators for inclusiveness by changing the School Culture as well as School Structure when leading for change. The results related to analysing Inclusive School Culture and the link between its aspects and Transformational Leadership theory can be used as *a reference* to the GDSE for leading for change in KSA mainstream schools to achieve the *Least Restrictive Environment*;

4. For leading for change, the GDSE also needs to give SLs more authority to work on transforming their School Cultures for inclusiveness. To achieve this, SLs need to be prepared with the same effort provided to qualify SEN teachers in the disability and inclusion concept related to School Culture with a move away from the traditional SEN concept, and particularly, the FM understanding of disability. The content of this research can be organised by the GDSE into a *Training Pack* to support SLs in school-based development training to redefine SLs' roles beyond the traditional managerial role;

5.  In addition to this traditional training, I learned from this study's results that there is no universally applicable recipe for inclusive practices: Every school has a unique School Culture, and what works in one school may not work in another; which I refer to these differences as Mainstream Schools' Needs. Given this finding, it is necessary to move away from individual, traditional training methods and towards school-based development training. This result will encourage me to continue working with SLs who lack sufficient confidence to address issues related to inclusion in their school setting. From this perspective, the Tatweer Programme project by the GDSE (described in Chapter One) needs more initiatives to support inclusion in mainstream schools. From the findings of my study, I can build an *action plan* for school-based development training that promotes inclusion for all students to enable this SL to analyse her leadership styles and assess her School Culture, determining the ongoing process for including students labelled with SEN/ID and moving away from exclusion; and

6.  A difficulty emerging from my study was that the education authority did not account for the SLs' efforts to change School Culture when evaluating the SLs. The GDSE should *cooperate* with the mainstream department in the MoE to support how the admission supervisor views the SEN programme as part of the mainstream school under inclusive practice, where her responsibility is to provide the support needed, it reinforces how SLs perceive their performance in leading for inclusion practices. Thus, the GDSE also needs to revise the evaluation criteria to support SLs' measures to implement inclusion.

## 8.5. Recommendations for Future Research

According to Goodley (2014), Disability Studies should play a central role when exploring different issues on rethinking the research assumptions and engaging, relating, resisting, acting and communicating against the forms of discrimination evident in disability discourse. Many suggestions based on my study results and my study literature review for further research can be delineated, such as the following:

1. During the analysis, with no evidence of FM elucidating disability in Disability Studies, I recommend that future research should examine how the FM is related to other models of disability in more detail;

2. Since I categorised the data into several themes to link specific conceptualisations of Aldamj to certain features of Inclusive School Cultures, another future research suggestion is conducting more in-depth research into each of the 11 concepts, using individual interviews and observation methods;

3. The participants (SLs) in this study drew my attention to the parents, whose sole aim was to enrol their children labelled with ID in mainstream schools. This represents a promising area for future research to look at why parents act this way, how they understand their children's disabilities (models used) and whether the School Culture affects their understanding. This can be done via more in-depth research using individual interviews and diary-writing methods, with the approach incorporating narrative analyses;

4. As my study showed a relationship between Transformational Leadership theory elements and Inclusive School Culture aspects, another suggestion is that it is important to study each element of Transformational Leadership theory separately with regards to Inclusive School Culture aspects;

5. The results showed that the SLs were beginning to recognise the importance of their School Cultures. Their debate about the obstacles they confronted when trying to reform their schools showed that they experienced significant conflict from the education authority, parents and SEN/mainstream teachers. These issues emerged from the group discussion between SLs need to be studied separately and in more depth;

6. As explained before, in the last couple of years, the KSA government has begun focussing on issues around feminism and empowering women. This continues to be a complicated issue, as well as one that is not readily discussed in the KSA educational field, where refusal and denial of feminist theories persist. I suggest that future research should study how the norms adopted by KSA families, when raising girls, could affect their ability to conduct themselves as leaders, and subsequently, the rights of students labelled with SEN to be included in Neighbourhood Schools;

7. Entering the world of Disability Studies and holding new principles has caused me to consider how best to support intervention research aimed at students labelled with SEN/ID, as well as developing a movement away from ableist language in the research. Thus, I suggest that more research should be focussed on empowering students labelled with SEN/ID to make decisions about their education. Such as, the Intensive Interaction approach places importance on the concept of the student as an active participant in interaction communication. This approach supports the social lives and enjoyment of students labelled with "Profound" and Multiple ID, and it has created real change for these students—

for example, in producing unprompted interactions by identifying the student's ability; and

8. My study discussed the importance of viewing Aldamj as a sense of belonging and hearing all individuals' voices. Thus, it would be interesting to consider how the students labelled with SEN/ID view disability and inclusion and hear their voices on their experiences during the school day; and

9. Further relevance of my study, beyond the site of my choice (schools), could be in developing inclusion in workplaces that fail to value differences. I would suggest that this research could be conducted in the field of social science or human resources, exploring understanding of disability in the workplace and how this impacts on disabled staff.

## 8.6. Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the research aims and findings by explaining the initial research purposes. It also illustrated the contributions made by answering the research questions. The main sections in this chapter described contributions and recommendations from my doctoral research for the literature, where I identified many significant areas from my research that have filled a gap outlined in the existing literature reviewed in Chapter Two. In addition, the other sections represent contributions and recommendations from my doctoral research to the undergraduate university modules and inclusion in the KSA's practices. Finally, this chapter has opened up new paths for future research.

***Ultimately,*** I hope my research inspires other researchers in the KSA in the area of Disability Studies to introduce new innovative steps towards supporting students with

Differing Intellectual Abilities in becoming valued members of their neighbourhood schools.

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# *Appendices*

**Appendix (1)** Summaries of the Selection Criteria for Participants Chosen for Individual Interviews and Focus Groups.

- **Individual Interviews – Selection Criteria for Participants:**

| Mainstream Schools | Preschools | Primary Schools |
|---|---|---|
| *Number of Participants School Leaders (SLs)* | 21 | 9 |
| *SLs Educational Background* | Early years childhood education | Various subjects |
| *SLs Years of Experience* | 2–10 years | 2–10 years |
| *Number of Vice-Principals* | 1–3 | 1–3 |
| *Number of Administration Teams* | 2-3 | 2-3 |
| *Special Education Needs (SEN) Services Programme* | • Mainstream classrooms with individual support inside the mainstream school or in the SEN Recourse Room/Unit.<br><br>• Psychologists and Speech Therapists if needed | • SEN classrooms with some mainstream classroom enrolment.<br><br>• Psychologists and Speech Therapists if needed |
| *Number of SEN Teachers* | 4–15 | 4–13 |
| *Mainstream Teachers* | 10–20 | 20–43 |
| *Number of SEN Classrooms* (Self- | ___ | 3-8 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| contained classrooms model) | | |
| *Number of SEN Resource Rooms/Units* | 1-2 | ____ |
| *Number of Students labelled with Intellectual Disabilities (ID)* | 4–24 | 5–39 |
| *Number of Mainstream Students* | 32–124 | 119–544 |

- **Focus Groups – Selection Criteria for Participants:**

| Focus Groups | Number of Participants |
|---|---|
| **Focus Group 1** | Five SLs from the same main participants as for the individual interviews |
| **Focus Group 2** | Five SLs from the same main participants as for the individual interviews |

**Appendix (2)** Individual Interviews Data Collection Guide.

The following questions for the individual interviews were formulated from the study aims and operational definitions, focussing on three parts—the disability models applied or implicitly held by SLs, conceptualisation of Aldamj as inclusion and the operationalisation of Inclusive School Culture as leading for change. These questions were formulated with the expectation that they would stimulate further examination and debate. Moreover, as explained in Methodology chapter, the same question was asked in different ways to see if their responses varied, and to gain deeper perspectives.

I asked opening questions that included SLs' insights into education in their schools. These questions can help the interviewees to organise their ideas and help me gain a general insight into their thoughts. The data collection questions are listed below.

| Research Question | Individual Interviews Questions | Aims | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Q1** | • What made you choose to be the SL at this school? Do you prefer to be at this school rather that other one? Why?<br><br>• Do you have previous experience working with students labelled with ID? How do you feel when contacting these students?<br><br>• What does the term *labelling* mean to you? Do you think such classification is a good strategy? | • To identify disability models they apply or implicitly held by SLs.<br><br>• To determine the effect of the disability models on their School Culture. | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | • Do you agree with the bifurcation of the educational system in terms of 'special' and 'general'?<br><br>• You know that in Islam, God asks us to take care of students in need. Would you explain to me how you might interpret this in your daily life?<br><br>• Would you describe the students at your school? Are there any differences between them? What *are* the *differences*?<br><br>• Do you feel positive about having students labelled with ID in your school?<br><br>• I would like to hear about the period when you started the SEN services programme. Do you think it was difficult in the beginning? What makes it easier now?<br><br>• Why do you think students labelled with ID are much more challenging? Describe your reaction to their behaviour?<br><br>• Can you describe your feelings when students labelled with ID continue to fail in classroom tasks (anger/sympathy)? | | |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | • Do you think SL should have the right to choose the students in their schools? Why?<br><br>• Do you think the students labelled with ID in your school should be treated differently? If so, how and why?<br><br>• How much support do students labelled with ID receive in the resource room in terms of time? Do you prefer to make this room available for all students?<br><br>• How do you know about the students labelled with ID ability?<br><br>• How do you know about the students labelled with ID needs? How does your school work to meet these needs?<br><br>• If a student labelled with ID needs cannot be met in your school, to what would you relate this difficulty?<br><br>• Do you support the idea of a normal school life for students labelled with ID?<br><br>• Do you assist the students to develop their | | |

| Research Question | Individual Interviews Questions | Aims | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| | skills to meet the school standards? | | |
| | • What does your school do to help include students labelled with ID? | | |
| | • Do you assist them to develop their skills to meet the school standards? Will this help include them? | | |

| Research Question | Individual Interviews Questions | Aims | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Q2** | • How do you define Aldamj? <br><br> • To what extent do you think that Aldamj of students w labelled with ID I school is appropriate? What is the ideal model of Aldamj in your opinion? <br><br> • Do you support the idea of Aldamj? What specifically do you support? <br><br> • What are the main rationales for Aldamj? | • To identify the SLs' understanding of Aldamj. <br><br> • To illustrate how this relates to Inclusive School Culture. | |

| Research Question | Individual Interviews Questions | Aims | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Q3** | • What *structural changes* has the school implemented to help ensure Inclusive School Culture? <br><br> • Would you talk to me about their daily routine? <br><br> • Do you see that as a priority for enhancing an Inclusive School Culture or are there other crucial parts? Can you give examples? <br><br> • What do you think is meant by School Culture? Describe your School Culture. <br><br> • Is there a links between the concepts of Aldamj and School Culture? <br><br> • Do you think that cultural change will lead to and regulate structural change, or vice versa? Or is just one of them adequate for forming an Inclusive School Culture? <br><br> *Let's continue our discussion with your insights into your* Inclusive School Culture*.* | • To explore the ways in which SLs perceive the concept of a School Culture. <br><br> • To explore the difference between, and significance of, *changing* School Culture and *changing* School Structure. <br><br> • To explore how SLs, view their roles in developing an Inclusive School Culture. <br><br> • *To explore the following aspects of* School Culture*:* <br><br> ✓ Belief in inclusion <br> ✓ Assumptions held about students labelled with ID <br> ✓ Providing equal opportunity to have equal participation <br> ✓ Valuing differences <br> ✓ Rejection of discrimination | |

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| | • Would you describe your understanding of 'Inclusive School Culture'? How would you describe School Culture and the implications it brings?<br><br>• What kinds of activities does the school provide? Do you give all students the right to choose the activities provided? How do you encourage them to participate?<br><br>• Do you have a school vision? Do you think it is part of the school? How?<br><br>• In what way do you encourage students labelled with ID to participate in your classrooms?<br><br>• Has your school created an environment that meets the needs of students based on their capabilities and disabilities? Please explain how.<br><br>• What about their self-identity? Do you foster the self-concept and self-esteem?<br><br>• How does your school promote valuing difference in your students, in attributes like emotional | ✓ Involvement in the curriculum<br><br>✓ A process of accommodation and adaptation rather than assimilation<br><br>✓ Teacher willing to respond to challenge<br><br>✓ Developing a sense of belonging<br><br>✓ Believing in human rights<br><br>✓ Various areas of staff collaboration (instructions, individualised education plans [IEPs], target setting, improving the student's daily life)<br><br>✓ Planning for diverse needs in the classroom<br><br>✓ Understanding that they  as a SL hinder | |

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| | intelligence, intellectual levels, physical appearance, social behaviour and other morphological characteristics? | student achievement | |
| | • What are the main reasons for adopting a Inclusive School Culture in education? In the same light, how does School Culture relate to inclusive education? Would you then describe your School Culture as inclusive? | ✓ Same-page agreement ✓ Staff commitment to reflections ✓ Clear, shared vision ✓ Promoting change ✓ Same language and commitment | |
| | • Based on your knowledge of the school's staff, students and other members, what is your school's orientation and view towards an Inclusive School Culture? | | |
| | • What do you think the benefits of having an inclusive school environment in this situation……..? | | |
| | • Who is responsible for inclusion? Which members of staff do you think are more supportive of inclusive practice? | | |
| | • Do you think these members of staff are able to facilitate forming an Inclusive School Culture in valuing diversity? | | |

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| | • Can you describe your own involvement in the inclusion process? | | |
| | • Different SLs have their own practices. What are your approaches in addressing an Inclusive School Culture in your school? | | |
| | • To clarify, what do you think a student labelled with ID and teachers requires from you? What makes for a good leader in the inclusion process? What type of leadership practice do you think fosters diversity in schools? | | |
| | • If you had unlimited resources, especially financial support, how would you implement inclusion in this school? | | |
| | • What strategies do your school use to enhance the interaction between students labelled with ID and their peers? | | |
| | • In any school, there are some issues, such as attendance. Are students labelled with ID in regular attendance at this school? If so, would you explain the main reasons for this? | | |
| | • Do you think students labelled with ID feel that | | |

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| | they are part of the school? If so, how did you achieve that? Otherwise, why could this not be achieved? | | |
| | • What role do you, as an SL, play in setting goals, creating collective commitment, planning and implementing, and evaluating changes to foster inclusive education? Can you give me an example of this? | | |
| | • Do you support close partnerships of teachers and other school members to facilitate an inclusive whole-school approach? | | |
| | • Related to the teacher, how can your strategies as SL enhance teacher performance to support a Inclusive School Culture? What about other school staff? How do you support them to tackle challenges and meet their daily objectives? | | |
| | • How is your school a part of the community? What are the implications of this? | | |
| | • How can you expand your support of inclusion in society? How can your school be part of the neighbourhood? | | |

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| | • Do you support social justice in the education system? What makes you hold this orientation? Is it because it is part of the Ministry of Education policies?<br><br>• How do you deal with teachers who refuse to execute any new ideas?<br><br>• Would you please describe two recent events when you were involved in working towards social justice in your school?<br><br>• What measures/methods will the school take to ensure that diversity permeates to every student of the school? | | |

**Appendix (3)** Focus Groups Data Collection Guides.

| Steps | Content |
|---|---|
| **Step 1** | Start by informing the group how the discussion will be conducted and guided; discuss some ground rules to organise the discussion.<br><br>في بداية النقاش ارغب بالترحيب بكن و أشكركم على إعطائي الوقت الكافي أثناء المقابلات الفردية، كانت فرصه لي لسماع أرائكم وقصصكم.<br><br>مشاركتكم مرة أخرى في المرحلة الثانية محل تقديري وتؤكد حرصكم على تحسين الوضع التعليمي في المملكة العربية السعودية.<br><br>كما ذكرت الغرض من هذه الحلقه هو انشاء مناقشة غير رسمية، كل فكره تطرحها إحدى عضوات المجموعة تخلق سلسلة من ردود الفعل لدعم الحوار، سيكون الهدف من ذلك طرح موضوعات نقاش تخص موضوع البحث لتبادل الأراء والخبرات. |
| **Step 2** | أبداء الحلقة بطلب عرض محتوى بطاقات النقاش<br><br>*Card 1:* Ask an introductory question that gives each participant the opportunity to say something, encouraging them, for example, to say what individual interviews added to them.<br><br>*Card 2:* Define School Culture and Inclusive School Culture with the groups. |

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| | **Card 3:** Focus groups questions (see the following table). |
| **Step 3** | سوف اعرض عدد من المقاطع ومن ثم أستمع لتعليقاتكن عليها.<br><br>**Card 4**<br><br>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYRuDvtYLl8<br><br>(McKenna, who has Rett Syndrome, in a 3rd grade inclusion classroom)<br><br><ul><li>How do students think about McKenna?</li><li>How do they communicate with her?</li><li>How does the SL establish an inclusive School Culture for her?</li><li>How does her teacher provide an inclusive classroom?</li></ul><br>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4o__NMJuILM<br><br>(Damian's 1st grade inclusion classroom)<br><br><ul><li>How do students think about Damian?</li><li>How do they communicate with him?</li><li>How does his teacher provide an inclusive classroom?</li><li>How does the SL make sure that Damian participates in all activities?</li><li>Describe the terminology used in the video, such as student's voice and peer interaction?</li></ul><br>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8TnKi_YblQ<br><br>(Avery's preschool inclusion classroom)<br><br><ul><li>What is the type of language support Avery receiving in this inclusive classroom?</li><li>Would you tell me how you view what is shown in the film?</li></ul> |

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| | • What aspects of Inclusive School Culture do you have in this classroom?<br><br>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji3R30PT1PQ<br><br>(Nick and Inclusion at work in 3rd grade classroom)<br><br>• What aspects of inclusive School Culture could you see?<br>• How do Nick's peers support him in the classroom, and do you also see that he helps his peers? |
| **Step 4** | Closing activities as a way I view as effective for gathering more data to end the focus groups discussion.<br><br>*Card 5:* Task: How social barriers, such as language and stereotypes, are used affect the school life of the student labelled with ID for feeling of refusal.<br><br>*Card 6* Task: Drawing a picture of 3 circles to demonstrate differences between segregation, integration and inclusion. |

| Research Question | Group Discussion Questions | Aims | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Q4** | • What are the barriers SLs may face when implementing school re-culturing for an inclusive environment in their schools (focussing on whether inclusion is being implemented but needs to be improved or is not being implemented at all)?<br><br>• What are SLs' recommendations for leadership practices that will enhance changing the | • To explore the challenges faced during developing Inclusive School Culture, and how these have been encountered and overcome.<br><br>• To explore the requirements that will enable the achievement of changing the | |

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| | School Culture for an inclusive environment? | School Culture to promote inclusiveness. | |
| | • Are you satisfied with the current educational reform? Have you made progress in establishing diversity that reflects your values, concept and philosophy? Or do you still find a gap between that and your real practices? | | |
| | • Current projects in the KSA, such as the Tatweer project, are supporting change in schools. What are your experiences with that? | | |
| | • Do you advocate for the Tatweer project in your school? Can we discuss the challenges you have encountered in implementing this project in the field? | | |
| | • What would you change, add or improve in your role to make the school contemplate ensuring that every student in the school feels cherished? | | |
| | • We discussed a lot of interesting issues coming out of this individually. What do you think about the future of a Inclusive School Culture in your school? | | |

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| | • During the individual interviews, many SLs mentioned monetary bonuses for SEN teachers. Can we discuss this issue? | | |
| | • Do you have enough authority and power to influence the implementation of Inclusive School Culture in your school? What are you going to do with this? | | |
| | • What do you think of the future of a diverse School Culture in your school? | | |
| | • Do you think inclusion is a part of the school environment? How can you expand your support for inclusion in society? How can your school be part of the neighbourhood? | | |
| | • Can we all discuss your recommendations on how to make the Inclusive School Culture more efficient and effective for the near future? | | |
| | • The education authority has changed the school principals' title from 'managers' to 'leaders'; have you found that the change has affected your roles? | | |
| | • What is your concept of your job at this school | | |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | before and after having students labelled with ID? Is there any difference? If there is, do you consider yourself adequate to fulfil this concept? | | |
| | • Have there been any changes in the Evaluation Criteria for Principals and Administrative Staff after having students labelled with ID? | | |
| | • Would you please tell me about your job description from the Ministry of Education? Do you agree with this description? | | |
| | • To what extent do you adhere to this description? Do you prefer to continue with it as it is, or would you prefer to use your own description? | | |
| | • What kind of training did you receive from the Ministry of Education? Have you found it adequate regarding this job description? | | |

**Appendix (4)** Prompt Sheet of Individual Interview Skills and Possible Difficult Behaviours in Focus Groups.

- **Prompt Sheet of Individual Interview Skills (Gray, 2014, Cohen et al. 2010 & Denscombe, 2007):**

| | |
|---|---|
| ✓ Do not begin the interview right away. Give a friendly greeting and explanation of your study. | |
| ✓ The first question should offer the chance to settle down and relax, starting with easy questions that the SL may expect, far from abstract ideas. | |
| ✓ Repeat what the interviewee said in different ways to make sure of the meaning. | |
| ✓ Do not talk about yourself or your opinion. | |
| ✓ Creating a relaxed atmosphere in which interviewees feel free to open up on the topic, building trust and a rapport. | |
| ✓ Listen actively. | |
| ✓ Monitor the time and cover all the issues. | |
| ✓ Identify the main point from the participants and the underlying logic of what is being said (read between the lines). What is the interviewee really saying, and what is the interviewee not mentioning? | |
| ✓ Focus on the inconsistencies in what participant has said, probing as the interview progresses to see what the participant reveals. | |
| ✓ Maintain appropriate eye contact. | |
| ✓ Observe nonverbal communication and pay attention to nonverbal communication which may aid later analysis. | |
| ✓ Be attentive. | |
| ✓ Be sensitive to the informant's feelings. | |
| ✓ You cannot demand the interviewees answer the question; just nudge them to reveal their knowledge or thoughts on a specific point. | |
| ✓ Be able to tolerate silence. | |
| ✓ Be skilful in using probes and elicit deeper information by being clear and subtle. | |
| ✓ Summarising what the interviewee has said or concluding discussion on one aspect of the topic. Summarising each part helps to be more coherent and provides stimulus for further exploration, putting facts together and showing what you have learnt. | |
| ✓ Do not be judgmental or show any idea refusal. | |
| ✓ Avoid leading questions that show one answer to be correct; instead, let the informant lead. (How do you feel? What fears do you have?) | |
| ✓ Avoid yes/no questions, making the questions open-ended so that the respondent has no presented choices. (What, who, how, where, when, why) | |
| ✓ Avoid restrictive questions that eliminate options. | |
| ✓ Stimulate an informant to produce more information without involving yourself. Remain quiet and wait for information to continue. You can | |

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| repeat the last thing the interviewee said and ask her to continue. Use affirmative statements like 'yes', 'I see' and 'right'. | |
| ✓ Do not move to the next topic until you feel that you have explored the present one thoroughly and been given as many details as possible. | |
| ✓ Let the interviewee answer determine the direction of the interview whilst keeping within topics of interest. | |
| ✓ Use the same language as the interviewee as you learn her language. | |
| ✓ Avoid 'why' questions because they imply a factual answer; just ask what was happening at that time. | |
| ✓ Terminate the interview when all aspects have been addressed. You can invite the interviewee to raise any further points, and thank them for their involvement. | |

- **Possible Difficult Behaviours in a Focus Groups (Gray, 2014, P. 481):**

| Behavioural | Why It Emerges | Moderator's Response |
|---|---|---|
| *The Heckler* | Argumentative, attention-seeking. | Don't get drawn in or counter-heckle. Keep the group calm. Move on with the agenda. |
| *The Challenger* | Trying to get own view adopted. Seeking to get the moderator's advice. | Determine reason/background to the question. Throw question open to the group. |
| *The Chatterbox* | An extrovert. Highly informed or otherwise. Attention-seeking. | Slow them down with some questions. Bring in other members of the group with their questions or comments. |
| *The Rambler* | Strays off the subject; uses long stories which lack a point | Ask for the point of story; when pauses, Restate the question or move the agenda on. |
| *The Mute* | Shy, bored or indifferent. | If shy give time to 'settle in' to the group; if bored, find what they are interested in; if indifferent, ask a provocative question. |
| *The Sceptic* | Sceptical about the value of the topic or | Acknowledge viewpoint; probe for reasons underneath it. Re-explain purpose of research and value of outputs. |

| | | |
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| | the views expressed about it. | |
| *The Moaner* | Gripes about a 'pet hate'. Sometimes these hates can be legitimate. | If 'on subject', explain how the research may find answers. If 'off subject', offer discussion outside focus group session. |
| *The Expert* | Some people are genuine subject matter experts; others attention-seekers or deluded. | For experts, draw on their expertise (without allowing them to dominate); for attention seekers, reduce or stop eye contact and eliminate positive reinforcement of comments. |
| *The Enemy* | Hostile (to the subject, fellow group members or the moderator) or aggressive. | If not spotted before commencement of the group, call a break and invite to leave. |

**Respected Administrator of General Directorate of Special Educational**

**Mr……..,**

My name is Kholood Aljaser, a PhD candidate supervised by Professor Daniel Goodley and Dr Kirsty Liddiard in the School of Education at the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom. I would like to request your permission to contact female School Leaders who have Special Educational Needs facilities for students labelled with Intellectual Disabilities in mainstream schools to invite them to take part in my study. I intend to conduct a research study focussing on exploring School Leaders' perspectives regarding disability, inclusion, Inclusive School Culture and leading for change.

If permission is granted, I intend to collect my data from the participants by conducting individual interviews and focus groups in January to March 2017. All information provided by the participants will be kept private and strictly confidential, and it will be used solely for the purpose of this research. Any personal identities, names or identifying information about the participants will not be published in any further work resulting from this study.

I would also like to inform you that your permission is voluntary, but it would benefit the Saudi community through exploration of issues in the current education system. This research is approved by the School of Education in agreement with the University of Sheffield's Research Ethics Policy. The research findings will be available to the public via the university's website.

Your consideration and cooperation are highly appreciated. If you have any questions or would like to obtain further information about the study, please contact me via email at: kmaljaser1@sheffield.ac.uk.

Many thanks for your time.


Yours sincerely,


Kholood Aljaser
Lecturer in the Special Educational Needs Department (King Saud University)
PhD Student at the University of Sheffield

**Appendix (6)** Sheet for Basic Information on the School and School Leader.

School Name:..................................................................

School Level: .................................................................

School Leader Name:.......................................................

- Education Level:

  - Bachelor's degree
  - Master's degree
  - PhD

- Date SEN Programme Established: ..................................................

- Years of Experience:........................................................................

During the SEN programme ..................................

Before the SEN programme ..................................

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of classrooms | |
| Number of mainstream teachers | |
| Number of SEN teachers | |
| Number of Mainstream students | |
| Number of students labelled with ID | |
| Number of vice-principals and other members of the Administration Team | |

SEN services:

.................................................................................................................................

.................................................................................................................................

**Appendix (7)** Individual Interviews Participant Information Sheet (Phase One) and Participant Consent Form.

- **Individual Interviews Participant Information Sheet (Phase One):**



Dear School Leaders,

My name is Kholood Aljaser, and I am conducting research as a PhD student at the University of Sheffield in Sheffield, United Kingdom.

You are invited to take part in a research project. The data will be collected in January to March 2017. Your participation would be highly appreciated, and it would contribute to the success of the research findings.

I would like to inform you that this study has been reviewed by the faculty of the School of Education at the University of Sheffield and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee at the same university.

If you decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet and asked for your written consent. Even after signing the form, you can still withdraw your consent at any time and remove yourself from the study. In this case, all of your details will be immediately destroyed to preserve confidentiality.

Before deciding whether to participate in the study, you should understand why the research is being conducted, and what it involves. Please take the time to read and discuss the following information, and don't hesitate to inquire about any aspects that are unclear.

*The purpose of this study* is to explore School Leaders' perspectives regarding disability, inclusion, Inclusive School Culture and leading for change. The research aims are as follows:

- To explore how School Leaders conceptualise disability and inclusion and determine whether these ideas are appropriate for creating an Inclusive School Culture for students labelled with Intellectual Disabilities;
- To explore how School Leaders operationalise the inclusive school culture using a transformational style of leadership; and
- To explore the issues that School Leaders face while developing an Inclusive School Culture.

*You have been approached* because the study requires data from those experienced in leading mainstream schools, which also provide special education needs facilities for students who have Intellectual Disabilities. Moreover, the type of information sought from you will be relevant for achieving the research project's aims.

*If you decide to participate*, there will be two phases of the study that you will be asked to take part in. These include an individual interview and a focus group. Each will take one to two hours. The questions will be semi-structured, which will enable us to discuss many issues related to the research aims in depth.

*Some individual interview questions may include the following:*
- How would you describe the students in your school? Is there any difference between them?
- What made you choose to be a leader in this school?
- Why do you think School Leader should have the right to choose the students in their school?
- Are students who have intellectual disabilities in regular attendance at your school? If so, what are the main reasons for this?
- How do know about the students' needs or requirements? How does your school work to meet these needs?
- What do you think is meant by 'inclusive' education?
- What about 'Inclusive School Culture'?
- If you had unlimited resources, how would you implement inclusion within this school?

*The audio-recording and typed record of your individual interview* will be anonymised and will not include any identifying information. The data collected will be stored securely on a password protected computer, and all files will be encrypted. Only the

researchers conducting this study will have access to this data. Audio recordings will be destroyed at the end of data analysis.

***The research results*** will be summarised and reported in a final thesis, which will be accessible for you to read. ***There are no risks anticipated with participating in this study,*** however, if you experience any distress, you are encouraged to inform the researcher and make contact using the details provided.

***Whilst there are no immediate benefits related to your participation in the project (i.e. payment),*** you may find in participating that you gain a chance to support the education practices in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

If you have any questions about the study, or if you would like to obtain further information about it, please contact me by email at: kmaljaser1@sheffield.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Kholood Aljaser
Lecturer in the Special Educational Needs Department (King Saud University)
PhD Student at the University of Sheffield

- **Participant Consent Form:**

The University Of Sheffield.

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**Participant Consent Form**

**Title of Research Project:**

**School Leaders' Perceptions of Differing Intellectual Abilities in the context of Inclusive School Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:**

Transformational Leadership Theory in Disability Studies

Name of Researcher: **Kholood Aljaser**

**Please tick the box indicating your choice:**

- ☐ I understand the information provided, and I would like to participate in the study. Contact me to arrange for my participation.
- ☐ I understand the information, but I do not wish to participate in the study.

**If you would like to participate, please tick the boxes below once you have carefully read all information provided:**

- ☐ I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the study, and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions and seek further information.
- ☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw from the study at any time without providing explanation, and without consequence. If I am unwilling to address any specific question or questions, I can decline to answer.
- ☐ I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential and I will not be identified or identifiable in the study or in any subsequent work resulting from the research.
- ☐ I agree for the data collected to be used in future studies.

Name of Participant                    Date                    Signature

_____        _____

**Appendix (8)** Focus Groups Participant Information Sheet (Phase Two) and Participant Consent Form.

- **Focus Groups Participant Information Sheet (Phase Two):**



Dear School Leader,

I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in the focus group discussion. The discussion will be held on the ........ from 17:00 to 21:00.

This discussion group will include five participants who work as School Leaders in mainstream schools that provide Special Education Needs services. The discussion will be informal, and every idea put forward by one of the group members will create a chain reaction to support the collective dialogue.

*The aims of the group discussion are as follows:*

• To introduce discussion topics that concern you related to your Inclusive School Culture;
• To share positive experiences related to your Inclusive School Culture;
• To display problems with a view to sharing solutions related to your School Culture; and
• To consider your experiences related to your inclusive School Culture.

It may be a good opportunity to self-assess your school from the organisational and cultural side, which could help you to set future goals for the next semester.

To avoid influencing the dialogue process and give you more time to discuss, my role will be as the coordinator of the discussion panel to manage the dialogue, summarise

ideas and encourage the introduction of some important issues for each school. ***The topics of discussion will include the following:***

- Meeting everyone;
- Starting the discussion panel with 'discussion cards' by asking questions and presenting opinions from the participants; and
- Viewing and discussing a video.

***Meeting Place:*** ....... Hotel. Hall 1.

***Duration***: 3-6 hours including a half-hour break for prayer and refreshments.

Knowing that the results of this research are a formal requirement of the university. Your participation in this research will aid its success and the development of special educational needs programmes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia mainstream schools for students labelled with intellectual disabilities.

Please take sufficient time to read the information, and if you have any questions about the study or you would like more information about it, please contact me by phone: 0567...... or by email at: kmaljaser1@sheffield.ac.uk.

With my sincere thanks,
Kholood Aljaser

Lecturer in the Special Education Department (King Saud University)
PhD Student at the University of Sheffield

- **Participant Consent Form:**



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**Participant Consent Form**

**Title of Research Project:**

**School Leaders' Perceptions of Differing Intellectual Abilities in the context of Inclusive School Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:**

Transformational Leadership Theory in Disability Studies

Name of Researcher: **Kholood Aljaser**

**Please tick the box indicating your choice:**

- ☐ I understand the information provided, and I would like to participate in the study. Contact me to arrange for my participation.
- ☐ I understand the information, but I do not wish to participate in the study.

**If you would like to participate, please tick the boxes below once you have carefully read all information provided:**

- ☐ I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the study, and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions and seek further information.
- ☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw from the study at any time without providing explanation, and without consequence. If I am unwilling to address any specific question or questions, I can decline to answer.
- ☐ I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential and I will not be identified or identifiable in the study or in any subsequent work resulting from the research.
- ☐ I agree for the data collected to be used in future studies.

Name of Participant          Date          Signature

_____    _____

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**Appendix (9)** Coding Highlighting Colours for the Individual Interview.

| Codes for the Research Questions | Colour Codes |
|---|---|
| Q1. Understanding of Disability | Pink |
| Q2. Understanding of Aldamj | Yellow |
| Q3. Understanding of School Culture and School Structure. | Light green |
| Q3. Aspects of operationalising their Inclusive School Culture | Green |
| Q4. Challenges of changing their Inclusive School Culture | Grey (discussed in focus groups) |
| Other that can be used for supporting my analyses | Blue |

**Appendix (10)** An Approximate Example of How the Codes from the Individual Interviews were Analysis and Organised.

- **Data Analysis Approach**
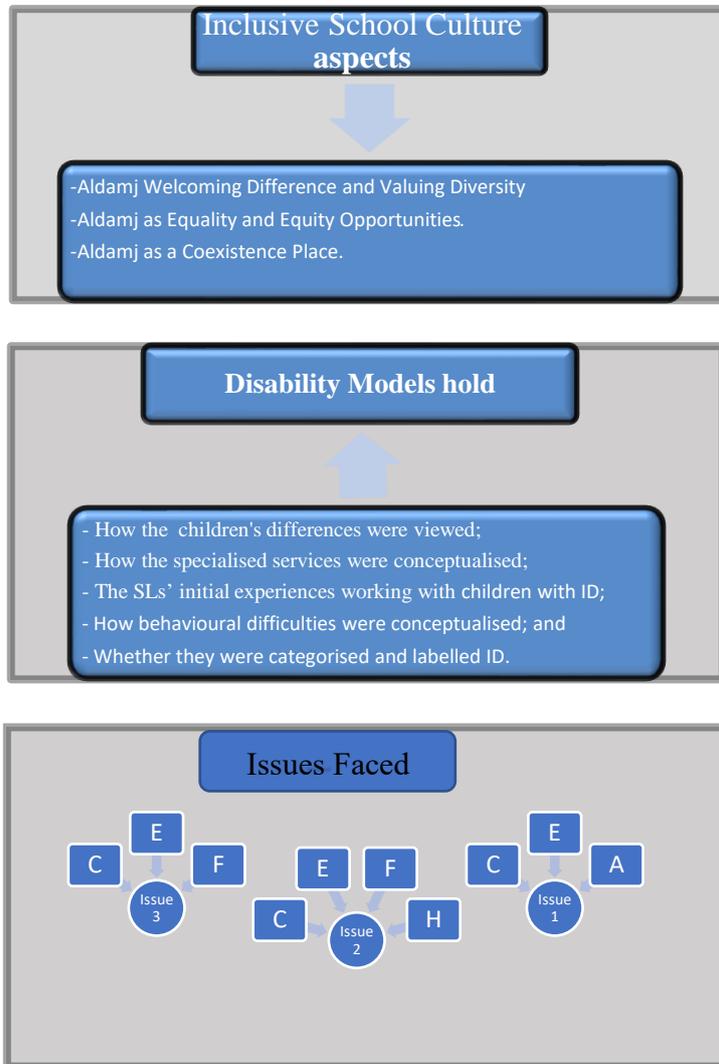


- **Organising the Codes** (Understanding of Disability)

| Q1 Understanding of Disability | Participants | Codes Pink |
|---|---|---|
| | | • How student's differences were viewed: <br>     o Example 1 <br>     o Example 2 |

| | | SL 1 | • How specialised services were conceptualised: |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | |     ○ Example 3 |
| | | SL 2 | • How student's differences were viewed: |
| | | |     ○ Example 1 |
| | | |     ○ Example 2 |
| | | SL 3 | • How specialised services were conceptualised: |
| | | |     ○ Example 1 |
| | | SL 4 | • How student's differences were viewed: |
| | | |     ○ Example 1 |
| | | | • How specialised services were conceptualised: |
| | | |     ○ Example 2 |
| | | | • How behavioural difficulties were conceptualised: |
| | | |     ○ Example 3 |
| | | SL 30 | • How specialised services were conceptualised: |
| | | |     ○ Example 1 |
| | | |     ○ Example 2 |
| | | | • Categorising and labelling ID |
| | | |     ○ Example 3 |
| | | |     ○ Example 4 |

**Appendix (11)** An Approximate Examples of Defining and Naming Emergent Themes.

| Pink | Code | SL Examples/Segments | Theme |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *How student's differences were viewed* | SL 1: Examples 1, 2<br><br>SL 4: Example 2<br><br>SL 28: Examples 1, 3 | **Trainable students:**<br>Psycho-Medical Model |
| | *How student's differences were viewed* | SL 4: Example 2<br><br>SL 9: Examples 1, 5 | **Trainable students:**<br>Social Model |

| Yellow | Code | SL Examples/Segments | Theme |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *School Culture* | SL 1: Examples 1, 2<br><br>SL 4: Example 2 | Aldamj as Welcoming Difference and Valuing Diversity |
| | *School Culture* | SL 1: Examples 1, 2<br><br>SL 4: Example 2 | Aldamj as Equality and Equal Opportunities |
| | *School Structure* | SL 22: Example 3 | IEP<br><br>SEN teachers |
| | *School Structure* | SL 2: Example 4 | SEN classrooms |