Classroom Inclusion of Saudi Arabian Students with Speech, Language, and Communication Needs through Enhanced Communication

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Abstract

We investigated how teachers could be encouraged to develop and enact inclusive practices in their communication with children who have speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN). This research was conducted in Saudi Arabia, where official policy and legislation state that inclusive education is to be supported. The present exploratory, qualitative study investigated the perceptions of 11 elementary school children with SLCN, in addition to 12 parents and 14 teachers. Data were secured through semi-structured interviews during which we explored the ways teachers engaged in inclusive practices for improved adult-child communication. Two themes were identified from a content analysis of interviews: (1) exclusionary adult-child communication approaches and (2) recommendations for improvement of inclusive aspects of classrooms. The results suggested several implications for learners with SLCN as well as for schools at the local and international levels. The current research was the first study of its type to investigate the perceptions of learners with SLCN and their parents and teachers in Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: communication; inclusion; elementary school; Saudi Arabia

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Introduction

Communication can be challenging for students with Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (SLCN; Beitchman & Brownlie, 2010; McKean et al., 2017). When students with SLCN are unable to meet the communication expectations of teachers and classmates (Mroz, 2006; Nind, Kellett, & Hopkins, 2001), their academic and social development can be negatively affected (Law, Rush, Schoon, & Parsons, 2009; Lees, 2005). These effects can include emotional and behavioral problems, low self-esteem, learning difficulties, unsatisfactory social relationships, and experiences with bullying (Botting, Durkin, Toseeb, Pickles, & Conti-Ramsden, 2016; Gascoigne, 2006; Perfitt, 2013).

Children with SLCN often display communication challenges that are atypical for their chronological age (Beitchman & Brownlie, 2010; Bishop et al., 2017). Several studies indicate that childhood education can be affected by speech and other language difficulties that interfere with curricular access, social skills, or social interaction (Brinton & Fujiki, 2005; Dockrell & Lindsay, 2000; Perfitt, 2013). Much of this literature relates to the socio-behavioral functioning of children with SLCN, especially negative social and emotional impacts, including a heightened risk of bullying (Conti-Ramsden & Botting, 2004; van den Bedem, Dockrell, van Alphen, Kalicharan, & Rieffe, 2016), problems associated with an inability to resolve conflicts (Nippold, Mansfield, & Billow, 2007; Stevens & Bliss, 1995), and decreased self-esteem (Lindsay & Dockrell, 2000; Lindsay, Dockrell, & Strand, 2007).

Children with SLCN often lack skills necessary for learning in the mainstream classroom. For example, children with language-related difficulties may struggle with literacy (Dockrell et al., 2014; Snowling, & Hulme, 2012; Stothard et al., 1998), numeracy (Harrison et al., 2009), working memory (Baddeley, 2003; Gathercole & Alloway, 2007), and executive functioning skills, including higher-order reasoning skills related to planning and organizing (Henry, Messer, & Nash, 2012).

Identification of learners with SLCN typically occurs in classrooms in the elementary school setting in many countries (Durkin, Mok, & Conti-Ramsden, 2015; McCartney et al., 2010). However, SLCN definitions, terminology, and evaluation instruments vary widely, and this variation has

consequences for the interpretation of results. There is global variation in SLCN prevalence rates (Martin & Miller, 2016), from 0.01% in Turkey to 3.12% in Finland (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2004). One world region for which SLCN data are scarce is the Middle East (El-Zraigat, 2003). This lack of prevalence data may negatively affect delivery of suitable services with appropriate planning on a systematic level (Beitchman et al., 1986; Skeat, Eadie, Ukoumunne, & Reilly, 2010).

With regard to SLCN, inclusive education refers to the integration of learners with SLCN into mainstream classrooms (Wellington & Wellington, 2002). Communication, language, and/or speech difficulties can be the result of one or more causes including problems in neurodevelopment, social-relational problems, and socioeconomic challenges (Skeat, Eadie, Ukoumunne, & Reilly, 2010; Steppling, Quattlebaum, & Brady, 2007). SLCN can be related to a range of issues, including articulation, phonological, or speech issues, voice disorders, deficits in understanding verbal and non-verbal communication, difficulties interpreting graphic symbols, and problems using language in social situations (Gillam & Marquardt, 2016).

The present exploratory, qualitative study was conducted in a specific social, educational, and political context, and was designed to produce evidence for consideration by Saudi Arabian educational authorities regarding how teachers might improve inclusion of learners with SLCN. Qualitative research approaches can provide insight into learners with SLCN and the perspectives of their parents and teachers concerning management of adult-child communication. Qualitative research also can empower learners with SLCN, who have not often been afforded a voice in research. Moreover, qualitative research can provide greater authenticity due to the personal contact between the student research participants and the interviewer (Merrick & Roulstone, 2011; Wellington, 2007). Accordingly, qualitative approaches can be valuable for generating insight into adult-child communication for students with SLCN. The current research was the first study of its type to investigate the perceptions of learners with SLCN and their parents and teachers in Saudi Arabia.

Methods

Participants

A total of 11 children (5 boys, 6 girls), 12 of their parents (4 fathers, 8 mothers), and 14 of their teachers (5 men, 9 women) were recruited from public schools in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. All children involved in the study were elementary school students and had been assigned an SLCN label by a school psychologist.

This study was approved by the institutional review board (the Ethics Committee of the Deanship of Scientific Research) of the senior author's university. Participation was voluntary, with consent forms signed by the students, parents, and teachers. Before the interviews were conducted, a verbal explanation was provided to participants regarding the interview and the research aim of enhancing inclusion of students with SLCN in the mainstream classroom. Participants were advised that they were not obligated to provide responses to any question. Demographic data of participants are presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3. To ensure that participants' identities were protected, pseudonyms were used and ages were recoded into ranges.

Data Collection and Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with individual students from September 2017 to May 2018. Responses were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed *verbatim* by the interviewer. The aim was to identify ways in which communication could be enhanced for SLCN students in the mainstream classroom in Saudi Arabia. All interviews were conducted by the senior author in Arabic at the school or home of the student. The senior author has substantial experience working with learners with SLCN. If the student, parent, or teacher requested the presence of another individual at the interview, this was granted, provided that the student gave consent (for parent and teacher requests). If uncertainty arose in a response to a question, the interviewer sought clarification.

Prior to the interviews, questions were prepared regarding enhancing communication with the aim of including students with SLCN in Saudi Arabian mainstream classrooms. The interview schedules were devised in consideration of the study's aims and translated into questions (Cohen, Mannion, & Morrison, 2007). The schedules comprised fixed alternative items in which there was a

choice limitation, in addition to open-ended questions in which the information provided was not limited (Cohen, Mannion, & Morrison, 2007). The questions could be direct or indirect, specific or unspecific, opinion-based or factual (Cohen, Mannion, & Morrison, 2007). The questions were arranged logically, using language familiar to the interviewees (Hatch, 2002). Background questions were included at the beginning of the interview to focus on prior knowledge of the participant in an effort to build rapport and to facilitate trust (O'Hanlon, 2003). The questions presented subsequently were designed to secure data in relation to the learning environment (Hatch, 2002).

When each interview began, the interviewer first sought to build rapport through discussion of the student's hobbies and pastimes. The interviewer then explained the purpose of the interview for the sake of transparency and to build further trust (Clifton, 2004; Gwynn, 2004). To ensure understanding, questions were rephrased when necessary (Royse, 2008; Wilson, Powell & Freeman, 2002). Students with SLCN sometimes experience problems communicating their opinion or understanding questions (Moore & Sixsmith, 2000). Accordingly, one approach to interviewing that can be useful in this situation is storytelling, which can be used to gain insight into a child's perspective (Gubrium, 2001; Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti, & McKinney, 2012), and this method was used as appropriate, according to the judgement of the interviewer.

In addition, several other approaches were employed to elicit information from the students, such as through play and creative efforts (Tangen, 2008) and the use of visual representations, including sketching and drawing (Coy, 2006). After the interviewer presented the questions, changes were occasionally made to the phrasing according to the language capability of each student. If participants did not understand a question, the interviewer reworded the question and provided prompts. When more sensitive issues were addressed (e.g., experience with bullying), the interviewer reassured the participants that their responses were valued and appreciated.

To identify themes across the interviews, a qualitative content analysis of responses was conducted. This is a method which involves identification of connections within and between themes (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). With the aim of identifying different issues, the transcribed text was reviewed three times by the interviewer. The data were coded using free nodes to identify differences

and consistencies. All free nodes with similar themes were collected into tree nodes, each with the name of a theme. If there were connections between themes, these were identified and used for interpretation. An independent expert reviewed and coded the transcripts to afford inter-rater triangulation. Where there were differing interpretations, these were discussed until agreement was reached. The schedules were piloted across groups of students, parents, and teachers from schools not involved in the study (following Cohen, 2017). This was done to ensure understanding and clarity of the questions and to determine the effectiveness of eliciting the information (Moore & Sixsmith, 2000; O'Reilly & Dogra, 2016). Additional piloting was conducted to establish the pace of the questions and the duration of the interview (see Gillham, 2005).

Results

The interview data identified two major themes: (1) exclusionary approaches in the classrooms, and (2) inclusionary approaches in the classrooms, as discussed below.

Exclusionary approaches in the classrooms

Children's responses

Children reported educational practices they believed led them to be excluded in the classroom. These views can be summarized as follows: Rapid speed of speech (8 mentions). For example: "Teachers talk quickly, I cannot understand when the teacher talks fast." (Mohammed); Noisy classroom environment (10 mentions). For example: "The children talk and the teacher talks, so how can I understand the lesson?" (Sumaya). Interviews with the children also identified difficulties that SLCN students faced when asking for help. Teachers shouted at them, which made them feel scared, as revealed in the following exchange with Ali: "Interviewer: 'Does your teacher take the time to speak to you when you ask for help?' Ali: ' No.' Interviewer: 'Why?' Ali: 'I feel scared ... She shouts.'"

The pressure on teachers to complete lessons within a specific time period and the slowness of student responses created an environment in which learners with SLCN preferred not to ask the teacher for help. Interview responses provided by the children indicated that the relationship between the child and the teacher required the teacher's attention and awareness, as revealed in the following exchange: "Interviewer: 'Does the teacher understand what you say?' Ali: ' Not always.' Interviewer: 'What do you do in this

case?' Ali: 'Don't know.'"

Even when the teacher attempted inclusion, the weakness of the teacher-student relationship led to additional difficulties, as revealed in the following exchange with Omar: "Interviewer: 'What do you do if your teacher doesn't understand what you're saying?' Omar: 'I won't say anything.'"

Parents' responses

Although most parents (68%) were "unsatisfied" with the inclusion of their children, some parents (24%) indicated they were "satisfied." Mother 9 is an example of such parents, as revealed in the following exchange: "Interviewer: 'What are your thoughts on the communication between the school and home?' Mother 9: 'I'm able to arrange meetings with the teacher whenever I feel they are necessary, and any messages I've sent have been received. And if they ask me to go in, I go in.'"

The rest of the parents (8%) were "somewhat satisfied" or "somewhat dissatisfied." They mentioned that teachers occasionally called them. They would have preferred to receive additional support, such as monthly meetings, better communication, and greater empathy. When parents were asked about their opinion of the partnership between parents and teachers, some emphasized that teachers were not experts and seemed to prefer to work in isolation from parents. For instance, Father 2 stated: "The teacher, for his lack of experience and training in this area, does not like to discuss the subject of my son in detail. They ask me to go to someone who is knowledgeable."

Parents mentioned the following practices in the classroom that negatively affected their child's learning: bullying (3 mentions), complaints from peers/lack of friendship/mockery (6 mentions), noisy classrooms (8 mentions), teachers ignoring students (7 mentions), and problems with assessment methods (3 mentions). The following exchange with Father 6 is representative of several parent reports: "Father 6: 'He is upset when children shout and bully him.' Interviewer: 'What do you mean?' Father 6: 'It's common for the boys to complain to the teacher about him because they're not his friends.'"

Teachers' responses

Teachers identified several issues that hindered inclusion, including the disability itself (11 mentions). For instance, Teacher 5 stated "We should acknowledge that the underlining cause for the

exclusion for such children is their disability;" Teachers also noted that lack of awareness among parents hindered inclusion (9 mentions). For example, Teacher 12 noted that: "Parents lack of awareness has a great influence on the child, his interaction, his scientific progress, his psychology and his personality. Without the parents' awareness, the child is the first to be affected. . . Added to that, there are still some families that refuse to try to integrate their children into mainstream schools because they are not prepared to accept the idea of integration or recognition of the benefits to the child."

In addition, teachers identified lack of awareness among teachers (14 mentions) as an obstacle to inclusive education: "There is a lack of knowledge among teachers because of the lack of training with this group of students" (Teacher 11). Teacher 12 added that "all the courses I have attended were theoretical, not practical, so not useful."

Teachers also reported lack of partnership between parents and teachers as a hindrance to inclusive education (11 mentions). For example, Teacher 3 noted that, "Parental involvement has a great positive impact on the success of integration, academic progress of the student, and overcoming all difficulties." Many teachers identified lack of awareness among classmates as an obstacle to inclusive education (12 mentions). According to Teacher 2, "The negative psychological impact of communication with some of their peers leads to low self-esteem of those students. Consequently, this leads to less participation in class or interaction during class because of the fear of making mistakes." Teacher 1 identified lack of awareness among classmates as an impediment to inclusion of learners with SLCN, as revealed in the following exchange: "Teacher 1: 'I see that inclusion is only a formality, not an effective one. I, therefore, suggest that parents take their children to private schools dedicated to such cases.' Interviewer: 'Why?' Teacher 1: 'Because his presence among students causes many problems for him, especially with his peers. The students do not adapt to their peers, which makes them feel lonely.'"

Inclusionary approaches in the classrooms

Children's responses

The children shared their recommendations for facilitating inclusion in the classroom. They stated that they faced difficulties due to their SLCN and desired support both inside and outside the

classroom, as follows: support classwork (11 mentions); for example: "If the teacher wants to help us, he should make us work together" (Mahmud); peer acceptance and assistance (6 mentions); for example, "I love my class and my studies when my peers love and help me" (Ali); teacher support (11 mentions). The importance of teacher support was identified by Jana in the following exchange: "Interviewer: 'What is the help you would like in the classroom?' Jana: 'Teacher support.' Interviewer: 'How could the support be offered?' Jana: 'By helping me with classwork, so my friends do not laugh at me.'"

Jana reported that she was unable to do the classwork in the classroom without help and that other students made fun of her when she made mistakes. Miriam also mentioned the importance of teachers' support and peers' assistance, as revealed in the following exchange: "Interviewer: 'What are your thoughts and feelings when you are not able to carry out the instructions given by your teacher?' Miriam: 'I ask the teacher or whoever's sitting near me.' Interviewer: 'So they always help you?' Miriam: 'Not always, sometimes.'"

In addition, Jana was aware of the importance of peer acceptance outside the classroom, as revealed in the following exchange: "Interviewer: 'Can you think of any other help you might like to have?' Jana: 'Yes, I like when my friends invite me to play with them at the playground after school.'"

Parents' responses

Several inclusionary approaches were suggested by parents, as follows: better communication with parents (12 mentions); for example, Father 3 stated that "I reject completely the way teachers deal with parents as they think they [the teachers] are the only experts and they know what is best for my child;" teacher empathy (12 mentions); for example, Mother 3 offered that, "All that is required from the teacher is kindness and cooperation, which will create a lovely atmosphere;" monthly parent-teacher meetings (8 mentions); for example, "Regular meetings regarding the progress my son is making is important and that should be on a monthly basis" (Mother 2).

Recommendations made by parents regarding the support offered to their children with SLCN included: after-school support (6 mentions). Parents stated the importance of assistance both inside

and outside the classroom, as revealed in the following exchange with Mother 6: "Interviewer: 'Can you think of any other forms of assistance you might like your son to be offered?' Mother 6: 'In-class support and after-school teaching.'"

Parents reported that extracurricular activities are an important method for improving inclusion of their children with SLCN in the mainstream classroom. They suggested that these activities can help develop interpersonal skills that increase learner efficiency and affection for peers and school and, as a consequence, support inclusion. According to parents, these extracurricular activities could be organized outside the school, and might encourage students to develop self-learning skills as well as independence.

Finally, parents identified teacher training and attitudes as impediments to inclusion of their children with SLCN (13 mentions); for example: "Without teacher training and knowledge, there will never be inclusion" (Father 2).

Teachers' responses

Most of the teachers (71%) reported that students with SLCN are able to communicate their views. A minority of teachers (29%) reported that they adjusted their speaking style and content to encourage all learners to speak openly in the classroom. To encourage learners with SLCN to communicate in the classroom, teachers identified the following tactics: use direct questions (12 mentions); engage participation in discussions (13 mentions); and collaborative learning (14 mentions), as revealed in the following exchange: "Interviewer: 'In what ways do you encourage learners with SLCN to participate in active communication in the classroom?' Teacher 12: 'Collaborative learning is one of the best ways to encourage students to share and communicate with their peers so as not to be excluded.'"

Teachers thus agreed about the utility of collaborative learning in the classroom. In such learning, the teacher typically divides learners into groups of four to six students each. The group members have varying thinking and learning skills. Each group is given tasks, and they must cooperate, share, and divide roles to produce a single result representing the entire group (see Baker, Andriessen, & Järvelä, 2013).

Many teachers indicated that student learning could be enhanced by use of the following

tactics: direct support in the learning environment (10 mentions); monthly assessment of learners (8 mentions); parental involvement (14 mentions); and personalized learning (6 mentions). In addition, to better manage learning for students who have difficulty following individual and/or class instructions, teachers identified the use of several tactics: peer support (10 mentions); visual support (5 mentions); and ensuring the student is seated close to the teacher (11 mentions). The following exchange with Teacher 6 illustrates two such tactics: "Interviewer: 'Are there any particular methods you consider to be valuable in dealing with the inability of students to follow instructions given to the class?' Teacher 6: 'Employing peer support.' Interviewer: 'How?' Teacher 6: 'I seat him close to me and ask his friend who is near to him to help.'"

In the next section, we discuss some of the insights generated by this study, and address several educational, practice, and policy implications of this study. We note limitations of the current research, and highlight important directions for future research.

Discussion

The current qualitative study investigated perceptions of Saudi Arabian public elementary school parents, teachers, and children with SCLN. Specifically, we explored perceptions of each group regarding efforts to promote educational inclusion for children with SCLN in mainstream Saudi classrooms. We identified two themes from a content analysis of responses secured in semi-structured interviews: (1) exclusionary teacher-child communication and (2) recommendations for advancing inclusion. At the broadest level, the results of this research suggest that successful inclusive education may depend on acknowledging and considering the views of each of the three affected groups (children, parents, and teachers; see Gwynn, 2004; Hess, Molina, & Kozleski, 2006).

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Article 24 (United Nations, 2006) codifies the entitlement of children with disabilities to a comprehensive education without concern about being singled out. More recently, this has been addressed in General Comment No. 447 (United Nations, 2016). Nevertheless, as documented in the present research, current pedagogy and assessment practices sometimes present obstacles that prevent children with disabilities from benefiting from education (Norwich, 2013). In addition to the challenges identified by teachers, parents, and children,

other factors that can hinder inclusive education in Saudi Arabia include an overly-competitive school context (Moore & Slee, 2012) and inadequate specialized training for teachers (Pijl & Frissen, 2009).

The results of the current study documented the importance of social inclusion, in particular through a friendship network and acceptance by peers. Parents and children emphasized the need for fostering acceptance and friendships, and expressed concerns about group work that might inadvertently exclude learners with SLCN. Collaborative efforts that involve teachers and peers able to display sensitivity to the needs of classmates with SLCN should be encouraged (McCartney & Ellis, 2010). Thus, for example, when teachers and peers collaboratively offer "prompts and models," students with SLCN report greater self-assurance to articulate their views and interact socially (Jackson et al., 2009). Additionally, by involving student peers capable of offering appropriate speech examples, using predetermined seating plans, and providing aids which facilitate communication among students (Kemple, Duncan, & Strangis, 2002; Rubin, Bukowski, & Laursen, 2009), teachers can provide opportunities for improved education, student interaction, and collective camaraderie (Tauber, 2007; Wickremesooriya, 2014). These opportunities also assist learners with SLCN to apply communication abilities gained in therapy to classroom contexts (World Health Organization, 2001).

Inclusive education, as it is applied in the USA and in the UK, acknowledges the importance of parental involvement in their children's education (Lindsay, 2004; Mountstephen, 2012). The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), to which Saudi Arabia is a signatory, encourages parent involvement in educational decisions affecting their children. Parents can and should be involved in a collaborative effort to educate their children and can be pivotal in facilitating their children's success. Teacher cooperation with parents, an important component of successful educational inclusion (Moore & Slee, 2012), can be a challenge for some teachers, however, as illustrated by the results of the current study.

Despite ongoing discussions among teachers, policymakers, and researchers, inadequate attention has been directed to the important role of parents (Hess & Molina, 2006; Ryan & Claessens, 2013). In addition, schools are often not disposed or prepared to involve parents in their children's education (Peters, 2003; Slee, 2011). When institutions perceive parents as oppositional or incompetent (Hess &

Molina, 2006; Law, Roulstone, & Lindsay, 2015), they erect a barrier separating school and home (Law, Roulstone, & Lindsay, 2015; Mittler, 2000).

The results of the current study indicate that the parents of children with SLCN have varying concerns, with some parents placing greater value on academic achievement, and other parents placing greater value on social outcomes. Both parents and teachers described continuing difficulties in establishing support that met the child's individual needs. Notwithstanding these continuing difficulties, some parents reported positive experiences with teachers—notably, teachers they perceived to be working hard to involve parents in activities related to their children and to provide appropriate support for their children.

Teachers in this study provided several examples of ways they have adjusted their communication practices to better serve students with SLCN (for instance, by decreasing speed of speech). On the basis of the current and previous studies (e.g., Rymes, 2008; Stackhouse & Wright, 2011), it can be expected that these adjustments will have a positive effect on student communication and learning (Martin & Miller, 2016), increasing self-esteem and facilitating the social relationships of students with SLCN (Cirrin et al, 2010; Hassan, 2007). By developing a constructive and engaging visual and listening environment, teachers encourage learners with SLCN to participate in educational activities (McCartney & Ellis, 2010).

Although the current and previous research indicated that children with SLCN are sometimes supported in classrooms, the current research suggested it also is useful to identify how students, parents, and teachers *perceive* support for learners with SLCN. Providing in-service training for teachers could enhance their efforts to engage students with SLCN. However, there is only limited research addressing the effectiveness *in practice* of in-service teacher training. For example, Starling et al. (2012) found that that teacher training increased the use of successful language modification techniques. As another example, Leyden, Stackhouse, and Szczerbinski (2011) found that supporting learners with SLCN with a "whole school" approach that includes in-service teacher training was well-received by administrators, who reported an increase in teacher-child directed speech and the use of visual support strategies. Other than a few such studies, however, very little research has documented

that in-service training leads to positive academic or social outcomes for children with SLCN (see Neuman & Cunningham, 2009).

Recommendations for Practice

In this section, we offer recommendations for parents and teachers to facilitate successful inclusion of learners with SLCN in the Saudi Arabian public elementary school context. For parents, we recommend active involvement in their children's education, including securing knowledge and awareness of fulfillment of their children's rights by the teacher and school (see Barlow & Humphrey, 2012). In addition, we recommend encouraging children to play and socialize with peers in the neighborhood or school (see Avramidis, 2013). Finally, we recommend working in partnership with teachers to identify manageable and timely strategies to address academic and social challenges of learners with SLCN (see McCormack, Harrison, McLeod, & McAllister, 2011).

For teachers, we recommend acquiring the requisite skills and knowledge for facilitating inclusive education (see McCartney, Boyle, Ellis, Bannatyne, & Turnbull, 2011). We further recommend that teachers encourage parents' involvement in their children's education, including inviting parents into the classroom, responding promptly and constructively to parents' concerns, and regularly updating parents on their children's academic and social progress (see Barnard, 2004; Fan & Chen, 2001; Sowerbutts & Finer, 2019). Finally, we recommend that teachers provide a participatory learning environment that will facilitate positive relationships between students with SLCN and their peers (see De Boer, Pijl, Post, & Minnaert, 2012). We note that our interest in the current research was limited to the Saudi Arabian public elementary school context. We cannot comment defensibly on the generalizability of the results or the applicability of our practice recommendations outside this limited context.

Limitations and Conclusions

The present research was designed to provide insight into the Saudi Arabian educational context. Although we identified several insights produced by this research, it would be useful to recruit the involvement of a larger sample of learners with SLCN and their parents and teachers from different cities (i.e., other than Jeddah) in Saudi Arabia, to investigate the generalizability of the

current findings.

       In conclusion, the current study provided insights into successful inclusive education for children with SLCN in Saudi Arabia. We suggest that the perspectives of children, parents, and teachers in relation to SLCN be acknowledged and appreciated (see Gwynn, 2004; Hess, Molina, & Kozleski, 2006). The current study identified several paths by which Saudi Arabian public elementary schools might more fully and effectively practice inclusive education (and see Marshall, Ralph, & Palmer, 2002; McCartney & Ellis, 2010).

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Table 1: <u>Demographic information and characteristics of the child participants</u> (*n* = 11)

Gender	**Number (%)**
Boys	5 (45%)
Girls	6 (55%)
Age of child	
7-8 years	3 (27%)
9-10 years	2 (18%)
11-12 years	6 (55%)
Family structure	
Both parents	9 (82%)
Single parent	2 (18%)
Father's education	
Secondary school	1 (9%)
Bachelor	8 (73%)
Master	2 (18%)
Mother's education	
Secondary school	3 (27%)
Bachelor	7 (64%)
Master	1 (9%)

Table 2: <u>Demographic information and characteristics of the parent participants</u> ($n = 12$)

Gender	Number (%)
Male	4 (32%)
Female	8 (68%)
Age of the parents	
Parental age < = 50	7 (58%)
Parental age > 50	5 (42%)
Number of children	
Single child	1 (8%)
Two	3 (24%)
Three or more	8 (68%)
Parents' marital status	
Married	10 (83%)
Not married	2 (17%)
Parents' education	
Secondary school	2 (16%)
Bachelor	8 (68%)
Master	2 (16%)

Table 3: <u>Demographic information and characteristics of teacher participants</u> (*n* = 14)

Gender	**Number (%)**
Male	5 (36%)
Female	9 (64%)
Teaching experience	
0-5 years	2 (14%)
6-11 years	4 (29%)
12-21 years	5 (36%)
22-31 years	2 (14%)
32-40 years	1 (7%)
Education	
Bachelor	11 (79%)
Master	3 (21%)
PhD	0 (0%)