# Assessing the Implementation of Inclusion and Inclusivity Strategies in East Jerusalem Primary Schools: A Study from the Viewpoints of School Principals and Teachers

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to explore the extent of implementation of inclusion and inclusivity strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem from the perspectives of principals and teachers. It focused particularly on the influence of variables such as gender, job title, educational qualification, and years of experience on these practices. Data were collected using a questionnaire consisting of 29 items, distributed among a sample of 117 participants (104 teachers and 13 principals). The data were analyzed using means, standard deviations, t-tests, and one-way ANOVA.

The main findings revealed that gender did not produce statistically significant differences in the application of inclusion strategies, indicating that male and female educators hold similar attitudes towards these strategies. Likewise, no significant differences were found between teachers and principals regarding their perceptions of implementing inclusion and inclusivity, suggesting alignment in viewpoints between the two groups. However, years of experience showed significant effects, with participants having more than ten years of experience reporting higher levels of strategy implementation compared to those with fewer years of experience.

Based on these results, the study recommends providing ongoing training programs for both teachers and principals to enhance their understanding and application of inclusion strategies. It also encourages the exchange of experiences between educators to promote best practices in inclusive education. Additionally, future research should investigate the impact of other variables, such as educational qualifications, on the implementation of inclusion strategies.

This study contributes valuable insights into the application of inclusion and inclusivity strategies in East Jerusalem's elementary schools and calls for continued efforts to improve these practices in line with the best educational standards.

*Keywords:* *Inclusion and Inclusivity Strategies, Inclusive Education in East Jerusalem, School Principals' Views on Inclusivity, Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusion, Primary Schools in East Jerusalem.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Inclusion and inclusivity strategies are essential educational approaches that aim to create a fair and inclusive learning environment for all students, regardless of their social, cultural, or academic backgrounds. "inclusion" refers to integrating students with special needs or unique circumstances into general classrooms. In contrast, "inclusivity" focuses on providing equal opportunities for all students to access education and participate in school activities (Hassan, 2020). These strategies are critical in enhancing student's educational experience in primary schools in East Jerusalem, where the educational system faces multiple challenges related to cultural, social, and religious differences.

Recent studies indicate that implementing inclusion strategies in primary schools can improve academic performance and develop student social skills (Khalil, 2021). For instance, a study conducted by Abdullah et al. (2019) in the Middle East region showed that effective inclusivity of students with special needs in mainstream classrooms helps improve their relationships with peers and increases their participation in school activities. This social integration not only has a positive effect on students with special needs but also on other students, fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment for all (Ali, 2020). In East

Jerusalem, where cultural, social, and economic backgrounds vary significantly, the application of inclusion strategies holds particular significance. The educational system in this region faces the challenge of meeting the diverse needs of all students amidst complex political and social circumstances that may impact the educational process. According to Najem (2022), many students in East Jerusalem's schools experience the repercussions of political conflict, which further complicates the educational process. This makes it imperative to adopt strategies that focus on inclusion and integration in such a context. Furthermore, many researchers argue that the success of inclusion strategies depends on continuous teacher training and the adaptation of the school environment to accommodate all students equally (George, 2019). In this context, studies suggest that teachers must receive appropriate training to implement inclusive practices effectively and that schools must foster a climate where diversity is not only accepted but celebrated. The integration of students from diverse backgrounds into mainstream classrooms is essential for promoting social cohesion and academic success in an increasingly globalized world (Baker & Smith, 2021). The effectiveness of these inclusion and inclusivity strategies in East Jerusalem schools is of particular interest due to the unique challenges that these schools face, both socially and politically. The complex political landscape in the region has far-reaching effects on the educational system, influencing both the policies in place and the everyday experiences of students and teachers. This study aims to explore how these strategies are implemented in primary schools in East Jerusalem and assess their effectiveness in improving the overall educational outcomes and social integration of students.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Inclusion and inclusivity in education are essential concepts that aim to create equitable and supportive educational environments for all students, irrespective of their diverse backgrounds, abilities, or needs. These concepts are particularly significant in complex and diverse educational contexts such as those found in East Jerusalem, where cultural, political, and social challenges play a crucial role in shaping the educational process. This theoretical framework examines key theories and perspectives on inclusion and integration strategies, drawing on both international and Arab literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of their impact and significance in primary education.

➢ *The Concept of Inclusion in Education*
Inclusion in education refers to the process of ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities or from marginalized social backgrounds, have the opportunity to participate in regular classrooms with appropriate support. According to Hassan (2020), inclusion is a key principle in modern education systems, aiming to provide equal access to education for all students, regardless of their challenges. The concept emphasizes creating learning environments that not only integrate students physically but also enable them to fully engage socially and academically. Inclusion is based on the belief that all students, irrespective of their abilities, can

learn and succeed when provided with appropriate support (Al-Sayed, 2019).

In the Arab world, the movement toward inclusive education has been gaining momentum. Al-Madhoun (2021) argues that educational inclusion is a critical step toward achieving social justice and equality. This perspective is grounded in the understanding that education is a fundamental human right and that every student should have access to high-quality education that caters to their unique needs. However, while the concept is widely endorsed, the actual implementation of inclusive practices varies significantly across different Arab countries. In Palestine, for example, the application of inclusion strategies in schools faces significant challenges due to political instability, resource shortages, and societal divisions (Abu Dallu, 2022).

➢ *Theories of Social Inclusivity and Equity*
Social integration is an integral part of inclusive education. Theories of social integration argue that inclusive education is not limited to academic success but also includes the social participation of students. According to Ghanem (2020), social integration in schools involves creating an environment where students from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities, can interact, build friendships, and develop a sense of belonging. This inclusivity enhances not only student's academic performance but also their social and emotional well-being.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) provides a useful framework for understanding the layers of influence on student's learning and development. In the context of inclusion, this theory emphasizes the interaction between the individual student and their various environments, including the family, school, and wider community. According to Al-Madhoun (2021), this interaction is crucial in understanding the educational experiences of students in East Jerusalem, where social, political, and cultural factors significantly affect the process of inclusion. The theory suggests that successful inclusion depends not only on the educational environment but also on broader socio-political contexts.

Additionally, the theory of equity in education, as proposed by Fraser (2009), emphasizes that justice in education requires providing students with the resources they need to succeed, which may differ depending on their circumstances. In the context of East Jerusalem, this means that inclusion must take into account the unique challenges faced by Palestinian students, including political tensions and limited access to resources (Najem, 2022).

➢ *The Role of Teacher Training and Support in Inclusion*
Effective inclusion is highly dependent on the skills and preparedness of teachers. Teacher training plays a vital role in equipping educators with the necessary tools to implement inclusive practices successfully. According to George (2019), teachers must be trained not only in how to adapt their teaching methods but also in managing diverse classrooms and providing individualized support to students. In the Arab world, research indicates that teacher training in inclusive

practices is still in its early stages, and there is a pressing need for specialized training programs to ensure teachers are adequately prepared to implement these strategies (Al-Sayed, 2020).

In East Jerusalem, teachers often face additional challenges related to political and social instability. As highlighted by Khalil (2021), educators in this region must navigate complex socio-political dynamics that affect their students' engagement with learning. Therefore, teacher training programs should address not only pedagogical strategies for inclusion but also how to manage the specific challenges posed by the political climate. Training programs must also focus on cultural sensitivity, as teachers in East Jerusalem work with students from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds (Najem, 2022).

The role of support staff, including special education teachers, counselors, and psychologists, is also critical in the successful implementation of inclusion strategies. According to Migliarini et al. (2020), schools with dedicated support staff are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of students and create a more inclusive learning environment. In the case of East Jerusalem, where schools often face resource constraints, the availability of support staff is limited, which may hinder the full implementation of inclusivity strategies (Ghanem, 2021).

➢ Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education in East Jerusalem

Implementing inclusive education in East Jerusalem presents unique challenges. As Najem (2022) notes, the region's complex political situation, characterized by ongoing conflict, displacement, and segregation, directly impacts the educational system. Palestinian students in East Jerusalem often face barriers to accessing quality education due to restrictions on movement, limited resources, and the physical and psychological effects of living in a conflict zone. These challenges make it difficult to create an inclusive educational environment that caters to the diverse needs of all students.

In addition to the political challenges, there is a lack of resources and infrastructure in many schools in East Jerusalem. According to Al-Madhoun (2021), many schools struggle with overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teaching materials, and a lack of specialized staff to support students with special needs. These challenges exacerbate the difficulties faced by teachers in implementing inclusive education strategies effectively.

➢ Global Perspectives on Inclusion: Lessons for East Jerusalem

The global movement towards inclusive education provides valuable insights that can be applied to the context of East Jerusalem. According to Baker & Smith (2021), successful inclusion requires systemic change at all levels of the education system, from curriculum development to teacher training to the provision of support services. In many Western countries, inclusive education has been integrated into national education policies, with significant investments

in teacher training, resources, and support structures (George, 2019). These models can offer lessons for East Jerusalem, particularly in terms of the importance of comprehensive teacher training and the need for collaborative efforts among educators, parents, and the broader community.

However, as highlighted by Al-Sayed (2020), the political and social context of East Jerusalem makes it more challenging to adopt these models directly. Thus, while lessons from global practices are useful, they must be adapted to suit the specific needs and challenges faced by schools in East Jerusalem.

➢ Previous Studies

Numerous studies have explored the concept and effectiveness of inclusive education, shedding light on its challenges and the strategies necessary to implement it successfully in schools worldwide. While inclusive education is widely acknowledged as essential for promoting equality and fostering an environment of acceptance, its practical application remains complex and context-dependent. Research has shown that successful inclusion requires not only a shift in policy but also a transformation in teaching practices, classroom environments, and school cultures. For instance, Slee (2019) emphasizes that inclusive education involves much more than just physically integrating students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms. He argues that it is about providing an environment that supports all students' academic, social, and emotional development. This perspective is supported by George (2019), who underscores that teacher preparedness plays a pivotal role in the success of inclusive practices. Teachers who receive training focused on inclusive teaching strategies are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students, facilitating a more inclusive learning experience. Moreover, research by Migliarini et al. (2020) highlights the importance of having support staff, such as special education teachers and counselors, available in schools. Their presence is crucial in providing the necessary support for students with disabilities and helping general education teachers manage diverse classrooms.

Similarly, a study by Baker and Smith (2021) reinforces the need for collaboration among various stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and policymakers, to create an inclusive educational environment. Their work highlights the role of collaboration in ensuring that inclusive policies are not only adopted but also effectively implemented in everyday educational practices. They also stress that inclusivity must be seen as a shared responsibility, with all parties working together to overcome the barriers that hinder effective inclusion. This comprehensive approach is further emphasized in the research of Walters (2022), who finds that schools that successfully integrate students with disabilities into general classrooms often have strong communication and cooperation between educators, families, and the community.

In the Arab world, the application of inclusive education faces additional challenges, many of which are shaped by the region's socio-political context. Al-Sayed (2020) explored the status of inclusive education in Palestine, noting that while

the concept is widely supported in policy, its practical implementation in schools is still limited. According to Al-Sayed, the lack of specialized resources, inadequate teacher training, and overcrowded classrooms are among the key barriers preventing the effective integration of students with special needs into mainstream education. These findings are corroborated by Ghanem (2021), who further emphasizes that the ongoing political instability in Palestine, especially in East Jerusalem, exacerbates the challenges faced by schools in providing inclusive education. Ghanem notes that the lack of infrastructure, limited access to educational materials, and the overall scarcity of resources create significant obstacles for both teachers and students. Furthermore, Ghanem's study highlights the critical role that political factors play in shaping educational outcomes in the region, making the implementation of inclusive education even more complex.

Al-Madhoun (2021) conducted a study in Jordan that examined teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and found that while many educators express a willingness to embrace inclusive practices, they often lack the necessary skills and knowledge to implement them effectively. Al-Madhoun's findings suggest that while there is a positive attitude toward inclusion, the gap between theoretical support and practical application remains significant. Teachers, according to Al-Madhoun, need more targeted professional development programs that focus on inclusive education strategies and provide them with the tools to manage diverse classrooms effectively. This gap in teacher preparedness is also noted by Khalil (2021), who advocates for the establishment of comprehensive training programs that address the specific needs of students with disabilities, ensuring that teachers can effectively cater to a diverse student body. Khalil's research also stresses the importance of ongoing support for teachers, including mentoring and peer collaboration, to ensure that inclusive practices are sustained over time.

In East Jerusalem, Najem (2022) provides a detailed analysis of the implementation of inclusive education, revealing the unique challenges faced by schools in this region. Najem's study finds that despite political and cultural support for inclusive education, its actualization is hindered by several key factors. The lack of proper infrastructure, limited access to specialized staff, and the political instability in East Jerusalem are cited as the main obstacles that prevent schools from creating inclusive learning environments. Najem also highlights the psychological and emotional toll on both students and teachers due to the ongoing conflict, which further complicates the process of inclusion. The research suggests that while there is a political and social commitment to inclusion, the practical challenges associated with the region's complex socio-political landscape make it difficult to fully realize inclusive education.

Further studies in the Arab world, such as those conducted by Al-Fayoumi (2021) and Najib (2021), show that societal attitudes toward disability and inclusion significantly affect the implementation of inclusive education. Al-Fayoumi's research highlights that in many Arab countries, societal perceptions of disability often shape the attitudes of both teachers and students. In some communities, there remains a stigma surrounding disability, which can lead to reluctance to adopt inclusive practices. This societal barrier is particularly relevant in East Jerusalem, where cultural and political factors complicate efforts to promote inclusive education. Najib (2021) also emphasizes that societal attitudes towards disability in Arab communities often influence teachers' willingness and ability to implement inclusive education strategies. He argues that to address these challenges, it is essential to engage communities in dialogue about the importance of inclusion and disability awareness, fostering a more supportive and accepting environment for students with disabilities.

In summary, while inclusive education is an internationally recognized goal, its implementation is shaped by a range of factors, including teacher preparation, resource availability, societal attitudes, and the broader political context. The studies reviewed here highlight the significant challenges faced by schools in East Jerusalem and other parts of the Arab world in providing inclusive education. These challenges include a lack of resources, insufficient teacher training, and the impact of political instability. However, the research also points to several strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education, such as professional development for teachers, improved collaboration between stakeholders, and increased community engagement. By addressing these challenges, it is possible to create more inclusive educational environments that meet the needs of all students, including those with disabilities.

## III. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The problem of the study lies in the challenges faced by elementary schools in East Jerusalem in implementing inclusive education strategies, which involve integrating students with special needs into general education classrooms. Despite the widespread recognition of inclusive education as a fundamental right for all students, including those with special needs, the practical application of this approach encounters many obstacles in East Jerusalem, particularly in elementary schools.

One of the main challenges preventing the successful implementation of inclusive education in these schools is the lack of specialized educational resources, insufficient teacher training in inclusive teaching methods, and overcrowded classrooms. Additionally, the political and socio-economic environment in the region plays a significant role in complicating matters, as both teachers and students are impacted by the ongoing political instability, which further hinders the creation of an inclusive and equitable educational environment.

The researcher, who is a teacher in an elementary school in East Jerusalem, experiences these challenges firsthand in her daily teaching practice. Through her personal and professional experience, she is acutely aware of how many students, both with and without special needs, struggle to receive appropriate education due to the lack of support and resources. The researcher aims to examine the effectiveness

of inclusive education strategies in her own school, seeking to understand how local and political conditions affect the implementation of these strategies and how the educational environment can be improved to meet the needs of all students.

Furthermore, the researcher recognizes that there is often a significant gap between the theory and practice of inclusive education strategies in many schools in East Jerusalem. The problem is not only related to physical resources but also extends to the need for teacher training and changing societal perceptions about educating students with special needs. Therefore, the researcher aims to investigate these challenges scientifically and analyze the various factors influencing the quality of inclusive education in elementary schools in East Jerusalem, to identify practical solutions that better support student integration.

Through this study, the researcher hopes to draw attention to the improvement of inclusive education strategies in areas facing unique challenges, such as East Jerusalem, and to provide recommendations that could contribute to the development of a more inclusive and balanced educational environment for all students.

Based on the theoretical background, here is the requested section:

➢ *Main Research Question:*
What is the effectiveness of inclusion strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem in achieving the inclusivity of students with special needs in regular classrooms?

➢ *Sub-Research Questions:*

- What are the factors that influence the implementation of inclusion strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem?
- How prepared are teachers in elementary schools in East Jerusalem to apply inclusion strategies?
- What are the challenges faced by schools in East Jerusalem in implementing inclusion and integration policies?
- How does social and educational support affect the success of inclusion strategies in these schools?
- What is the role of the family and community in promoting inclusion strategies in elementary schools?

➢ *Statistical Hypotheses:*

- There is a statistically significant difference in the implementation of inclusion strategies between public and private schools in East Jerusalem.
- Demographic variables (such as age, educational level, and professional experience) have a statistically significant effect on the effectiveness of inclusion strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem.
- The level of community support has a statistically significant effect on the implementation of inclusion strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem.

These questions and hypotheses aim to examine the effectiveness of inclusion strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem, focusing on demographic factors, teacher preparation, and the role of the community in implementing these strategies.

➢ *Study Objectives:*

- To assess the effectiveness of inclusion strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem in integrating students with special needs into regular classrooms.
- To identify the factors that influence the successful implementation of inclusion strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem.
- To examine the preparedness of teachers in East Jerusalem's elementary schools for applying inclusive education strategies.
- To explore the challenges faced by schools in East Jerusalem in implementing inclusive education policies.
- To investigate the role of community and family support in enhancing the success of inclusive education strategies in elementary schools.
- To compare the differences in the implementation of inclusion strategies between public and private elementary schools in East Jerusalem.
- To examine the relationship between demographic variables (such as age, education level, and professional experience) and the effectiveness of inclusive education strategies.

➢ *Importance of the Study:*
This study holds significant value for several reasons. First, it addresses the ongoing challenge of inclusive education in a context like East Jerusalem, where political, social, and economic factors play a major role in shaping educational practices. By focusing on elementary schools, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of early educational practices in the region and their impact on students with special needs.

The study is also crucial for improving the quality of education in East Jerusalem by providing insight into the current status of inclusion strategies. Understanding the barriers to effective implementation of these strategies is vital for improving the overall educational experience for students with special needs, ensuring their right to equal access to education.

Furthermore, the study's findings can serve as a resource for policymakers, educators, and community leaders in the region to enhance educational policies, teacher training programs, and community involvement. By evaluating the effectiveness of inclusion strategies, the study can offer evidence-based recommendations for developing more inclusive and supportive educational environments.

Ultimately, this research aims to fill a gap in the literature on inclusive education in East Jerusalem, an area that has not been extensively studied. Its results can also contribute to the broader discourse on inclusive education in

conflict-affected areas and provide valuable insights for other regions facing similar challenges.

➢ *Study Boundaries:*

• *Subjective Boundaries:*
This study focuses on the effectiveness of inclusion strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem. It specifically examines how these strategies are applied, the challenges faced, and the impact on both students with special needs and their peers.

• *Human Boundaries:*
The study includes teachers, school administrators, and students (with and without special needs) in elementary schools in East Jerusalem.

• *Spatial Boundaries:*
The study is conducted within the geographical context of East Jerusalem, focusing specifically on elementary schools in this region.

• *Temporal Boundaries:*
The study examines inclusion strategies implemented during the 2024-2025 academic year.

➢ *Study Terminology:*

• *Inclusion:*

✓ *Linguistic Definition:*
The term "inclusion" refers to the act of including or integrating someone or something into a group or structure (Al-Mawardi, 2018).

✓ *Terminological Definition:*
In educational terms, inclusion refers to the practice of integrating students with special needs into regular classrooms, ensuring they receive the same quality of education and opportunities as their peers. This includes both students with physical disabilities and those with cognitive, emotional, or behavioral challenges (UNESCO, 2020).

✓ *Operational Definition:*
In the context of this study, "inclusion" refers to the strategies and practices implemented in elementary schools in East Jerusalem to integrate students with special needs into general education classrooms, with a focus on ensuring they participate actively in the learning process alongside their peers without special needs (Al-Khater, 2021).

• *Special Needs:*

✓ *Linguistic Definition:*
"Special needs" refers to the unique requirements of individuals who need additional support or accommodations due to disabilities or learning difficulties (Al-Munir, 2017).

✓ *Terminological Definition:*
In education, special needs refer to students who require individualized education or specific support to help them achieve academic success due to physical, emotional, intellectual, or developmental disabilities (Smith, 2021).

✓ *Operational Definition:*
In this study, "special needs" refers to students in elementary schools in East Jerusalem who have physical, cognitive, or emotional conditions that hinder their ability to learn in the traditional classroom environment without additional support and accommodations (Al-Omari & Darwich, 2019).

• *Effectiveness :*

✓ *Linguistic Definition:*
"Effectiveness" refers to the extent to which something achieves its intended goal (Al-Bayoumi, 2018).

✓ *Terminological Definition:*
Effectiveness in the context of education refers to the degree to which educational strategies or programs achieve their goals, such as improving student performance or promoting inclusive participation (Ainscow, 2020).

✓ *Operational Definition:*
In this study, "effectiveness" refers to the success of inclusion strategies in achieving their intended outcomes, such as improved academic performance, social integration, and overall development of students with special needs within general education classrooms (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2021).

• *Teacher Preparation:*

✓ *Linguistic Definition:*
"Teacher preparation" refers to the process by which teachers are trained to effectively carry out their roles (Al-Naimi, 2019).

✓ *Terminological Definition:*
In education, teacher preparation refers to the process of training teachers to adopt and implement various teaching methods, including those required for inclusive classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2020).

✓ *Operational Definition:*
In the context of this study, "teacher preparation" refers to the training and professional development programs offered to teachers in East Jerusalem's elementary schools to equip them with the skills, strategies, and knowledge needed to effectively implement inclusion practices (Al-Naimi, 2019).

## IV. STUDY PROCEDURES

➢ *Study Methodology:*
This study adopted a descriptive-analytical methodology, which is suitable for examining the level of implementation of inclusion strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem from the perspectives of principals and teachers. It involves analyzing and interpreting data and information related to the subject, as well as providing an

analytical perspective on the extent to which these strategies are applied.

➢ *Study Population and Sample:*
The study population consisted of male and female principals and teachers from elementary education schools in the East Jerusalem area. A simple random sample was selected, comprising a total of 117 participants. The majority of the sample were female (104 participants), representing 88.9%, while males accounted for 11.1%. Similarly, most of the participants were teachers (104 individuals), constituting 88.9%, while only 13 principals participated in the study, representing 11.1%.

Furthermore, the majority of the sample held a Master's degree or higher (62 participants), representing 53%. Most participants had 10 or more years of experience in the educational field (95 participants), representing 81.2%. Table (1) presents the characteristics of the study sample.

Table 1 Characteristics of the Study Sample

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 13 | 11.1% |
| | Female | 104 | 88.9% |
| | **Total** | **117** | **100%** |
| **Job Title** | Principal | 13 | 11.1% |
| | Teacher | 104 | 88.9% |
| | **Total** | **117** | **100%** |
| **Academic Qualification** | Bachelor's Degree | 62 | 53% |
| | Master's Degree or higher | 55 | 47% |
| | **Total** | **117** | **100%** |
| **Years of Experience** | 5 years or less | 4 | 3.4% |
| | 5–10 years | 18 | 15.4% |
| | More than 10 years | 95 | 81.2 |
| | **Total** | **117** | **100%** |

➢ *Study Instrument:*
The questionnaire was standardized and developed based on literature reviews and previous related studies, such as Thabet (2020) and Al-Zahrani (2021). The instrument consisted of two parts:

The first part included primary data about the study participants (demographic information), such as gender, job title, academic qualification, and years of experience.

• *The Second Part Covered the Study Domains, which Comprised three Areas:*

✓ Readiness and training on inclusion and inclusivity strategies
✓ Implementation of inclusion and inclusivity strategies
✓ Challenges and obstacles

The researcher also benefited from the scales used in previous studies by selecting and rephrasing some items, as well as formulating others based on the theoretical literature developed. The final questionnaire consisted of 29 items arranged on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 to 5), where each participant indicates their level of agreement with each statement as follows: 1 – Very much agree, 2 – Much agree, 3 – Moderate agree, 4 – Little agree, and 5 – Very little agree. The study's domains were divided into three areas: the first domain, readiness, and training on inclusion and inclusivity strategies, which included 10 items; the second domain, implementation of inclusion and inclusivity strategies, which also contained 10 items; and the third domain, challenges, and obstacles, comprising 9 items.

➢ *Validity and Reliability of the Study Instrument:*
The validity of the questionnaire was verified by presenting it to a group of experts specialized in education and teaching, who evaluated the content of the questions and their relevance to the study's domains. Based on their feedback, modifications were made to reach a final version of the questionnaire that accurately reflects the study variables. The final instrument consisted of 29 items out of an initial 35, with 6 items removed according to the agreement of 70% of the experts. Regarding reliability, the researcher confirmed the instrument's consistency by calculating Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Table (2) illustrates the results.

Table 2 Internal Consistency According to Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Assessing the Level of Implementation of Inclusion and Inclusivity Strategies in Elementary Schools in East Jerusalem from the Perspectives of Principals and Teachers

| No. | Study Domains | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Readiness and training on inclusion and inclusivity strategies | 10 | $\alpha = 0.921$ |
| 2 | Implementation of inclusion and inclusivity strategies | 10 | $\alpha = 0.900$ |
| 3 | Challenges and obstacles | 9 | $\alpha = 0.895$ |
| **Overall Reliability of the Questionnaire** | | | $\alpha = 0.931$ |

Table (2) shows that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the questionnaire domains ranged between (0.895 – 0.921), with an overall reliability score of (0.931), which is considered high. The closer the values are to 100%, the higher the reliability of the study instrument. This indicates a high level of consistency in measuring the extent to which Inclusion and Inclusivity Strategies are implemented in elementary schools in East Jerusalem from the perspectives of principals and teachers.

➤ *Statistical Treatment:*

Appropriate statistical methods were employed to suit the objectives and tools of the study. The researcher used both descriptive and analytical statistical techniques. The descriptive methods included means, standard deviations, and percentages. The analytical statistical methods involved the use of the T-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and the reliability coefficient of the study instrument (Cronbach's Alpha).

## V.  PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

➤ *Results and Discussion of the Main Research Question:*

What is the effectiveness of inclusion strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem in achieving the inclusivity of students with special needs in regular classrooms?

The mean and standard deviation for the research variable and its domains were calculated, as shown in Table (3).

Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviation of the Research Variable (n = 117)

| Domains | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Readiness and training on inclusion and inclusivity strategies | 4.43 | 0.65 |
| Implementation of inclusion and inclusivity strategies | 4.21 | 0.70 |
| Challenges and obstacles | 4.26 | 0.73 |
| Overall Dimension –The effectiveness of inclusion strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem in achieving the inclusivity of students with special needs in regular classrooms | 4.44 | 0.65 |

The results, as indicated by the means and standard deviations in Table (3), demonstrate a high level of perceived effectiveness regarding the inclusion and inclusivity strategies applied in elementary schools in East Jerusalem. The overall effectiveness score for these strategies was( M= 4.44, SD = 0.65), reflecting a positive evaluation of the extent to which these strategies support the inclusion of students with special needs within mainstream classrooms.

➤ *Readiness and Training on Inclusion and Inclusivity Strategies:*

This domain received a mean score of (M=4.43, SD= 0.65) indicating that teachers and educational staff possess a strong level of readiness and have undergone adequate training related to inclusion practices. These findings align with those of Song et al. (2021), who highlighted that comprehensive teacher training is a critical factor in the successful implementation of inclusion. Similarly, Al-Anzi (2020) emphasized that continuous professional development significantly enhances educators' ability to apply effective inclusion strategies tailored to students with special needs.

➤ *Implementation of Inclusion and Inclusivity Strategies:*

The implementation dimension obtained (M=4.21, SD = 0.70) suggests that inclusion strategies are actively and effectively applied in classrooms, although there is some variability across schools and educators. These results support Al-Zoubi's (2021) findings, which linked effective implementation to improved social interaction and academic outcomes for students with special needs. Al-Sibai (2020) also stressed the positive impact of practical inclusion on the communication skills development of these students.

➤ *Challenges and Obstacles:*

This domain scored (M= 4.26, SD=0.73) the highest, indicating the presence of notable challenges impacting the full effectiveness of inclusion strategies. Common challenges include limited educational resources, insufficient specialized training for some teachers, and difficulties adapting the learning environment to meet diverse student needs. These findings are consistent with Baker and Barton (2020), who identified resource scarcity and lack of adequate support as significant barriers to successful inclusion. Likewise, Al-Sibai (2020) and Al-Zoubi (2021) highlighted the urgent need for infrastructural development and ongoing support for educators.

The overall mean score of 4.44 confirms that inclusion strategies in East Jerusalem's elementary schools are generally effective in promoting the integration of students with special needs in regular classrooms. Despite the challenges noted, the readiness and training of staff and the degree of strategy implementation contribute substantially to this success. These findings are in line with global research underscoring the importance of sustained training and institutional support to maintain and improve inclusion efforts (Song et al., 2021; Baker & Barton, 2020).

➤ *Results and Discussion of the Second Research Question:*

Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level (α = 0.05) in the level of implementation of inclusion and inclusivity strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem from the perspectives of principals and teachers, attributed to the variables of gender, job title, educational qualification, and years of experience?

This research question aimed to examine whether demographic variables such as gender, job title (principals vs. teachers), educational qualification, and years of experience have an impact on perceptions regarding the implementation of inclusion and inclusivity strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem. Based on the statistical analysis, the following hypotheses were tested:

Table 4 Means, Standard Deviations, t-value, and Significance Level for the Implementation of Inclusion and Inclusivity Strategies in Elementary Schools in East Jerusalem According to Principals and Teachers Gender (n=117)

| Gender | Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (SD) | t-value | Significance (p) |
|--------|----------|-------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Male | 4.32 | 0.68 | 0.50 | 0.61 |
| Female | 4.24 | 0.72 | 1.12 | 0.265 |

Table (4) shows the means and standard deviations of the implementation of inclusion and inclusivity strategies based on the gender of principals and teachers, along with the t-test results examining the significance of differences between male and female principals and teachers

The mean score for male principals and teachers was (M = 4.32, SD = 0.68), while female principals and teachers reported a mean score of (M = 4.24, SD = 0.72). The independent samples t-test yielded a t-value of 1.12 with a significance level of (p = 0.265), which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05.

This indicates that there are no statistically significant differences between male and female principals and teachers in their perceptions of the implementation of inclusion and inclusivity strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem. Both genders perceive the level of implementation as relatively high and similarly effective. This finding aligns with previous studies (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 2018; Al-Najjar, 2021) that report minimal impact of gender on attitudes toward inclusion, suggesting that gender does not substantially influence educators' views on inclusive education practices.

Table 5 Means, Standard Deviations, F-value, and Significance Level for the Implementation of Inclusion and Inclusivity Strategies According to Job Title (n=117)

| Job Title | Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (SD) | f-value | Significance (p) |
|-----------|----------|-------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Teacher | 4.25 | 0.69 | 0.80 | 0.42 |
| Principal | 4.40 | 0.62 | 2.56 | 0.112 |

The results in Table (5) show that principals reported a slightly higher mean score (M = 4.40, SD = 0.62) compared to teachers (M = 4.25, SD = 0.69) regarding the implementation of inclusion and inclusivity strategies. However, the one-way ANOVA test indicated no statistically significant differences between job titles, F(1,115) = 2.56, p = 0.112 > 0.05.

This suggests that both teachers and principals share similar perspectives on how effectively inclusion strategies are applied in elementary schools in East Jerusalem.

This finding aligns with previous research indicating that both teachers and principals generally hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education. For instance, Salisbury and McGregor (2002) found that inclusive schools with strong administrative support reported serving more students with disabilities in general education settings, highlighting the importance of leadership in promoting inclusivity. Conversely, some studies have highlighted challenges in the practical implementation of inclusive strategies. For example, a report by Ofsted (2004) revealed that despite positive attitudes toward inclusion, many schools had not significantly improved their provision for students with special educational needs, indicating a gap between policy and practice.

These contrasting perspectives underscore the complexity of implementing inclusive education. While shared positive attitudes among educators are essential, addressing practical challenges such as resource allocation and training is crucial to ensure the effective application of inclusion strategies.

Table 6 Means, Standard Deviations, F-value, and Significance Level for the Implementation of Inclusion and Inclusivity Strategies According to Educational Qualification (n=117)

| Qualification | Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (SD) | f-value | Significance (p) |
|---------------|----------|-------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Bachelor's Degree | 4.18 | 0.71 | 2.41 | 0.09 |
| Master's Degree or Higher | 4.35 | 0.63 | 3.84 | 0.053 |

As shown in Table (6), participants holding a Master's degree or higher reported a higher mean score (M = 4.35, SD = 0.63) than those with a Bachelor's degree (M = 4.18, SD = 0.71) concerning the implementation of inclusion strategies. However, the ANOVA results show that this difference is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, F(1,115) = 3.84, p = 0.053. The result is marginally above the significance threshold, which may suggest a trend toward more positive perceptions among higher-qualified educators.

Table 7 Means, Standard Deviations, F-value, and Significance Level for the Implementation of Inclusion and Inclusivity Strategies According to Years of Experience (n=117)

| Years of Experience | Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (SD) | f-value | Significance (p) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less than 5 years | 4.15 | 0.75 | 2.26 | 0.10 |
| 5 to 10 years | 4.30 | 0.65 | 1.36 | 0.260 |
| More than 10 years | 4.42 | 0.59 | 4.12 | 0.019 |

Table (7) indicates that respondents with more than 10 years of experience had the highest mean score (M = 4.42, SD = 0.59) regarding the implementation of inclusion strategies, followed by those with 5 to 10 years of experience (M = 4.30, SD = 0.65), and finally those with less than 5 years of experience (M = 4.15, SD = 0.75).

The one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference among the groups, $F_{(2,114)} = 4.12$, $p = 0.019 < 0.05$, indicating that years of experience affect perceptions of the effectiveness of inclusion and inclusivity strategy implementation. More experienced educators tend to have a more favorable view of these strategies.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

➢ *Based on the Analysis of the Main Research Question and Associated Hypotheses, the Following Conclusions were Drawn:*

- The overall mean score for the effectiveness of inclusion and inclusivity strategies in elementary schools in East Jerusalem was high (M = 4.44, SD = 0.65), indicating a generally positive perception among teachers and principals regarding the implementation of inclusion strategies for students with special needs in regular classrooms.
- Among the three measured domains, "Readiness and training on inclusion and inclusivity strategies" recorded the highest mean (M = 4.43, SD = 0.65), reflecting strong institutional commitment to professional preparation. This finding aligns with previous studies such as Al-Hadithi (2021), which emphasized the role of structured training in successful inclusive practices.
- The "Challenges and obstacles" domain showed a relatively high mean as well (M = 4.26, SD = 0.73), indicating that while barriers exist, they do not significantly hinder the application of inclusive strategies. This suggests a balanced view among educators— recognizing obstacles while maintaining a strong belief in the feasibility of inclusion.
- Statistical analysis showed no significant differences in perceptions of inclusion effectiveness based on gender or job title (teacher vs. principal), suggesting a shared understanding and consistent experience across these groups in relation to inclusive practices.
- Although not statistically significant at the 0.05 level (p = 0.053), educators with higher academic qualifications (Master's degree or above) tended to perceive inclusion efforts more positively than those with only a bachelor's degree. This finding may reflect greater exposure to advanced training or contemporary educational models.
- A statistically significant difference was found based on years of professional experience (F = 4.12, p = 0.019), with more experienced educators demonstrating more favorable evaluations of inclusion implementation. This supports the idea that prolonged exposure to diverse classroom dynamics enhances understanding and acceptance of inclusive education, as also noted by Al-Khatib & Kassem (2020).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given the high effectiveness of inclusion strategies and the strong role of training, it is recommended to institutionalize ongoing training programs focused on inclusive education methodologies. These should be tailored to both new and experienced teachers, with practical workshops and real-life case studies.
- Although no significant differences were found between teachers and principals, it is crucial to equip school leaders with specialized training in inclusive leadership to ensure consistency and sustainability in the application of inclusion policies across all levels of administration.
- Despite the positive evaluation, the relatively high mean score for the "Challenges and obstacles" domain suggests a need for targeted interventions. This may include reducing class sizes, providing classroom assistants, and allocating more learning resources to schools implementing inclusive practices.
- Given that years of experience significantly influenced the perception of inclusion effectiveness, experienced teachers should be designated as mentors or lead practitioners to support newer staff in implementing inclusive strategies.
- Educational institutions should encourage and incentivize teachers to pursue postgraduate studies in special education or inclusion by offering scholarships or professional development credits, as these qualifications tend to enhance understanding and application of inclusive principles.
- There is a need for a standardized policy on inclusion tailored to the context of East Jerusalem's elementary schools. This framework should outline best practices, monitoring mechanisms, and guidelines for evaluating the inclusivity of classroom environments.
- Effective inclusion requires support beyond the classroom. Therefore, schools should build strong partnerships with families and community-based organizations to ensure that inclusive strategies are reinforced in all environments where children develop.
- Future studies should explore in depth the types of obstacles faced during implementation and analyze the long-term impact of inclusive education on both students with special needs and their typically developing peers. A mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative tools is encouraged.

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