Students with disability and the quest for inclusive education: A case study of private schools in greater Cairo

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STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY AND THE QUEST FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:

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Abstract

Continuing acts of marginalization and discrimination against children with disability in education are undeniable, especially in developing countries. These acts of discrimination raise concerns regarding legislative reforms that are essential to enforce inclusive education in schools. This research investigates the extent to which private schools in Egypt are inclusive for students with disability by seeking the inputs from the main stakeholders; school administrators, teachers, and parents.

Findings of the research show that despite the enthusiasm and good intentions of all parties, implementing inclusive education in Egyptian private primary schools is still at unsatisfactory levels. Thus, recommendations focus on providing adequate funding resources, designing enabling inclusive legislations, enhancing support services, providing relevant educational tools, and providing efficient training programs for teachers and school administrators. These recommendations seek to enhance the inclusiveness of the education system in Egypt and other developing countries.
Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Students with Disabilities

Over the last decade the traditional profile of disabled persons as being uneducated and unlikely to get employed has changed (Prentice, 2002). The increased awareness of the parents of the children with disabilities about the importance and the right of their children to receive proper education has raised the quest for inclusive education enormously.

In order to understand the research topic further, one has to grasp who are the targeted students, whom inclusion is recommended or lobbied for. Gaad (2010) listed students with disabilities under four main categories, 1) Students with minor mental disabilities, 2) Students with Down syndrome, 3) Students with hearing and speech disabilities, and 4) Students with physical disabilities (Gaad, 2010). Other categories may include, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, and brain injuries. Children with Down syndrome usually learn and progress more slowly than most other children (Down Syndrome Education International, 2016). Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a brain-based disorder that results in distraction, hyperactivity, distractibility or a combination of these characteristics. While, Dyslexia is a disorder related to specific learning disabilities in reading (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). Dyspraxia is a disorder related to a deficiency in the ability to plan and carry out sensory and motor tasks (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, 2016). All these categories, and others, of learning disabilities need to be considered in terms of infrastructure, teacher trainings, class formulations, as well as the provided curricula.
1.2 Inclusive Education

Inclusion in education is an approach of redesigning the mainstream schools by developing its classrooms, academic programs and activities in order to be ready to accommodate students with disabilities in a way that makes all students learn and participate together.

The term ‘inclusion’ means enhancing learners with barriers interaction with the community, giving them opportunities to engage in standard educational systems and have their rightful presence in regular classrooms. Although inclusion is framed within the human rights approach, and is being encouraged by the goodwill and optimism of all who are involved in the inclusive education system, it is still at substandard levels especially in those countries that are yet under their developmental process (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000).

The term “inclusion” must not be confused with the term “integration”, for there are clear differences between both. Integration consistently became on the international communities’ top agenda, as national governments discussed promoting the rights of students with disabilities to appropriate education systems -till the end of the 1980’s, but that is when inclusion came in to capture the sights during the 1990’s till our present times (Vislie, 2003).

Inclusion simply implies that a child attends the same school that he/she would have had attended if he/she had no disability (Mittler, 2000) with the help of supporting services. Integration, on the other hand, is preparing the student with disabilities to enrol in mainstream schools, where he must be ‘enforced’ to adjust himself to the school’s system (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). Therefore, it should be clear how effectual inclusion is than integration, for in inclusion, the moral senses of human rights and values are hailed and through it all learners benefit from the education system,
regardless of their disabilities. Adebayo & Ngwenya (2015) defines inclusive education as a principle that recognizes the need to work towards a ‘schools for all’ tactic. However, to make school accessible and functional for all, especially for students with disabilities, there must be a systemized process to restructure the classrooms and school in a way that accommodates those students and meet their needs. Such development requires an adequate budget and resources to acquire an inclusive education system in each school.

1.3 Legislations

Adopting inclusive education to support learning for all has started to find its way to Egypt and has been implemented according to Ministerial Decree No. (42) for 2008, updated by Ministerial Decree No. (42) for 2015, those laws preside the admission of students with minor disabilities in public and private schools. The latest decree states that children with minor disabilities have the right to enrol in all types of educational systems, such as public, private, community-based, second-chance, formal language and special curricula schools, as well as in all stages of pre-university education and of pre-school.

According to the decree, parents should have the opportunity to enrol their disabled child in either an inclusive or a special education school, and thus the schools subjected to inclusion system shall be committed to announce that inside and outside its premise. The following targeted population are eligible to be considered for inclusion pending fulfilling criteria of admission stated in the ministerial decree:

A. Children with vision disabilities.

B. Children with mobility and physical disabilities including cerebral palsy (except for severe cases).
C. Children with hearing disabilities.

D. Children with mental disabilities; including minor cases like slow learning and autism, a required minimum of 65 to maximum 84 degrees of IQ (intelligence quotient), using Stanford Binet intelligence scale (4th & 5th editions), are accepted… Taking into consideration the child's psychological state, and the outcomes of the adaptive behavior scale appropriate with the general inclusion.

E. It is provided not to have two types of disabilities in one case - e.g. both vision and hearing disabilities or vision and mental disabilities or hearing and mental disabilities (Ministerial Decree (42) for 2015).

Even though there is a ministerial decree that states the rights of students with disabilities in inclusive education in Egypt, the decree is not strictly implemented. There is a need for legislative laws to be added to the constitution in order to enforce mainstream schools to accept students with disabilities as long as they are meeting the criteria of acceptance. Currently there is a law that is being discussed in the parliament to be added to the constitution of all the rights of individuals with disabilities.

This research will study and explore the implementation of inclusive education in private primary schools in Egypt; it will have a close look on the strengths, weaknesses, problems and opportunities that are presented for primary schools in Egypt to apply this policy of inclusive education. This research will illustrate specific case studies in order to evaluate a successful inclusive educational practice, through analyzing the current educational status for schools that adopted inclusive practice in education, as well as others who will to follow the system. The study would further examine the progress of those special needs students and their advances in inclusive schools in comparison to their peers who never attended inclusive schools.
1.4 Statement of the Problem

Disregarding special needs students in Egypt is widely notable across public and private schools, despite the Ministry of Education’s decrees; most of the private schools refuse to apply inclusive education systems, for the implementation of such decree requires vast resources. As public schools have limited resources and funds dedicated to the inclusive education policy, as the absence of well-trained teachers willing to deal with special needs students is trending.

The society in general is not ready to live with the reality that there are in-fact students with disabilities and their desire to be part of the society is a moral duty. Parents refuse that special needs students attend classrooms with their children, especially in private schools. Last but not least, the society’s defiance and school administrations reluctance to embrace students with special needs; bring to the forefront the issues of inclusiveness and the government role in enforcing the ministerial decree firmly.

1.5 Research Question

The central question of this research is:

To what extent do private schools in Egypt apply inclusive education policies for students with disabilities?

This key question could be only answered if we examined the following four subsidiary questions:

1. Are Egyptian schools adopting inclusive education?
2. What is required to make schools in Egypt properly implement inclusive education?
3. Why are school administrations and special needs parents facing challenges to integrate students with disabilities in regular schools?
4. How did other countries successfully apply inclusive education and what would be the lessons learned?
Chapter II: Conceptual Framework

This research investigated how Egyptian private primary schools apply inclusive education policies. As shown in (figure 6.1) below, three main aspects were examined in this research; namely schools, teachers, and resources. The study tries to grasp what is really needed to sustain inclusive education in Egypt for students with disability. In addition, to address problems that needed to be overcome to make schools legible to apply inclusive education policies:

Figure 6.1
The three main elements in (figure 6.1) are main factors this research was based upon. First of all, the research focused specifically on private schools (versus public schools) to assess what inclusive education practices are found there. The rationale behind this selection is that special needs students are usually easily accepted in public schools on paper only. Their acceptance (without much objection) is just a matter of formality, since such students in reality do not attend those public schools they are registered at.

Both school administrators and parents know very well that public schools have no obligation to provide support for special needs students except for enrollment on paper. Some parents accept this because they have no adequate resources to enroll their children in expensive private schools.

Therefore, it was of no benefit to investigate the public schools and that is why this research rather determined its focus on private schools. Each private school, has its own admission rules and has its own system of applying inclusion; whether is partial or full inclusion. Some schools apply both systems, but deciding which system each would be enrolled in depends on the disabilities and IQ levels of each student.

Secondly, this research focused on teachers in inclusive schools, as there are several variables that affect this factor, ones like the amount of extra in-service training needed, the surrounding culture and challenges resembled in the attitude of teachers towards their included special needs students which in some cases reaches the extent that teachers refuse special needs students in their classrooms. This refusal is based on the teachers’ belief that they would not have enough time to deal with a special needs student, given this student’s natural slow learning abilities. The teachers’ time is a crucial element to his/her success in mentoring a special needs student, for he/she needs extra hours to be able to achieve progress with a special needs student.
Thirdly, this research tackled resources needed for a school to be successfully applying an inclusive educational system; those supplementary resources are vital for achieving the goals of inclusive education. In any of the schools that apply inclusive education, there must be a budget dedicated solely to operate and develop inclusive systems, as well as the sensible need of extra human labor of teachers. The budget is also necessary to provide class teachers with constant trainings to assure an improvement of professional skills while interacting with special needs students. Moreover, advanced educational tools are needed by teachers to easily communicate with special needs students, as well as other students without disabilities, in ways that guarantee a safe flow of information from teacher to student.

Special needs students demand exceptional support, like extra academic sessions during school day, which bring us back to the certain need for more teachers. The ideal recommended students-teacher ratio in one class is known to be twenty students per teacher, in which only two of the twenty are special needs students –except for some cases where co-teachers are needed. Thus, the ideal ratio recommends that extra human capital is needed to sustain successful inclusive systems in Egyptian private schools.

Also, for students with physical disabilities, there must be extra resources allocated easier accessibility to school buildings and safety standards.
Chapter III: Literature Review

3.1 Inclusive Education

Inclusive education has been widely discussed in academic literature and was found to have raised significant debates and disagreements. In general, inclusive education is a perspective that aims to fulfil the rights of all students to get decent education, regardless to their disabilities or differences. In other words, it is an initiative that gives students with disabilities (special needs students) the chance to be engaged in mainstream classrooms and be taught by regular teachers. Inclusive education policies advocate the restructuring of mainstream schools to accommodate all children regardless to their disabilities (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Ainscow (1999) with the aid of several English local education authorities, a definition for the word ‘inclusion’ was developed. The author stated four unique elements to define ‘inclusion’. A) Inclusion is a never-ending process of finding better ways that better respond to diversity. B) Inclusion is about identifying and removing barriers of policy and practice. C) Inclusion does not only concern the presence of all students together, but rather focuses on their mutual achievements. D) Inclusion is the emphasis on groups of learners who may suffer marginalization, exclusion or underachievement (Ainscow, 1999).

The inclusion of students with disabilities into ordinary classrooms and schools is one of the most controversial policy reforms in the modern education era (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994). Students with disabilities are now being included into regular schools in many places around the world. Countries like, USA, UK, Canada and Australia have backing legislations that support and regulate inclusive education policies, also, some developing countries like India and Philippines now have similar legislations. Although
these regulations and laws are enforced on schools, some school administrators do not actually abide by it and refuse to embrace the idea of accepting students with disabilities in their schools (Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008).

Implementing inclusive education could be successful through applying modifications in school systems and policies; such reforms cannot function without raising awareness among individuals involved in the inclusive process. In addition, all participants have to be involved in decision-making from the beginning (Nilholm, 2006). Inclusive education -as a principle- recognizes the need to work towards a ‘schools for all’ approach, which means that all children with or without disabilities should have access to regular schools that meets all their necessities (Adebayo & Ngwenya, 2015).

Inclusion is more than housing individuals into an unvarying system of educational practice. Inclusive education is rather all about why, how, when, where and the consequences of educating all learners. A key contributor to the improvement of inclusive education and its practice is preparing the teachers and training them well (Barton, 2003). Also, the supply level of teaching/learning resources, like adequate educational facilities and others, challenges the implementation of effective inclusive education systems (Adebayo & Ngwenya, 2015). In order to implement inclusive education successfully teachers need to be supported and empowered by introducing more programmatic support, narrowing down class ratios, developing teachers’ skills, and using supportive technology.

Moreover, to facilitate inclusive schooling environments, there must be easy physical access, ideal learning tools and social experiences. The absence of those elements would not help a wholly participation of students with disabilities in schools and denies the rights for an equitable educational experience.
Pivik et al., (2002) set four elements for improving the education experience and making it more constructive for students with disabilities; explicitly: 1) improving accessibility by modifying physical structures, 2) increasing disability awareness programs to minimize negative attitudes towards special needs students, 3) developing teachers and staffs’ inclusive education programs to deal better with special needs students, and, 4) developing more educational policies to improve inclusion. (Pivik, Mccomas, & Laflamme, 2002). The decision to introduce school reform to apply inclusive education may occur at the building, district, or state level, or at all three levels, however, the most influential of these changes actually happen at the classroom level. It is not easy that any school be ready to make decisions on restructuring for inclusion, because the most important is the culture of the community of the school in which the school staff understands well what inclusion is all about (Mamlin, 1999).

3.2 Inclusive Education in the Middle East
Gaad (2010) illustrates the development of inclusive education systems in the Middle East during the past three decades. Examining the Tunisian, it was the first African-Arab country to ratify the UN convention regarding the rights of people with disabilities, and its government habituated the society of the benefits of an inclusive policy. Since the 1970s, many children with special needs were spontaneously enlisted in regular schools (Gaad, 2010, p. 48). In addition, the same situation applies on the state of Qatar, where education for special needs started in 1974 by the opening of a single classroom in regular primary schools. (Gaad, 2010, p. 27).
Furthermore, the government in Qatar has been adopting serious inclusive projects to improve the inclusive education. Also countries like, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have also adopted the inclusive education systems in schools. There are two categories of
inclusion, partial inclusive and full inclusive systems. Partial inclusive is where students are encompassed in special classes in regular schools, they rather engage with normal students only in break times, trips, assembly hours, activities, and art classes. While in full inclusion, students are included in regular classes and are provided with other services, such as resource centers, traveler-teachers programs, consultant teachers and special education programs. (Gaad, 2010, p. 16 & 37).

While on the other hand, countries like Kuwait had not involved inclusion within its education systems. The model in Kuwait is simply that of classic exclusion and categorization based upon capabilities/disabilities. Despite some attempts of social inclusion programs like the One-day integration for special needs students in regular schools to raise awareness, there are yet no serious attempts taken by the government sector towards inclusive education in Kuwait. (Gaad, 2010, p. 25-26)

A country like Palestine, forced under war conditions, where the Arab-Israeli conflict seems to be never-ending, in such difficult circumstances, inclusive education is neglected by the Palestinian society, for the basic human needs are not sustained by its members due to poverty and economic strains. (Gaad, 2010, p. 65).

As for the case in Egypt, Gaad argues that there is no real inclusion implemented as Egypt is considered an overpopulated and under-resourced country. There is no doubt that Egypt, despite slight awareness to the significance of inclusion and efforts by advocates exerted to inject this kind of concept within its societies, still thrives to apply an effective inclusive educational system. (Gaad, 2010, P. 43).

The UNICEF in Egypt stated -on its website- that it is funding a project for education in Egypt, with a branched inclusive educational system, particularly running from 2013 – 2017. UNICEF mentions an aim to intervene to widen the Ministry of Education’s capacity through introducing inclusive school models nationwide. These schools are to
adopt an integrated approach, which leads to the creation of child friendly school environment, respecting diversity and particularly the acceptance of special needs children. The integrated approach promotes the use of different teaching methods, along with the flexibility and openness of the curricula; it also allows the participation of parents in shaping school policies and strategies. The tools to achieve integrated model would be through enhancing school leadership, monitoring, assessing, and supplying adequate learning materials and supervision (UNICEF - Egypt, 2016).

Unquestionably, inclusion is not rightfully interpreted in Middle Eastern countries, societies that have segregated systems for as long as history recalls. However, there is a sincere loom to refine laws, activities and projects to adopt and implement inclusion of children with disabilities in Middle Eastern mainstream schools. (Gaad, 2010, p. 95).

3.3 Inclusive Education in other Developing Countries

Adequate implementation of inclusive education is an important and major issue in developing countries, due to the fact that the majority of disabled population lives in underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America, Caribbean and the Middle East. Yet, inclusive education is inefficiently implemented in most developing countries due to barriers and constraints of traditional economic and developmental strains, thus achieving western models of inclusion remain impractical. (Eleweke & Rodda 2002).

Inclusive education is being encouraged and promoted in South Africa now, not only as another option for normal education, but also as a new educational strategy that contributes to the democratic society that settled after the Apartheid era. However, the implementation of inclusive education -and after ten years of basing a democratic government in South Africa- remains a challenge (Engelbrecht, 2006).
Before and during the Apartheid, educational system laws were enacted where more children get neglected due to racial issues. (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001; Engelbrecht et al., 2002). In addition, special needs students were banned by legislations from attending schools with other “regular” children. (Engelbrecht et al., 2002).

Yet after the Apartheid era, inclusive education laws changed and re-framed within the modern values of human rights to include all learners under a unified non-racial education and training system, designed to host everyone -including children with special educational needs- without discrimination (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001; Engelbrecht, 2006).

The Department of Education in South Africa released several policies that builds a framework to implement inclusive education, the latest of which was the White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System in 2001 (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001).

White Paper 6 designed the following six principles to systemize a developed and sustained of inclusive education and training systems in South Africa:

- Formulating adequate educational/training policies and legislations.
- Improving education support services.
- Facilitating access to education through expanding and developing schools.
- Improving curricula through assessment and making it bendable to embrace all categories.
- Public awareness and advocacy campaigns to introduce special needs students and provide the needed moral and practical support.
- Adequate funding support. (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001)

Currently, although there is a more equitable allocation of resources across South African schools, yet the output of school systems still varies considerably, like any other
developing country, due to the lack of: 1) Adequate resources, 2) Appropriate administrative systems, and 3) Well trained teachers. Those three factors limit the successful implementation of new education policies regarding inclusive education. Not to mention to the inequalities that still exist in South African communities between the previously advantaged white people’s schools and disadvantaged schools (Engelbrecht, 2006).

We could look at Mexico as a different case, applying inclusive schools in it has not been easy due to extreme poverty, famine and a strong teachers’ union that is resistant to inclusion. However, in 1993, the government in Mexico underwent a major restructuring procedure -in formal education- in order to provide equality to all learners regardless to their special needs or disabilities. Which included promotion of integration of students with disability into regular schools, provision of teacher training, and parent orientation to better achieve students’ inclusion. (Forlin, Cedillo, Romero-Contreras, Fletcher, & Rodriguez Hernández, 2010).

3.4 Challenges Hindering a Successful Inclusive Educational System

There are many challenges facing a successful implementation of inclusive education systems, where teachers and educators play the most influential role in overcoming such obstacles (Villa et al., 1996; Sharma et al., 2008; Cook et al. 2000).

The involvement of teachers in curricula decisions and students’ groupings helps teachers be assertive that they can provide supplementary services to students with disabilities in their classrooms (Buell, Hallam, Gamel-Mccormick, & Scheer, 2010).

Although it is difficult to improve the quality of teachers dealing with students with disabilities, the consequences of failing to reach this standard is detrimental to welfare of special needs students. Teachers must be well trained, skilful and motivated to
maintain remarkable annual progress to their special needs students. Normally, special needs students fall far behind their peer—progress wise, that is why it is crucial for teachers to be alerted of deal with such issue. The significance of professional, well-prepared and skilful teachers for a successful inclusive education system to be enacted should not be ignored. The future in this field depends on the ability to develop and sustain teachers, as well as design policies that promote incentive systems for those teachers. (Brownell, Sindelar, Kiely & Danielson, 2010).

The values and beliefs of different communities are one of the challenges that pop-up when trying to implement inclusive education programs; there is a definite need for cultural reforms in schools, societies and homes. These reforms are associated with the perceptions and feelings of individuals working in inclusive schools, thoughts that influence how teachers teach, how students learn, and how administrators organize and develop programs to reach the desired progress. (Hudgins, 2012).

Although the movement towards inclusive education is part of a broader human rights agenda, many educators have serious concerns against the swelling phenomena of placing special needs students in regular schools. (Florian, 1998).

Accordingly, educators who received pre-service preparation programs on how to deal with students with disabilities are those who are more likely to deal with inclusion positively. Also, it is important to consider teachers’ worries during these preparation programs and address them (Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008).

Implementing inclusive education practices in regular schools encourages—by nature—the termination of segregated system. It means that both educational facilities and schools must shift their perspectives and attitudes in coordination with the new enacted reforms. Educational facilities need to comprise larger numbers of students, including those of special needs. Policy makers and local administrations are both demanding the
adoption of new methodologies. (Pijl & Frissen, 2009). However, according to Hudgins (2012), the lack of needed expertise for both teachers and administrators to implement the inclusion still remains as a crucial challenge. The teachers’ attitudes towards special needs students affect the substantial implementation of inclusive systems, teachers and staff members in any school should abide by the school’s purpose and agenda. (Hudgins, 2012). Teachers may be intolerant with their special needs students due to their disabilities; therefore, school administrators must set an action plan that changes attitudes of those teachers by putting them on professional development training programs in order embrace children with special needs students in their classrooms tolerantly. (Cook, Tankersley, Cook, & Landrum, 2000). Other studies however - conducted for teachers actively involved in inclusion programs- showed huge enthusiasm on part of those teachers concerned with the inclusion of special needs students into regular schools and classes. Their enthusiasm was reported to be at its peak by the end of their teaching cycle, after mastering their teaching abilities and touching the results of their efforts (Villa, Thousand, Meyers and Nevin, 1996). In fact, a teacher’s behaviour comes as a key player affecting interaction among children and - subsequently- their progress and development. A general observation concerned with teachers’ genders, implied that female teachers have shown more positive attitudes towards inclusion and special needs students than their male counterparts (Aksamit, Morris & Leuenberger, 1987). Moreover, Adebayo & Ngwenya (2015) stated that some of the major challenges frustrating the implementation of inclusive education are teachers’ competency, financial resources, teachers’ friendliness and efficacy. (Adebayo & Ngwenya, 2015).

Some studies show that classroom layout might need to be changed in design and capacity to accommodate special needs children. Chairs, tables, stairways, lifts, ramps
and smart teaching boards would highly affect the quality of educational services offered and ease-up inclusion efforts. Classes of smaller size were recommended in such studies, as well as, the training of teachers and school administrators to attain specifics of individual special needs conditions -so that then could be better responsive on the ground (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000).

Furthermore, Johnson and Jonson (1986) recommend the use of cooperative activities in inclusive classroom, children with special needs have been observed to make vast progress in terms of academic and social adjustment when prompted and praised often (McConnell, Sisson, Cort, & Strain, 1991)

Another challenge that faces inclusion is the lack of resources and proper attitudes, which makes inclusion impractically feasible; however, full inclusion may be doable with a longer time frame. For a perfect inclusive system to develop, there is a need for an enormous change in the culture, organization and keenness of schools. (Evans & Lunt, 2002).
Chapter IV: Research Methodology

4.1 Design Strategy

This research represents a case study on the “practices of inclusion in Egyptian private primary schools”. The case study analysis methodology was adopted through the analysis; this method is considered a tool in many social science studies. It enjoys a more noticeable role in both education (Gulsecen & Kubat, 2006) and community-based problems (Johnson, 2006).

In this research, we have conducted semi-structured interviews with three main categories: parents of special needs students, class teachers and school administrators. The semi-structured interview guide provides a clear set of instructions for interviewers and can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data. (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

According to (Fylan 2005) an interview is one of the most stimulating ways to collect data. Semi-structured interviews are formal conversations in which you define your purpose and questions prompting the discussion, while structured interviews are considered like questionnaires that are pre-administered. (Fylan, 2005)

Findings of this research are extracted from the qualitative analysis of primary data collected through interviews. Preferences were given to conduct field surveys rather than questionnaires based on the assumption that informants would be more responsive to verbal questions than having to fill out questionnaires. Moreover, semi-structured interviews often promote initiating more ideas and points for discussion enriching the kind of data gathered.
4.2 Sample Selection

Interviews covered the main purposed categories of informants involved in inclusion practices in Egyptian primary schools, namely: special needs students’ parents, class teachers, and school administrators. Number of interviewees amounted to 1) ten parents of special needs students whom their children enrolled in different schools in Egypt, 2) four school administrators of four different private schools, and last but not least, 3) four class teachers from four different private schools. For confidentiality reasons we named the parents interviewees A, B, C, … etc., school administrator A, B, C, D and teacher A, B, C, D. Then we referred to each interviewee in the research with a capital letter.

Some challenges emerged while conducting the interviews, as some interviewees reluctantly answered some questions due to their sensitive situation.

Interview questions focused on the main issues of:

A) The definition of inclusive education,

B) How is it applied in Egyptian private primary schools.

At the end of this thesis, the research offers recommendations for improving inclusive education practices in Egypt. These recommendations developed through the outcome of data gathered from interviews with parents, teachers, schools’ administrators, as well as the authors of works cited through the paper.
Chapter V: Data Collection, Findings and Discussion

5.1 Data Collection

The data collection will depend on data received of the semi-structured interviews that will be conducted with the three main stakeholders; school administrators, teachers, and the parents of students with disabilities that are enrolled in inclusive private primary schools in greater Cairo:

1. The first category was the school administrators and teachers from Egyptian private primary schools that apply inclusive education. This category was important to identify the resources and materials needed by those schools to sustainably implement inclusive education. They gave a general view on the positive and negative sides of inclusive education. They also helped in knowing the challenges facing educators and schools in the implementation of inclusive education in Egypt.

2. In second came the teachers, in order to study how they react to the idea of including special needs students in their classrooms. We think that teachers are either the major challenge against implementing inclusive systems, or the very reason of its successful operation. The research studied their behavior towards special needs ‘students’ vs. other students. It studied their competency, understating, special education, behavior and readiness to accept and tolerate special needs’ students.

3. The third category was the special needs students’ parents, to know their concerns, opinions, pros and cons regarding their experience of inclusive education with their children.
5.2 Findings

Inclusion as stated in the ministerial decree is very broad and general, but how inclusion actually is applied in Egyptian primary schools varies widely, for every school has its own method of applying it!

After interviewing many parents, school administrators and teachers, there is not a specific frame in which the schools can follow to apply inclusion. The inclusion ministerial decree does not have any framework or ground rules, each school design its own frame, policies, rules and limitations. The only common factor found among schools in applying inclusive education is the inclusive exams requested from the ministry of education. The ministry had built-up specialized exams for students with disabilities to ease on them the process. Those exams are to examine if students know the information or not, it does not matter how many words are written, or if he can write essays or not. Those exams usually consist of true or false, multiple choice questions, and very small essay questions due to time constraints.

5.2.1 Findings from Parents’ Perspective

5.2.1.1 Inclusion from Parental Perspective

Special needs students’ parents aim is to enroll their children in regular schools not special schools designed only for special needs students, because they believe that inclusion is best for their children. However, in fact, every child has a special need in a sense that there is no child like the other, even among siblings, capacities and learning capabilities vary. In this regards, parent A says:

“I strongly agree that every child has a special need that requires a special way of teaching, dealing and learning. I have three sons, one of them is a special need, however, I see each one of the three has his special need, they all vary in their learning styles and no child is like another” (Interview, April 2016).
Most of the parents of special needs students believe that the best way to apply inclusion is to allow special needs students attend full school days in mainstream classes with other students. In this regards, Parent B explains:

“I believe inclusion means that my son attends a full school day with other children of his age in regular classrooms with the help of a shadow teacher. The shadow teacher will help him express himself better; the shadow teacher will be the liaison between the school and home. He/she will tell me what is going on in school because my son cannot convey all the information he learns, for example, he may forget to tell me about a homework or may forget to take notes off the blackboard” (Interview, April 2016).

Parent C sees the best shape for inclusion as provided through having student with special needs, she notes:

“Inclusion is mingling special needs students with other students in schools under an indirect supervision, a support of a professional teacher” (Interview, April 2016).

Most parents believe that their children have benefited from inclusion either, socially, or academically, or both, in this regards, parent D notes:

“My son has benefited from the inclusion socially, but academically he did not progress that much. They treated him as all other children and that is what I needed from inclusion. He has his friends and his social life. However, the burdens of studying and learning fall heavier on me at home. The class teachers have no extra time to dedicate to my son during class periods and he definitely needs it. I have to over-study with him at home to cover the gap between him and his peers. Sometimes I have to give him private sessions at home because his school applies the full inclusion system and do not have extra sessions for special needs students; they leave it all to the parents” (Interview, May 2016).

While other parents assures that there is no real inclusion in Egypt and that their children do not benefit from attending full school days in average school, they concluded that only international very expensive schools have real effective inclusive systems, in this regards parent F says:

“For two main issues, there is no such thing called inclusion in Egypt. The first issue, inclusion in Egypt is simply how you can afford it. Inclusive education only
exists in Egypt in very expensive schools with school fees ranging from 100,000-150,000 annually. Other inclusive private schools with average fees ranging from 20,000-40,000 are a scandal, in those schools, special needs students just attend in the mainstream classrooms but they do not learn anything. The second issue is the awareness of the teachers; most of the teachers are unaware of what inclusive education is, and do not know how to deal with special needs students” (Interview, May 2016)

5.2.1.2 Different Types of Inclusive Systems in Egyptian Schools

From the data collected, it showed that there are two systems of inclusion applied in most Egyptian schools, full or academic inclusion, and partial or social inclusion. Academic inclusion is to include special needs students in mainstream classrooms, attend all classes regularly, and engage in activities of a full school day with or without a shadow teacher. While in social inclusion, schools only allow special needs students to attend social activities like the break, art classes, assembly hours, music classes, school field trips and physical education classes. In the social or partial inclusive system, it is not allowed for special needs students to attend academic classes with other students of their same grade level. Schools design different academic classes exclusively for special needs students. The decision of the type of inclusion that is applied on different cases is based on the capabilities and capacity of student themselves. However, in most of the schools, especially private schools, the partial inclusion is obligatory and it is the only condition imposed on parents to accept and enroll their special needs students in it. Most of the parents refuse this condition but they always accept in the end because they have no other choice.

Regarding parents perspective of how they see different types of inclusive systems, some see social inclusion is better, in this issue parent A states:

“Full inclusion is better in the first years of the special needs students education in the primary schools, but as the curriculum gets more advanced and difficult every year, it is better to switch to partial inclusion because the student will not be able to
progress academically like his peers even when a shadow teacher is provided”” (Interview, April 2016)

On the contrary, other parents argue that full inclusion should be the norm because it is more beneficial to children, in this point B argues:

“I strongly believe that partial inclusion -that most of the schools apply- is not useful, activities are the time to play not to learn, the aim of inclusive education is that my son sees his peers in every aspect during school day and learns from them. He learns to observe the rules, like listening to the teacher in class and standing in the line and this can only be accomplished in the full inclusion system. My son already is enjoying social inclusion in his social life outside schools, with his friends in the club and his relatives, but at school it is different, he needs to be put under certain code of ethics and watch other students do their activities to learn from them and blend in” (Interview, April 2016)

5.2.1.3 Teachers and their Influence on Special Needs Student

From the data collected, it showed that teachers influence special needs students greatly. Therefore teachers who deal with special needs students must be, 1) prepared psychologically to deal with them, 2) professional and academically prepared very well, and 3) have special skills, ones that make him/her transfer the information easily to the student, whether the student is a special needs student or not. In this regards, parents see that to apply inclusion correctly, teachers must be prepared psychologically to deal with children with special needs. In this regards, parent B and D agreed that:

“Any teacher, whatever his achievements are during his academic career, if he does not know how to psychologically deal with special needs students, by accepting, loving and teaching them in a calm and tolerant manner, the teacher will definitely fail and accordingly the student will. Therefore, I believe teachers not only need special in-service teaching preparations, but has to be also prepared psychologically to know how to deal professionally with special needs students.” (Interviews, April & May 2016).

In addition to what has been previously mentioned, sometimes schools hire teachers that are not professional and not well academically prepared, in this regards parent C says:
“My daughter was enrolled in a full inclusive system in a school in which they provided the support teacher, they always refused that I get in contact with the support teacher of my daughter and that all communications would be through the administration. This -of course- is unbearable because it is important that the support teacher act as a liaison, and report to me how my daughter is progressing at school. I discovered that they hire unqualified personnel to act as support teachers and they do not want parents to get in contact with them and inspect their non-academic and unprofessional backgrounds” (Interview, April 2016)

Sometimes, the foreign teachers are more professional than local ones while dealing with special needs students in their class, in this regards parent C says:

“My daughter is enrolled in a full inclusion system of a language school; I have noticed that all of her foreign teachers deal with her very professionally. On the contrary of the national teachers, who are not all up to my expectation of the way my daughter should be treated. Foreign teachers accept the others while not all of the domestic ones do!” (Interview, April 2016)

Teachers need special skills, ones that make him/her transfer the information easily to the student, whether the student is a special needs student or not. In this regards, parent C says:

“Teachers should use sophisticated educational tools and practical methods with all students, not only special needs ones. Objects, models, and experiments used by professional teachers play a crucial role in delivering the information or the lesson verbally especially in the primary stage” (Interview, April 2016).

Another point of view regarding teachers that stress that the class teachers are of so much benefit to special needs students if they treat them well and accept them in their classroom, in this regards parent D implies:

“I have a positive experience with class teachers, my son’s teachers help him a lot and he benefits from them, they are so friendly with him and I have never felt any negative feelings from them towards my son as I hear from other parents of special needs children, my son was lucky I guess. For I do not expect that much from the teachers academically, I rather depend on my homework with him for his academic progress” (Interview, May 2016).

5.2.1.4 Challenges Faced by Special Needs Students and their Parents

From the data collected, it showed that most parents face many challenges when they choose to enroll and educate their special needs children in mainstream schools like, 1)
finding appropriate schools, 2) difficult academic curriculum regarding their low IQ, 3) the refusal of the community to accept their children, and, 4) disappointment from families, relatives and friends. We will discuss these challenges thoroughly below.

The first challenge parents face is finding appropriate schools for their special needs children. Most schools, despite the inclusion ministerial decree, refuse to accept special needs students. In this regards, parent D says:

“I got worried till I found a school which accepted my son, although his IQ was within the range stated in the law of inclusion. In addition, his capabilities and skills were acceptable and similar to other students at his age of six. I had to pay donations to my son’s current school to accept his enrollment” (Interview, May 2016)

Other challenges beside admission to appropriate schools that special needs students face are not only the academic curriculum and its difficulty regarding their low IQ, but also, the community, teachers and school administrators themselves. In this regards, parent B says:

“My son is following a full inclusion system, where he attends a full school day with his peers. Every year the school administrator waits for him to fail the final exams! She wants to transfer him to the special education section in her school, which only applies partial inclusion systems, not the full inclusion one. Instead of encouraging him to learn, excel and pass exams, she rather expects him to fail, to prove to herself that she is right and that those students are not eligible to attend full school days and engage in full inclusion systems. This is the biggest challenge we suffer, it is even a harder challenge than the difficult curricula our children have to study daily, which is relatively difficult in regards to my son’s limited capacities and low IQ. In addition, there is another challenge which is other children in the school and their parents, other children cannot understand difference or accept it and their parents are afraid that my son might hurt their children just because he is different” (Interview, April 2016).

Another parent, parent C, has the same point of view as parent B above, which is school administrators and teachers are the main challenge that faces her daughter, in this regards she says:

The biggest challenge my daughter and me face is the school itself, precisely its administration. I had to convince the school administration that my daughter can
learn and has the right for education, and that they are not doing me a favor for accepting her. Although my daughter is clever, she is not brilliant she is an average student. The school is expecting from my daughter to be brilliant, although not all normal students are brilliant. In a class of 25 students, you can find one or two students with vivid minds, while others remain as relatively averaged. In my case, the school administration had to see that my daughter has extra potential than average children, for them to believe that she deserves to attend in a regular mainstream classroom” (Interview, April 2016)

For avoiding the problem of the community refusal to special needs children, some parents see partial inclusion as a solution for the challenges faced by the community in which they refuse accepting special needs students with regular ones, in this regards, parent A believes:

“When my son was young, he had not yet sensed his peers ‘parents’ negative vibes - his peers themselves did not have that much of adverse feelings as their parents- for they were still young and innocent. However, as they grew older, they started to be more like their parents, and be part of this community that denies the basic rights of my son to have access to regular schooling and decent education. They started to bully him because he is different -which emotionally and psychologically harmed him. I see that partial inclusion helps -in our case- for segregating my son during class times minimizes such acts of rejection and refutation against him” (Interview, April 2016).

Another type of challenge facing special needs children and their parent comes from their personal life, as sometimes the biggest challenge parents face is from the very people whom are supposed to be encouraging, like families, relatives and friends, not just from the community itself, the challenge seems to be graver, in this regards parent E says:

When I decided to enroll my daughter in an inclusive school, I faced challenges from people close to me like relatives and friends. They did not believe in my daughter and saw it useless. However, they agreed with me just from the perspective “give it a shot but she will probably fail”! Such pessimism towards my daughter’s case gave me a push and made me work harder with my daughter and now she is very successful in her studies” (Interview, April 2016).

In general, the challenges facing special needs students and their parents can be summed-up according to parent F as follows:
- Rejection by private schools.
- Weak awareness of other children and their parents.
- Inexperience of teachers and their negative attitudes towards students.
- Ignoring students in classrooms -by teachers and their peers.
- Bullying out students by their peers and sometimes their teachers.
- Mistreatment parents get from shadow/support teachers.
- The financial burden on parents.

5.2.1.5 Special Support Needed for Special Needs Students

From the data collected, it showed that special support is definitely needed and currently applied in Egyptian private primary schools to help special needs students successfully apply inclusion in schools, but it may cost the parents double the school fees annually. There are several types of special support that schools can provide.

a) Extra Sessions and One-to-One Sessions

According to parents, one type of special support student’s need is taking extra academic sessions during or after school, with or without the same class teacher teaching these subjects. This is also known as “One-to-one sessions”. Parent B reflects on this concept, saying:

“Of course my son needs extra support. The most important factor of a successive inclusion system is offering the special need student the help he needs and deserves during the school day and exams! This simple extra help or support will help my son be better and close to other students without disabilities. At the beginning of every academic year, I meet with the class teachers of my son and arrange that they give him paid extra sessions in school during the break and during the non-academic classes like physical education and art classes. The reason for that is to avoid taking these extra sessions after school that will make a waste of time to him and to the teacher himself/herself. Hearing the information again with the same teacher, the same lesson taught earlier during class, and the same way of teaching, has made a great difference with my son’s learning and information absorption. My son as a special needs student is a slow learner, he will not learn the lesson from the first time during class and he needs to hear the lesson a second and a third time. The time after school is for resting and memorizing the lessons learnt at school earlier during the day.” (Interview, April 2016).
b) Support or Shadow Teachers

According to parents, shadow teachers, also known as support teachers, are another type of support system special needs students may need. The role of a shadow teacher is to attend all the classes with the student, in order to help him or her cope faster with the class and teachers. Some parents argue that shadow teachers may have a negative influence on the student, while others argue the opposite. While not all school administrators accept the shadow teacher system, many agree with it and actually set it as a condition for accepting and enrolling the students.

Several parents who are against shadow teachers have argued that the shadow teacher makes the student dependent and not independent:

*Shadow teachers are not that beneficial; the student becomes lazy and totally dependent on his shadow teacher to the extent that he makes the shadow teacher take the notes from the blackboard for him because he gives her/him the intention that he is slow. Shadow teachers in this situation cannot say “No” to the student, as she/he is here to help him/her; however, the student here is sneaky!* (Interviews, April 2016)

On the other hand, other parents believe that shadow teachers are beneficial and help the students and is an important back-up to the class teacher as follows:

*Shadow teachers are very beneficial; they help our children a lot during the school day and help them cope well during class time. Our children are slow learners and they need extra help during class, which would otherwise not provided by the class teacher as he or she is usually busy with the rest of the class. It is therefore a must to provide our children with a shadow teacher to back-up the class teachers and help them during the school day”* (Interview, April 2016).

Also, shadow teachers are important for students with special needs in order to observe and guide them indirectly. In this regards, Parent C says:

*The shadow teacher is important for inclusion success; the shadow teacher should deal with the student in an indirect way by observing the student remotely during the social activities in school. In addition, it is better that each shadow teacher has two or three special needs students to be responsible for. Having only one shadow teacher for each special needs students will make the student lazy and not want to work. Also, it is better that the professional and qualified shadow teacher be provided through the school and not through the parents, in order to avoid any financial abuse of the parents”* (Interview, April 2016)
It is worth noting that shadow teachers are quite expensive, and impose a financial burden on parents who are already paying expensive school fees. Many parents have even reported cases of shadow teachers financially abusing them because they know that their children cannot go to school without them.

c) Simplified Exams

Another type of support for students with special needs is taking inclusive exams, or in other words, simplified exams. Some parents prefer not to request this unless their child begin failing the regular exams that are designed for his or her peers. However, most parents favor this method as it simplifies the examination process for their child. Many request these exams from the beginning of the schooling process in order to avoid making their children undergo the hardship of normal exams and possibly failing due to his or her limited capacities. In their view, this saves the child from feeling upset and incapable.

Simplified or inclusive exams are designed especially for special needs students. They are specially designed to have questions which take less time to answer, while still being able to examine the student in the same information as the rest of the class. They mostly include multiple-choice, fill in the blanks, and true or false questions. Special needs students are exempted from essays, comprehension, and descriptive and literary questions. Inclusive exams however are not automatically granted. Parents must submit a request to the Ministry of Education and the student has to undergo specific IQ tests and other physical investigations every year. The experts working in the ministry evaluate the student make sure that the student is eligible to sit for these exams.
d) Exam Companions

Another type of support system for special needs students is having someone help them during exams. The type of help can vary from reading the exam, explaining exam questions, and writing the answers while the student dictates. Depending on the disability the student has, the type of companion will differ. For exams, there are two types of companions available: legal and educational. A legal companion is used for students who are slow learners, and need assistance with reading, writing and so on. In this case, a younger student from the same school is allocated for the special need student as a legal companion. This legal companion escorts the student during the exam to read and write for him/her. If the student needs extra help during the exams, an educational companion is approved to assist with explaining or illustrating the questions. Just like simplified exams, exam companions are not granted automatically. Parents submit a request to the Ministry of Education and the student has to undergo specific evaluation tests every year, to make sure they are in definite need of a companion.

e) Simplified Curricula

The ministry of education started adopting a new method to support students with special needs, which focuses on designing simplified curricula for special needs students in regular schools.

f) Technology

Another type of special support is the use of technology in delivering the information to all students, not only those with special needs students. In this regard, parent D notes:

“My son takes computer trainings which helped him in exceling in reading and writing. He was weak in these areas until he started to take computer courses which helped him a lot. His capabilities of reading and writing is much better now” (Interview, May 2016).
5.2.1.6 Factors Affecting Inclusion

From the data collected, it showed that the class size is an important factor which affects the inclusive system. Instead of having to take one-to-one sessions or extra sessions during school, it is better to minimize the number of students per teacher. This however would mean increasing the human capital in schools. Instead of having 30 or 25 student per teacher, the school arranges different academic classes for the special needs students, with the ratio for example being five special needs students per teacher. This system is implemented in the partial inclusion system. With this system, the teacher will have more time to illustrate the topics of the lesson to the special needs students and attend better to their needs. Many parents see this factor important, such as Parent A who states:

“Partial inclusion is better, as my son attends the academic sessions with other special needs students like him and they are a very limited number per class. I found my son returning home understanding his lessons better than when he used to attend the full inclusion system. In the full inclusion, there was 25 students in class and the class teacher did not have enough time to concentrate well with each child. The class size influenced my son’s progress even if he had a shadow teacher with him. I can say that my son’s percentage of learning in class is 80% in the partial inclusion system vs. 50% in the full inclusion system” (Interview, April 2016)

Another factor that affects inclusion is the age and grade level of the special needs in this regard, parents D and E and school administrator C agree that:

“Of course when the special needs student is younger, the student achieves better during class. However, as they grow, academic and educational progress become more challenging, and the gap between the child and other children without disabilities became wider and clearer. During the first years of school, special needs students are academically better than they are socially, but as they grow older and advance in education, special needs students excel socially rather than academically!” (Interviews, April and May 2016)
5.2.1.7 Advantages and Disadvantages of Current Inclusion Policies

From the data collected, it showed that there are advantages and disadvantages of inclusion in Egyptian private schools. In this regards, parent B sees the main disadvantage is the partial inclusive system:

“The disadvantage of inclusive education in Egypt is applying the inclusion partially and thus not receiving the required and expected gain from inclusion. The advantages however include special need students gaining self-confidence, learning from peers, obtaining a natural right of education and improving social behavior. The community itself will benefit by having more literate individuals through educating special needs individuals. This way the illiteracy of the community will be reduced” (Interview, April 2016)

Parents detect other disadvantages of the inclusive system, which is the disorganization in the special section in inclusive schools, in this regard, parent C say:

“A main disadvantage of the full inclusive system in schools is the disorganization of the extra session or one-to-one sessions delivered to special needs students during the school day by support teachers, it must be compatible with the lessons taught in class in the same day and the support teacher delivering these sessions should organize well with the class teacher. In addition, the curricula are not simplified for special needs students, I think it is important to be simplified, as long as the exams will be simplified” (Interview, April 2016).

While parent D sees the main advantage of inclusion is enhancing the capacities of special needs children as follows:

“The advantage of the inclusive system is it enhanced the capacities and capabilities of my son. Enrolling in a mainstream school made my son think, act, talk and deal with people in a better way. Other children I know with the same disability of my son who attend special schools designed only for special needs fall far behind my son although at their early years before school they did not differ than my son at all. As for the disadvantages, I do not find any in the inclusive schools until now” (Interview, May 2016)

5.2.2 Findings from School Administrators’ Perspective

5.2.2.1 Inclusion from School Administrators Perspective

The perspective school administrators see inclusion sometimes differ from the point of view of parents, in this regards, school administrators B and C agree that:
“Inclusion is allowing special needs students to live a normal life and enjoy a normal environment, which is the right of each individual. However, we cannot neglect the fact that inclusion is not suitable for all special needs students. Some benefit from full inclusion, some from partial, and others do not benefit from inclusion at all. Special needs students who are not benefiting from either full or partial inclusive systems are not gaining anything and their parents are harming them by enforcing them to continue in an environment they are not capable to deal with. Moreover, sometimes there are two students with the same disability in a same classroom with similar IQ levels and their responsiveness to inclusion is totally different. There is no specific educational program designed for a special need student that can work with another student, every student is unique and different” (Interviews, April & May 2016).

The needs of every special needs student differs from one child to another, in this regards school administrators A and B agree that:

“The need of each special need student is different, meaning every child needs his unique form of support. This can range from just mobility, to needing a special computer that helps him in his listening, hearing or visual disabilities. Many times, students have very good cognitive abilities, but need help because his mobility functions are limited. Special needs student are just like other children but the difference is that they are in continuous need for someone who works with them because every child needs his own support” (Interviews, April & May 2016)

5.2.2.2 Different Types of Inclusive Systems in Egyptian Schools

When it comes to inclusive systems, there is no “best type”, as explained by administrator B, every child should be enrolled in the appropriate inclusive system that suits his capacities and capabilities, he explains that:

“The best type of inclusion is what best suits each special need student, no system is perfect for everyone. There must be assessments for students, you can find a student who can attend inclusive schools with a shadow teacher and you can find another one who does not need shadow teachers, some students can attend partial inclusive systems like activities classes only but not academic, another can attend full inclusive systems. Every student is a special case that should be observed and dealt with separately, there is no thing called what is the better inclusive system” (Interview, April 2016)

There are two types of inclusion that is applied in private schools: full and partial. However, some schools offer a third system, which combines the partial and full inclusive systems. In this regard, school administrator C says that:

“In our school, we designed a special system for inclusion, where, the special needs student attends classes with the regular students and learns specific subjects like, Math,
Arabic, Science and Religion. This counts to 30% of his school day time in regular classroom with his peers. The other 30% of his time is spent in activities with regular students. The remaining 40% is spent in special classrooms the student attends with special teachers to learn tougher subjects, like languages. In this system, we mix between the full and partial inclusive systems for the utmost benefit. Students are partially included academically and at the same time receive one-to-one sessions in special classrooms to complete the knowledge of the rest of the curriculum. In addition, the student receives speech sessions, psychiatric treatments sessions, and behavior modification sessions if needed.” (Interview, May 2016)

School administrator A believes that the proper system is the mix of both full and partial inclusive systems for the following reasons:

“We apply the full inclusive system, however, observing the special needs student limited abilities, the student only attends half the time of the lessons with his peers in the classroom. For example, each class of each subject is 40 minutes; the student attends only 20 minutes of the class and then leaves the classroom and attends a one-to-one session with a special education teacher who completes the illustration of lesson of the same subject for him. This way, the student is included and at the same time will take the special support needed to understand the lesson. Of course, there is coordination between the class teacher of the subject and the special education teacher to follow the same curriculum daily.” (Interview, April 2016).

5.2.2.3 Teachers and their Influence on Special Needs Student

According to school administrators, teachers can be of great help to special needs students. A teacher can either be a main reason for the success of a student, or for their failure. One problem here is that many teachers’ attitudes depend on the financial incentive they receive. In this regard, school administrator B says:

“Class teachers usually do not want to take extra responsibilities by accepting special needs students or by giving them extra academic session (one-to-one sessions) during school, but when the administration offers them extra financial incentive, they agree! It is very important that the class teacher of each subject be the same one who gives the extra support for the student outside the class. Of course, the class teacher will not dedicate any extra time to the special need students outside the classroom except if he gets an additional financial incentive. Also, it is important that they are encouraged to use educational tools and facilities and to come up with new ideas and be open to innovation.” (Interview, April 2016)
Unfortunately, many teachers have a very bad influence on special needs students to the extent of refusing them into their classrooms. In this regard, school administrator C says:

“Teachers are responsible of 95% of the failure of the education process in general in Egypt. Moreover, when it comes to inclusive education the situation is worse, most teachers believe that special education is useless and special needs student should attend special schools designed for them only. Moreover, some teachers see that there is no need to attend a school at all because there is no much benefit of educating special needs students! This way of thinking and harsh perspective demonstrates the very low level of conscious of the Egyptian culture and the community.” (Interview, May 2016)

5.2.2.4 Challenges Faced by School Administrators

One of the challenges that face school administrators is how to deal with parents. This means either parents of special needs students or parents of other non-disabled students in this regards, school administrator B says:

“My biggest challenge is convincing parents of students without disabilities to accept that their children have colleagues with special needs and that this is not something bad, nor will these special needs children hurt or affect their children negatively. On the contrary, they may help to develop their characters. Also, these parents see that a special need student in his children’s classroom will consume more time from the class teacher and they think this affects their children negatively.” (Interview, April 2016)

Another challenge faced by school administrators is parental denial to the fact that their child has disabilities and is not like other children, and that they are simply different. Parents should not expect a miracle from the school or from the child, as this expectation often puts a burden on the school and on the child itself. School administrator A says in this regards:

“I think the expectations of parents towards their special needs children are exaggerated. They blame the, school, teachers, and sometime the children themselves, when there is a problem with the student like failing a test, or, failing to adapt in the inclusive system in general. Many parents forget that their children are different with limited abilities. I think this is because of the pediatricians following-up their children’s progress and the false hopes they give to the parents that their children can be just like the others.” (Interview, May 2016)
The real and major challenge that faces the successful application and implementation of inclusive education in Egypt is the teachers themselves. In this regard, school administrator C says:

“I have been working in the field of education for 35 years, and can say that the real obstacle that faces inclusion is the teachers, and not the school or the system set by the school. I can say around 80% of teachers I have dealt with refuse the presence of special needs students in their regular classrooms and in the mainstream schools in general. Unfortunately, this refusal may sometimes reach to intentionally psychologically hurting the student by punishing him in front of his peers for no good reason when the special need student reacts in a way that do not like the teacher; for example, simple reasons like, the special need student forgot to get his book or standing up with no excuse during the class.” (Interview, May 2016)

Another challenge school administrator’s face is the unexpected negative attitude of regular enrolled students towards special needs students in the school, especially in the younger primary stage. In this regards, school administrator C says:

“We can never expect the reaction of the students towards those with special needs, especially from students who are young and not yet mature. Their level of consciousness is not at a level to understand and observe the special considerations of their special needs colleague. In a situation when there is a negative attitude from a student towards a special needs student, you are faced with two challenges: 1) the problem of the negative or inappropriate attitude of the regular student, and 2) the problem of its negative influence on the special need student.” (Interview, May 2016)

Another challenge faced by school administrators in the lack of adequate resources. The special section in any school requires a specific budget designed only for it to cover the extra expenses. Due to the limited budget parents have, the school covers these extra expenses. In this regards, school administrator C says:

“Besides the extra sessions the special needs students receive, they need and use extra educational equipment and materials to help them in their educational development. Sometimes there is a budget deficit, which the administration cannot afford. The parents of special needs students have to cover this deficit in the school budget by paying extra school fees to overcome this problem, or their children’s progress will be affected.” (Interview, May 2016)
5.2.2.5 Special Support Needed for Special Needs Students

According to school administrators, there are many forms of special support, such as those illustrated in the previous section of parents (section 5.2.1.5). However, school administrators see the role of support teachers from another perspective, which administrator B addresses by saying:

“It is not the responsibility of the support teacher that accompanies the special needs student to give the lessons to the student. This is a big misunderstanding by parents. A support teacher’s main responsibility is to observe and assists students in managing class activities and mingling in class, like, taking notes from the blackboard and obeying any order given by the class teacher.” (Interview, April 2016)

5.2.2.6 Financial Resources Required for Special Support for Special Needs Students

From the data collected, it showed that schools need to have extra financial resources allocated to fund their special inclusion program. This fund is used to hire sufficient qualified academic teachers, provide them with trainings, and equip them with adequate educational tools and materials. In this regards, school administrator B says:

“In a school that applies inclusive education, additional resources are needed to hire additional qualified class teachers and train them well. There must be additional qualified teachers to cover the special support needed for special needs student. These teachers should not be just special education teachers, since the student will also be studying from the regular academic curriculum. This means regular academic teachers are needed and must take continuous trainings on how to deal with special needs students. In addition, teachers must use educational facilities and tools to help him in delivering the lessons.” (Interview, April 2016)

5.2.2.7 Factors Affecting Inclusion

According to school administrators, the most important factor that affects inclusion is the qualifications of the teachers. In this regards, school administrator A, B and C agree that:

“Having sufficient qualified teachers, enough budget to fund them academically and psychologically on how to deal with special needs students, giving teachers extra financial incentives, and providing them with educational tools and facilities are the
main factors that lead to a successive implementation of inclusive education in schools.” (Interviews, April & May 2016)

In addition, one of the important factors affecting the inclusive education is the student/teacher ratio; particularly the ratio of special needs students per class. In this regards, school administrator B says:

“The student/teacher ratio in class is a very important factor that affects the teacher’s best performance and the student’s best educational development. The ideal number of students in a classroom is twenty students per class teacher. To achieve the main goal of inclusion, the number of special needs students must not exceed three out of the twenty students. A support teacher must be present to in following class activities. This is the best model for an inclusive classroom in a mainstream school.” (Interview, April 2016)

Another important factor for the success of inclusive education is the cooperation between school and home. In this regards, school administrator B says:

“The cooperation between home and school is a very important factor in smoothly applying inclusive education. Special needs student advancement is not the responsibility of the school alone nor is it the responsibility of the parents at home alone. It is a common journey in which all parties must be involved thoroughly in order to end successfully.” (Interview, April 2016)

5.2.2.8 Advantages and Disadvantages of Inclusion

One of the disadvantages of inclusion is that some individuals working in inclusive schools do not believe in inclusion itself and refuse to follow its system. In this regards, school administrator B says:

“One of the disadvantages of inclusive systems is when the special needs student is placed in a school that does not accept and reject him/her. In such a scenario, the student is always depressed and becomes isolated. On the contrary, when a special needs student is placed in a school that accepts him, the student becomes self-confident and sociable. The student starts to gain every positive attitude from the normal environment he is included in. The student gains more will power, starts to think and act like his peers, act, talk, walk, and even dream like them. His expectations and look to the future becomes better.” (Interview, April 2016)
Another disadvantage of inclusion from the perspective of school administrators is the financial cost. In this regards, school administrator C says:

“I see one of the disadvantages of inclusion is its high cost to be implemented. Schools have to have a specific extra budget to cover the cost of educational materials, tools and equipment, hire extra human capital, and train them. This places a burden on the school administration as sometimes these extra expenses lead to budget deficits.” (Interview, May 2016)

Another disadvantage seen by school administrators is that many parents neglect their children, leaving all the responsibility on the school. In this regards, school administrator A says:

“Sometimes parents are not cooperative at all with the school and teachers, and leave the entire burden on the school. However, they should understand that the responsibility towards the child is mutual and the student need extra special attention at home, equivalent to the same attention he receives at school. We and the parents at home should work as a team and unfortunately, some parents do not see this and think that the high school fees they pay to their children in school is enough!” (Interview, April 2016)

To sum-up, there are many advantages of the inclusion of special needs students in the community in general, and school in particular. All school administrators agree:

- Students gain self-confidence.
- Students exposal to different cultures and fields.
- Students engagement with his/her peers especially in the activity classes and starts to feel as a member of a team.
- Students learns to obey the rules and follow the system.
- Students behavior improvement to be able to face the outside world in a representable manner.
- Students acquire educational and learning skills.
- Students build personal relations with their peers.
- A real community is created for the student in the school, preparing him/her to live in the broader community when they grow up.

5.2.2.9 Admission of Special Needs Students in Schools

Admission of special needs students in schools requires certain procedures, in this regards school administrator C says:

“When a special needs student is admitted to the school, he or she first undergoes several assessments to evaluate their academic level and psychology. Then the student is placed under a 15-day observation period in order to observe his/her capabilities. In this observation period, we prepare the student to begin engaging in the class activities. Based on the student’s attitude during this 15-day observation period and his/her assessments, we decide whether he/she will be enrolled in the full inclusive system or the partial inclusive system in the school.” (Interview, May 2016)

5.2.3 Findings from Teachers’ Perspective

5.2.3.1 Inclusion from Teachers Perspective

Inclusion is seen by many different points of views by parents, school administrators and teachers. Below is teacher A’s view on inclusion where she believes that the student practices the characteristics acquired in the inclusive school from his peers in the normal life activities:

“Special needs students practice the educational field in a standard community and he/she acquires from this inclusion the right behavioral characteristics beside the scientific curriculum. The student may understand a limited amount of the curriculum from the class teacher, and completes his/her understanding and knowledge later from the one-to-one sessions delivered by special education teachers with the help of the support teacher. The goal of inclusion is the presence of the student in different levels of the community and being able to interact in it. There are several levels to inclusion, the first being the student’s presence in the classroom, While the second inclusion level is the student’s presence in a broader community by being engaged in the activities in the school such as breaks, school trips, assembly hours, and concerts. The third inclusion level is the student’s inclusion outside of the school, which includes going to a restaurant or to the grocery shop alone. This third level is the mingling of the special need student in the community where the student practices the characteristics acquired in the school from his peers in the normal life activities.” (Interview, April 2016).
5.2.3.2 Special Needs Students from Teachers Perspective

Teachers see special needs students as regular students that just need extra social and educational support. This support differs from one student to another, even between two students with the same type of disability and age. In this regard, teacher A says:

“From my point of view, I see special needs students just like any other students. The only difference is that the student might need extra support from me and I feel the double responsibility towards him. The special need student may need psychological support, as some of them are sensitive. The special need student may need speech support as some of them cannot speak and express themselves well. The special need student may need self-care support as some of them suffer from low mobility functions. But all of the special needs students need extra educational support due to their lower IQs.” (Interview, April 2016)

5.2.3.3 Challenges Faced by Teachers

Understanding and interacting with a special needs student is the main challenge that teachers face. In this regard, teacher A explains:

“In my opinion, challenges are the goals I set to reach with the special needs student in my class. I welcome the student to my class and evaluate their performance and capabilities, then set a goal to achieve in terms of improving his or her performance and capabilities. This is doable for any student, but the point is finding the key to it; finding the way. This is my biggest challenge. For example, you can find a student who is talented in painting, so the challenge here is to develop my tools of teaching to deliver the lesson to him through paintings which is the thing he/she enjoys. If I succeeded in this, then the student will be definitely learning and improving in an enjoyable environment and then I have reached my goal, which is my challenge.” (Interview, April 2016)

Another challenge faced by teachers is when the ratio of the special needs students in their classrooms exceeds the maximum capacity, especially when they are left without any co-teachers. To this, teacher B says:

“At the beginning of the year I discovered I had 4 special needs students in my class without any co-teacher. I had to file a complaint to the administration because I definitely could not manage this number alone, as they need extra support and time. I was shocked when the administrator told me to just ignore them, we do not have any extra co-teachers to help you, and they were only admitted because they are paying fees.” (Interview, May 2016)
5.2.3.4 Special Support and Resources Needed for Special Needs Students

According to teachers, the special support system is the most important factor in helping special needs students and successfully implementing inclusive education. However, this support is not sufficient in most Egyptian private schools, unlike other countries in the Gulf area who have successful application. In this regards, teacher A says:

“Organizing the time of the special needs student is the most important factor in supporting them. It is not important that the student attends all classes with regular students in mainstream classrooms, because he/she will not benefit like them. It is not the matter of how long he/she attends regular classes; it is a matter of to what extent the student will benefit. The student attends 50% of the class time in the regular classroom, then is taken to another individual support smart classroom, where the special education teacher uses educational tools, aid and equipment such as media tools and computer programs help to illustrate and deliver the same lesson he/she has just been taught in the regular classroom. Imagine how many individual support smart classrooms and teachers are needed for every special needs student and for every subject - this is so expensive! The purpose of these individual classrooms is that the time the regular students spend interacting with the class teacher in class after the teacher finishes delivering the lesson will be of no benefit for the special needs student, simply because he/she did not understand the lesson in the same way as them. The student will benefit from this time more by providing him/her with the needed special adequate support in a special classroom with a special teacher. This type of support is unrealistic in Egyptian schools, as Egypt is an under-resourced country. This support system is feasible in Western countries and even in some rich Gulf countries because of the adequate resources they have. But, unfortunately this expensive system is not feasible in schools in Egypt due to low school resources except in some international schools with very high fees that varies from 100,000-150,000 pounds annually!” (Interview, April 2016)

5.2.3.5 Factors Affecting Inclusion

According to teachers, many factors affect inclusion, such as communication and coordination between all persons working with the special needs students, direct counseling and guidance from the support teacher and specialists, and interaction of the students in class.
5.2.3.6 Advantages and Disadvantages of Inclusion

According to teachers, the goal of inclusion is to immerse the student in a standard community to acquire adequate behavioral characteristics from his peers. This is considered a major advantage of the program. However, he might also acquire bad behavioral characteristics from his peers like swearing and violence. In any school community, there are a minority of students who have bad behaviors like using inappropriate language and physical violence. This is considered a main disadvantage of inclusion of special needs students with regular students, as special needs students tend to replicate actions of other individuals.

In general, teachers sum up the advantages and disadvantages of inclusion as follows:

Advantages of inclusive education:

- **Immersing special needs students in social life**
- **Discovering the superiority in each special needs student**

Disadvantages of inclusive education:

- **Labeling of special needs students**
- **Not all special units in inclusive schools are efficient**
- **There is no monitoring on the special units in inclusive schools from the Ministry of Education**
- **Inclusive education is the best in international schools; however, they do not fall under the authority of the Ministry of Education**
- **There are not enough cadres in the inclusive education field in Egypt**
5.3 Discussion of Findings

Inclusive education is being applied in both public and private schools in Egypt. In public schools, all students with disabilities are admitted and enrolled. Public schools are under-sourced and suffer countless negative conditions, so it is difficult to discuss these conditions. School administrators do not have any objection to admit students with disabilities, as they pose no burden on the administration because they do not attend and are just enrolled by name. With the help of simplified exams, exam companions, and private teachers at home, they pass the exam each year. Parents who choose to enrol their children in public schools have no other choice because they cannot afford the expenses of the private schools.

On the other hand, private schools are extremely selective when it comes to a student with disabilities. The school administrators understand well that parents are going to pay expensive fees for their child to be included in a full inclusive system and attend a full school day. Enrolling students in private schools is an obligation for school administrators and parents expect to see an annual yearly progress for their child.

This research focused on private schools in greater Cairo. The first problem that face parents when trying to enrol their children with special needs in private schools is the admission.

According to the Ministerial Decree No. (42) In 2008 (updated by Ministerial Decree No. (42) In 2015) on the admission of students with disabilities in public and private schools clearly states that:

“Children with mild disabilities shall be integrated in classrooms of the public governmental schools, private schools, community-based schools, second chance schools, formal language schools and in the schools teaching special curricula in all stages of pre-university education and of pre-school. The disabled child's parents shall
have the opportunity to enroll their child in either an inclusive school or in a special education school, and thus the school subjected to inclusion system shall be committed to announce that inside and outside its premise."

The Ministerial Decree of inclusion in Egypt is compulsory as long as the special needs student is eligible to be admitted to the school according to the conditions of acceptance stated in Decree in the Appendix. However, admission of special needs students to primary schools, especially private schools, is not for granted. School administrators do not actually abide by the decree and refuse to accept students with disabilities in their schools. The whole matter is left to the whims of the school administration. There must be a solution for this situation that face the parents of special needs students every year.

After the special needs student is accepted in a specific school supporting the inclusion program, and after being evaluated to check his/her eligibility to be enrolled in the school, parents are often faced with the problem of selecting which type of inclusive system their child will be enrolled in. This research looked at several schools and the different types of inclusive systems they use. To our surprise, every school has its own system. No two schools were the same. All these systems are designed based on each school’s, administration, rules, regulations, resources, number of classes, and the number of human capital.

In general, schools that apply inclusive education and accept students with disabilities have formulated three types of inclusive systems:

1 - Full inclusion system, also referred to as academic inclusion

2 - Partial inclusion system, also referred to as social inclusion

3 – A mix between full and partial inclusion systems.

In the full inclusion, special needs students attend mainstream classrooms regularly, and all activities of the full school day with or without a shadow teacher. This system has
proved to be the closest to the main goal of inclusion as it immerse students within the
standard community.

In partial inclusion, schools only allow special needs students to attend social activities
like breaks, art classes, assembly hours, music classes, school field trips, concerts, and
physical education classes with or without a shadow teacher. That is why it is also
called social inclusion. The partial inclusive system does not allow its students to attend
the academic classes with other students in the same grade level. All special needs
students in the same grade attend one classroom together, which is considered a severe
violation to the concept of educational inclusion itself. Moreover, is considered a severe
violation to the rule of inclusion, which state that the ratio of integrated children with
mild disabilities shall not exceed (10%) of total number of the class.

The third system, which is a mix between partial and full inclusive systems, where the
special needs student attends all the social activities like break, art classes, assembly
hours, music classes, school field trips, concerts, and physical education classes with or
without a shadow teacher. In addition, the student attends 50% of the time of the
academic classes and then are withdrawn from the classroom to attend the rest of the
class alone with another individual support teacher in an individual smart classroom.
This special education teacher uses all the possible educational tools, aid and equipment
like media tools and computer programs to complete the student’s understanding of the
lesson. The justification here is somehow reasonable, as the student may understand a
limited amount of the lesson from the class teacher, but catches up through the one to
one session delivered by the specialized teacher.

In general, any school depends on two main important factors to be operate successfully
which are, its teachers and its resources.
According to the literature reviewed in this research, along with information obtained from parents, teachers and school administrators, the main factors for the failure of the inclusive educational system in Egypt has been due to its teachers. The following reasons explain the situation:

- **Weak awareness of teachers towards the nature of special needs students,**
- **Unwillingness to do extra work or exert extra effort without any additional financial incentive,**
- **High ratio of students per teacher in the classroom**
- **The limited educational materials, computer labs, learning equipment and aids designed for assisting special needs students**

There must be extra funding and resources allocated in order to eliminate the obstacles mentioned above.

The adequate resources allocated to the operation of the inclusive education system in any school is the main factor for inclusion to succeed. There is a positive direct relation between school fees and the inclusive education in any private school in Egypt. The more you pay, the more service you receive access to. Inclusion in Egypt is simply based on how much you can afford. In expensive private schools, that typically ranges annually from EGP 100,000 to EGP 120,000. There are no problems with resources because parents can afford them. Some private schools double the fees for special needs students to cover the special support and to fund the special resources needed for the inclusive systems in their schools.

These extra fees and resources needed are mainly to cover the special support needed to help students with disabilities. The most common types of special support are simplified exams, simplified curricula and exam companions. However, one of the major supports
that most special needs students need is the shadow or support teacher. Right now, the shadow teacher that accompanies the student during school is an internal issue that is left to the decision of the school and parents. Shadow teachers accompany students throughout the day and assist them in coping faster with the class and teachers. They are usually only used in the primary stage only as students are young and have limited capabilities. According to the assessment for each student during admission, it turns out that some students need shadow teachers while others do not. However, some schools, especially schools applying the full inclusive systems, make it a compulsory condition to admit the student to the school with a shadow teacher although the student's assessment results show they do not need one. In this case, it should be left to the parent to decide as long as the student does not need a shadow teacher. When the student is enrolled with a shadow teacher and he/she does need this type of support, he or she cannot enter the classroom without the assisted aid even though they are able to function alone. This very problematic issue raises many problems between the parents and the school administration, to the extent that they do not allow the student to enter the school without his/her shadow teacher. Many parents have reported school informing them not to bring the student to school if his/her shadow teacher is absent. Another problem is that shadow teachers are expensive and they represent a real financial burden on the parents.

This research is not concerned about who will pay or who will fund these extra-required resources. Extra resources are needed in any school applying inclusive education and must be funded.

This research has found many barriers or challenges that obstruct a successful implementation of inclusive education in Egyptian schools, ones like:
Limited resources allocated to inclusive systems inside each school, especially in public ones.

Teachers’ inexperience with the special needs students’ nature.

Teachers’ negation to provide extra work and effort without any additional financial incentive.

Ratio of the students/per teacher in the class is relatively high.

The scarcity of educational materials, computer labs, learning equipment, and aids designed for assisting special needs students is common.

Insufficient rules and regulations that strictly apply inclusive education -in terms of admission and the operations of the inclusive systems in schools.

The community, presented in students without disabilities and their parents, are unaware of social integrity and respecting diversity.

To succeed in implementing inclusive education in schools, there is a need of creative school reforms, new firm policies and strategies that overcome such social and financial barriers, and provide the best of schools, teachers, communities, and resources. Only then we could talk about delivering a profound educational environment that is accessible to all learners regardless to their disabilities or special needs.
Chapter VI: Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings of the research showed that despite the enthusiasm and goodwill of all parties involved in the inclusive education system in Egypt, implementing inclusive education in Egyptian private primary schools is still at considerably unsatisfactory levels. The recommendations for this research are to require in-depth rules and regulations to be set by the Ministry of Education. These regulations need to formulate every aspect of the inclusive process in schools, starting from admission, to the type of inclusive system the student is enrolled in, to the type of support he or she will be given throughout the day. It is no more accepted to leave the destiny of students with disabilities and their parents to the whims of the school administrators.

6.1 Admission of Special Needs Children to Schools

Although the Ministerial Decree of inclusion in Egypt is compulsory as long as the special needs student is eligible to be admitted to the school according to the conditions of acceptance stated in Decree in Appendix 10.1, admission of special needs students to private primary schools is not for granted as school administrators do not actually abide by the decree and refuse to accept students with disabilities in their schools.

Therefore, this research recommends that:

First, there must be a sovereign decision to enforce schools to accept students with disabilities as long as they are meeting the criteria of acceptance in mainstream schools.

Second, there must be an Admission Committee in the Ministry of Education especially for special needs cases. This committee’s main responsibility is to evaluate students with disabilities and decide on their eligibility, based on the specified admission rules,
to admit in schools so as not to leave this evaluation to the school administrators to avoid their whims.

6.2 Optimal Degrees of Inclusive Systems in Egyptian Private Primary Schools

The analysis in this study shows, partial inclusion is a deception to parents by school administrators, as parents are just enrolling students in schools and students are just engaged in social activities, the social activities that they are already engaged in outside the school, for example, in the club and with relatives. In this system, the main goal of educational inclusion is not met. The problem is that some schools make it compulsory. Partial inclusion should be compulsory only if the special needs student continuously fail to adapt with other students during attending a full school day.

The other system, which is the mix between partial and full inclusion is good to some extent. It may be the best from the point of view of the specialists in the field of inclusive education, yet it is unrealistic because it is the most expensive. The school needs to design individual special classrooms with individual specialized teachers for every student for every subject, which is an extremely high cost. Most average schools cannot afford this and end up switching to the partial inclusive system.

The full inclusion is the perfect system of inclusion; however, the student may only understand a limited amount of the curriculum from the class teacher. Nevertheless, they enjoy a full inclusion school day and gain self-confidence as they do not feel different from their peers. The student then compensates that knowledge he/she has missed during class by one-to-one private sessions delivered by specialized teachers, preferably the same class teacher of each school subject.
The Ministry of Education should set strict rules and regulations to enforce the schools to apply the full inclusive systems. A student’s enrollment in either system should not be left to the schools’ administrators’ whims. Full inclusion should be the norm, with schools having the option to have both systems and allowing parents to have the full choice to decide which their child uses, as long as he or she is eligible.

6.3 Special Support for Special Needs Students in Schools

The type of special support that schools offer and request to every special needs students should not be generalized and obligatory on all students. One of the major supports that most special needs students must have is the shadow or support teacher. Right now, the shadow teacher that accompanies the student during school is an internal issue that is left to the decision of the school and parents. According to the assessment for each student during admission, it turns out that some students need shadow teachers while others do not. However, most schools make it a compulsory condition to admit the student to the school with a shadow teacher although the student’s assessment results show they do not need any. In this case, it should be left to the parent to decide as long as the student does not need a shadow teacher. This is a very problematic issue that raises many problems between the parents and the school administration.

Therefore, there must be a ground rule designed by the Ministry of Education on the urgency of shadow teachers, according to each students’ condition. According to the student assessment at the beginning of each academic year, if the student needs a shadow teacher, then it is the right of the school administration to make it a compulsory condition for the student’s enrollment in the school. On the other hand, if this support is not necessary, the decision should be left to the parents whether they provide a shadow teacher to their child or not.
6.4 The Importance of Extra Resources Needed for Inclusive Education

The adequate resources allocated to the operation of the inclusive education system in any school is the main factor for inclusion to succeed. There is a positive direct relation between availability of appropriate resources and the attainment of the inclusive education in any school. This research is not concerned about who will pay or who will fund these extra-required resources. Extra resources are needed in any school applying inclusive education and must be funded.

Extra funding and resources are recommended to be allocated in order to eliminate the obstacles mentioned in the discussion section; 5.3.4. This extra funding will improve and facilitate the operation of the inclusive system in any school. The extra resources should be directed towards training teachers and ensuring they can work properly with the students. Teachers need to attend continuous professional development training programs in order to meet the special needs of their students and be more alert to their circumstances. It is crucial for teachers to attend awareness sessions on how to deal with special students to make them well prepared. Receiving financial incentives for the extra time and effort they exert is also very important. Additional resources are needed to also increase the human capital in the school. When the number of teachers increases, the ratio of student per teacher will decrease, thus improving the performance of teachers with their pupils. The recommended ratio for student per teacher is 20:1, whilst the recommended ratio of disabled students in any class is 10% according to the inclusive Ministerial Decree. Therefore, to ensure the best quality of education within an inclusive program, no teacher should have more than twenty students, only two of who should be with special needs. This recommendation also calls for the need of a co-teacher to be present.
Additional resources are needed also to equip the school and teachers with assistive and educational tools for special needs students, such as educational materials, computer labs and learning equipment.

The Ministry of Education should formulate rules and regulations that are to be strictly applied in inclusive educational systems in Egyptian schools geared for admissions and operations. It is important that the Ministry of Education continuously monitors these schools and enforces them to follow the rules and regulations, especially since they are dealing with a vulnerable group whose parents are unauthorized to monitor the schools.

Finally, inclusion in education is recommended to students with disabilities as it has many advantages that benefit not only the student, but the parents and society as well.

Even its disadvantages, from our point of view, are controllable to not affect the student that much. Issues like labeling special needs students which the school administration, teachers, regular students and parents sometimes do, can be eliminated by extensive awareness sessions to the community. It is not an easy mission, however it can be done with the help of all individuals involved in this special education system, and also the help of the NGOs and advocates of human rights.

Excluding these disadvantages, we are left with the main advantage of inclusion, which is the mingling of special needs individuals in the community and society. By immersing the student within their school community, it prepares them for the real world, giving them the coping skills needed to survive and be productive citizens. Inclusion in education is the only way to discover the amazing skills and potentials of individuals with special needs, these skills can never be known if they are left at home illiterate and uneducated.
Appendix

Ministerial Decree No. (42) for the year 2015
Al-Waqa'i'a Al-Masriya Newspaper: volume No. (49) issued on March 2nd 2015

Ministry of Education

Ministerial Decree No. (42) for the year 2015

On Admission of Students with Mild Disabilities in Formal Education

Issued on November 2nd 2015

After review of the following:

- Education Law No. 139 for the year 1981;
- Child Law No. 12 for the year 1996;
- Ministerial Decree No. 37 for the year 1990 on bylaws of the special education's schools and classrooms;
- Ministerial Decree No. 42 for the year 2008 on the Committee of Integrating Children with Special Needs in Formal Education;
- The Ministerial Decree No. 94 for the year 2009 on Enrollment of Children with Minor disabilities in Formal Education;
- The Ministerial Decree No. 264 for the year 2011 on the Enrollment of Children with Mild Disabilities in Formal Education in the schools being prepared for inclusion in the Formal education; and
- The Ministry of Education's strategic plan for developing the pre-university education (2014/2030); the Minister of education declared: -

**Article #1:** Children with mild disabilities shall be integrated in classrooms of the public governmental schools, private schools, community-based schools, second chance
schools, formal language schools and in the schools teaching special curricula in all stages of pre-university education and of pre-school. The disabled child's parents shall have the opportunity to enroll their child in either an inclusive school or in a special education school, and thus the schools subjected to inclusion system shall be committed to announce that inside and outside its premise.

Article #2: Children with mild disabilities who are enrolled in accordance with what is previously referred to in Article #1, shall be admitted in light of the following:

F. As for vision disability, all degrees of vision disabilities (blindness and visual impairment) are accepted.

G. Mobility and Physical disability, all types are accepted including cerebral palsy (except severe and profound cases).

H. Hearing Disability, only children who got 70 decibels for audiometer using hearing aids (e.g. in-ear aids or cases of cochlear implant) are accepted.

I. Mental Disability; including mild mental disability, slow learning and autism, where only children with minimum 65 degrees to maximum 84 degrees for intelligence quotient using Stanford Binet intelligence scale (fourth and fifth editions) are accepted. Taking into consideration the child's psychological health, and the results of the adaptive behavior scale appropriate with the general inclusion.

J. It is provided not to have two types of disability in case of vision or hearing or mental disabilities (e.g. both vision and hearing disabilities or vision and mental disabilities or hearing and mental disabilities).

Article #3: Establish a committee including the health insurance doctor, representative of the Directorate's inclusion committee, a psychologist who shall attend a pedagogical training based on an annual ministerial plan, a social worker and a special education
teacher. This committee shall be responsible along the school year for medical, psychological and educational assessment of the children newly enrolled in the primary level, whether they are normal or disabled. This aims to early discovery of any difficulties that may affect the child's academic attainment and his/her adaptive behavior, as well as determining the necessary medical and educational aids.

Article #4: Ratio of integrated children with mild disabilities shall not exceed (10%) of total number of the class; in other words, not more than four children with disabilities in each inclusive class.

Article #5: The same curricula of formal education schools shall be taught in the inclusion schools as well, taking into account the disability type, provision of as necessary supporting services, treatment and enhancement activities including the resource classrooms…etc. inside the school. This aims to facilitate teaching these special curricula and to meet the needs of all children of variable abilities, capabilities and disabilities. The means of evaluating the integrated disabled students' academic performance are set according to type and degree of disability, based on the characteristics of integrated students' exam. In addition to making the necessary changes in accordance with needs of every child, through the inclusion committee, the General Direction of Special Education and the Ministry's General Director of Special Education. It is applicable for integrated visually impaired students to go through their exams via computer, or laptop or IPad or tablet. Taking into account that the parents must first submit an application for an approval, by beginning of each educational stage.

Article #6: The inclusion schools shall be committed to allow students with disabilities to benefit from all the activities and the social, health and psychological services provided at school, and in the same places used for normal students. Also these services should be physically appropriate for students with disabilities and should be well
prepared to be offered to them by means and ways that suit the type and degree of
disability, so as to develop their self-dependence and to facilitate the disabled inclusion
and participation in society. In addition to the necessity of providing places and times
for practicing the artistic and sportive activities suitable for the disabled child's
conditions in terms of the social, environmental and health aspects. As well as the
buildings' availability (i.e. to be welcoming and suitable for all kinds of disabilities
related to inclusion). Kindergartens and schools will have to do the necessary changes in
the school environment in terms of the teaching means, methodology, assessment tools
and any other procedures that can facilitate inclusion provided that this change shall not
hinder the process of integrating children with disabilities.

**Article #7:** Assigning a pedagogic-companion for cases of autism and cerebral palsy
along the school year and during exams, and for other cases of minor disabilities if
necessary. In addition to assigning a legal-companion during exams relying upon the
integrated students' type of disability and their medical reports. This shall take place
through cooperating with the General Direction for Special Education, the Ministry's
General Director of Development of Special Education and the General Direction for
Exams, in case of final exams of the high school.

**Article #8:** Applying for admission in the inclusion schools or for the subjective tests
shall be by beginning of the school year until November 30th of the same year, and
never late than this deadline. The educational directorates and directions to which these
schools are following must declare this date in order to inform the parents who intend to
enroll their children in the inclusion schools. The primary, preparatory and high schools
certificates shall be sealed with the inclusion education stamp specifying the disability
type.
Article #9: The integrated students who follow schools teaching special curricula go through subjective tests in the subjects taught in Arabic only (Arabic language, Social Studies and Religion) which are considered as pass/fail subjects while they are not added to total grades.

Article #10: Students with mild disabilities (mild mental disability- cerebral palsy- down's syndrome) who are integrated either in formal education or in special curricula schools, are excepted from learning English.

Article #11: Students integrated in formal education are tested in dictation and calligraphy in Arabic. However, students who have a legal-companion during testing are exempted from examination in dictation and calligraphy and grades of these two themes are distributed for rest of the Arabic language questions. This also applies to blind students integrated in inclusion schools.

Article #12: Incentive rewarding (25% of salary) for directors, teachers, psychologists, social workers of inclusion schools accommodating students with disabilities, who are trained to be able to deal with such cases under supervision of the Ministry's Inclusion Committee. It is provided that they are given certificates of training approved by the Professional Academy for Teachers' officials, in order to get this incentive.

Article #13: Establish a committee consists of members from the Scientific Committee for Criteria of Students with Special Needs' Admission and the Ministry's Inclusion Committee that shall be assigned to:

1) Select the inclusion schools among all the educational directorates.

2) Disseminate culture awareness on importance and advantage of inclusion for all members of both the school and the family of disabled and normal students in
inclusion schools. As well as conducting cultural awareness campaigns on inclusion, for the local community and families of disabled and normal students.

3) Train all the personnel of inclusion schools on inclusion requirements, in cooperation with the civil society organizations and other concerned parties.

**Article #14:** Supervising students with disabilities integrated in preschools, formal education schools (primary, preparatory and high schools), community schools and the second chance schools by the General Direction for Special Education, the Ministry's General Director of Development of Special Education in cooperation with the competent directions in the Ministry, the educational directorates in different governorates, sub-committees for inclusion and their educational directorates.

**Article #15:** In case of the educational failure of students with disabilities enrolled in the inclusion schools, they are subject to the same regulations and resolutions applied on their normal peers in the formal education schools.

**Article #16:** This Decree shall be publicized in Al-Waqa'i'a Al-Masriya official newspaper, shall take effect by the next academic year (2014/2015), and all the concerned parties, respectively, shall be committed to apply this decree.

Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Abu Al-Naser
Minister of Education
Interview Questions

The results retrieved from those interviews provided detailed answers to the following research questions:

• What is meant by inclusion? How do parents, teachers and educators view it?
• How are special needs students described?
• What is the difference between public and private schools?
• How could we overcome challenges facing special needs students in schools?
• What are the recommended measures needed for special support?
• Who would provide this special support, the school alone? Or would parents and shadow teachers give a supportive hand?
• What are the resources required for special support and how would these resources be provided?
• What are the teachers’ attitudes and responsiveness towards inclusion and their special needs students?
• Do variables like gender, grade-level, or class size have direct influences to the teachers’ negative/positive attitude towards special needs students?
• What are the kinds of trainings and tuitions teachers are required to attain to successfully apply inclusive education?
• If teachers had extra preparations like, in-service trainings or post-graduate studies in special needs education, would this actually lead to more positive attitude towards special needs students?
• What is the additional human capital required in schools that apply inclusive education?
• What is the professional development for both teachers and administrators to successfully apply inclusive education?
• What are the main challenges of applying inclusive education in schools?
• What is the impact of cultures relevant to the schools’ communities on the implementation of inclusive education systems?
• What are parents’ concerns, opinions, hopes, and expectations of this inclusive system they engage their children in?
• What are the factors affecting the success of inclusive education?
• How to overcome social and administrative barriers that hold special needs student back from learning and participating in regular schools among their peers?
• What are the advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education according to scholars, teachers, students and parents?
Consent Form for Parents

جامعة الأเมيركية بالقاهرة

استمارة موافقة مسبقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية – أولياء أمور الطلبة ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة

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هـدف الدمج: هو دراسة و استكشاف عملية الدمج في مدارس التعليم الأساسي في مصر و الحاوله للوصول إلى بعض الاقتراحات التي قد تفيد المعلمين و مديري المدارس في تحقيق التعددية للطلبة من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة.

نتائج البحث: ستستمر في دوره متخصصه أو مؤتمر علمي أو ربما كليهما.

المدة الموقعة للمشاركة في هذا البحث هي خمسة و أربعون دقيقة أو ساعة فقط.

إجراءات الدمج: هي عملية تشمل على استكشاف ما هو الدمج و كيف يتم تطبيقه في مدارس التعليم الأساسي في مصر و مميزات و عيوب الدمج من وجهة نظر كل معلم للطالب عن طريق سير بعض الأسلاة مع الأخذ في الاعتبار أن الحوار سيتم تسجيله صوتياً للحصول على دقة المعلومات بعد الحصول على موافقتكم أما في حالة الرفض لن يتم تسجيل و لذلك:

أوافق على التسجيل

لا أوافق على التسجيل

لا يوجد مخاطر من المشاركة في هذا البحث

الاستفادة المتوقعة من المشاركة في البحث: (المحاولة للوصول إلى بعض الاقتراحات التي قد تفيد المعلمين و مديري المدارس في تحقيق الدمج في مدارس التعليم الأساسي في مصر بصورة جيدة.

السرية والخصوصية: ستكون هويتك و المعلومات التي ستلقيناها في هذا البحث سرية.

أي أسئلة متعلقة بهذه الدمج أو حقوق المشاركين فيها أو عند حدوث أي أضرار ناجمة عن هذه المشاركة يجب أن توجه إلى:

نهى السيد عوض سيد أحمد

الهاتف رقم: 01223776574

إن المشاركة في هذه الدمج ماء هي الإعمال تذكير حيث أن الانتظار عن المشاركة لا يضرم أي عقوبات أو فقدان أي مزايا

الإمساء:

اسم المشارك :

التاريخ:
الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة

استمارة موافقة مسبقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية - مدير المدرسة و المعلم

عنوان البحث: الظلم في الإعاقة والتعليم: دراسة حالة من مصر

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انت مدعو للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية عن النمط في مدارس التعليم الأساسي في مصر لنوع الاحتياجات الخاصة.

هدف الدراسة هو دراسة واستكشاف عملية النمط في مدارس التعليم الأساسي في مصر ومحاولة الوصول إلى بعض الاقتراحات التي قد تفيد المعلمين ومديري المدارس في تطبيق النمط بصورة مفيدة للطلبة من نواحي الاحتياجات الخاصة.

نتائج البحث ستستغرق في دورته متخصصة أو مؤتمر علمي أو ربما كلاهما.

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لا يوجد مخاطر من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

الملاحظة: إن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة مايسه إلا منظور حيث أن اقتصاد نمط المشاركة لا تتطلب أي عقوبات أو فوائد أي ميزانية تحقق ذلك. ويمكنك أيضا التوقف عن المشاركة في أي وقت من دون عقوبة أو فقدان لهذه المزايا.

الإمضاء: 

اسم المشارك: 

التاريخ: 

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