

# Kuwait Parents' Attitudes toward Inclusive Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities in General Education

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## ABSTRACT:

This study investigated the attitudes (i.e., beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions) of Kuwaiti parents about providing students with intellectual disabilities (ID) an inclusive education in general education classrooms. One hundred seventy-seven parents from the six governorates in Kuwait participated in this study. The researchers utilized a survey method to examine the parents' attitudes with a concentration on eight demographic attributes: gender, age, level of education, knowledge about people with ID, having a child with a disability, contact with a person with ID, having school-age children, and the governorate where they live. The results indicated that parents who had contact with or had children with ID held the most positive attitudes toward providing students with disabilities an inclusive education in general education. The findings of the study provide a comprehensive view of the importance of the inclusion of people with disabilities in attitude. In this study, we identified predictor factors that affect the attitudes of parents and implications.

**Keywords:** inclusive education; attitudes; intellectual disabilities; general education; parents

## INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education (IE) is a topic widely discussed in educational circles over the last two decades (Gallego-Ortega & Rodríguez-Fuentes, 2021). Despite the various initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of students with intellectual disabilities (ID) in general education settings in Arab and Middle Eastern countries, the lack of sufficient research on the subject continues to prevent the adoption and achievement of inclusion (Amr, 2011). Research has demonstrated that attitude and parental involvement are considered to have important roles in the implementation of inclusion (Dimitrova-Radojichich & Chichevska-Jovanova, 2014; Mavropalias et al., 2021), however, the literature shows a lack of parental knowledge about the philosophy of IE in the middle east (Al Zyoudi et al., 2011; Gaad, 2004; Hamaidi et al., 2012). This study investigated Kuwaiti parents' attitudes (i.e., beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions) about providing students with ID an IE in general education (GEd) settings.

### Kuwait

Kuwait, at the tip of the Arabian Gulf bordering Iraq to the north and Saudi Arabia to the south, is divided into 6 governorates. Like other countries, Kuwait has witnessed the historical practice of segregation of people with disabilities in educational and community settings (Salih & Al-Kandari, 2007; Weber, 2012). Kuwait was the first middle eastern country part of the Gulf Cooperation Council (i.e., United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait), to introduce inclusion in public education (Aldaihani, 2010). Kuwait's policies regarding inclusion emphasize the rights of individuals with disabilities be integrated into society and learn beside peers without disabilities (Al-Kandari & Salih, 2008; Alshemari, 2016) However, Kuwait does not yet have clear strategies for the implementation of IE in GEd settings (Al-Kandari & Salih, 2008; Aldaihani, 2010). Kuwait's current system has GEd teachers educating students with disabilities in separate programs from the GEd schools (Al-Shammari, 2008; Almoosa et al., 2012).

### Attitudes

Research has demonstrated that attitude is an important component in facilitating the successful implementation of IE (Dimitrova-Radojichich & Chichevska-Jovanova, 2014). Unfortunately, research indicates that society's general attitudes toward persons with disabilities are

often negative (Grames & Leverentz, 2010; Triandis, 1971). Thus, attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities are a potential obstacle to an equitable education (Zheng et al., 2016). Understanding the negative attitudes of individuals toward people with ID can help improve society's practices and the access of people with disabilities to their educational rights (McManus et al., 2011). Attitude can be viewed through cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (De Boer et al., 2012).

- The cognitive component is about knowledge of or beliefs about something (e.g., I believe students like Ahmed / Norah should be given the opportunity to be included in general education schools.);
- The affective component is about feelings and emotional reactions to an object or a person (e.g., I feel upset when I see a student like Ahmed / Nora.);
- The behavioral component is about actions or acting in a certain manner (e.g., I would try to stay away from Ahmed / Nora.).

### Parents' Attitudes

A review of the literature demonstrates that parents' attitudes toward inclusion are important factors to consider (Soponararu et al., 2016). The goal of a successful system of inclusion is to ensure that the community believes that the education system is capable of meeting the needs of all students. Parents must have confidence in the school's ability to provide effective and relevant education to their children (Elkins et al., 2003). There is research that demonstrates parents have a positive or neutral attitude toward IE (Paseka & Schwab, 2020). There is a significant relationship between knowledge and perceived social norms, and these are considered powerful predictors of parents' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities (Lui et al., 2015). Studies have shown that having a positive experience with inclusion can help parents develop a more positive attitude (Paseka & Schwab, 2020).

### Inclusive Education

Inclusion in general education schools means students with disabilities are included in classrooms with peers without disabilities and provided access to and the ability to participate in the GEd environment, with needed support. Parents have served a vital role with strong political advocacy (Gasteiger-Klicpera et al., 2013; Lui et al., 2015) serving as a stimulus behind the advancement of inclusion of children with disabilities in GEd (Sharma & Trory, 2019). While some parents advocate for an IE for

their child, others prefer a segregated education (Elkins et al., 2003). One study noted that parents are concerned about the lack of information regarding the positive aspects of IE (Soponaru et al., 2016).

Despite the general acceptance of IE, some parents think that special schools are the best choice for children with disabilities (Dimitrova-Radojichich & Chichevska-Jovanova, 2014). Studies have shown the type of disability can influence the attitudes of parents toward wanting their children to receive an IE in GEd (Al Neyadi, 2015; De Boer & Munde, 2015; Paseka & Schwab, 2020; Sharma & Trory, 2019). The majority of studies to date, focused on parents' attitudes toward inclusion, only collected data from the mothers (Soponaru et al., 2016). When included in the research, male parents were found to be theoretically more optimistic about inclusion than female parents and less likely to participate actively in their child's learning (Lui et al., 2015). When examining parents of students with typical development, they generally do not reject the social contact of their children with peers with disabilities (Radovanović et al., 2022).

Despite the various policies and legislation that have been established in the Arab countries to ensure that people with disabilities have the right to education in the least restrictive environment, there are still gaps in the application of inclusive practices (Abdelhameed, 2015). The logistics of the transition to IE can be challenging for students with and without disabilities, their parents, and school personnel (Burststein et al., 2004; Kelly et al., 2014; Kim, 2012; Braunsteiner & Mariano-Lapidus, 2014).

### Research Question

This study contributes to the research by investigating parents' attitudes related to affective, behavioral, and cognitive (i.e., beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions) components regarding providing students with ID an IE in GEd, specifically in Kuwait.

#### Main question

What are the attitudes of Kuwait parents about providing students with ID and IE in GEd settings?

#### Sub questions

- a. Is there a statistical relationship between Kuwait parents' demographic attributes (i.e., gender, age, level of education, knowledge about people with ID, having a child with a disability, contact with a person with ID, having school-age children, and the governorate where they live) and their negative or positive attitudes toward providing an IE to students with ID in GEd?
- b. Which of the selected Kuwait parent demographic attributes (i.e., gender, age, level of education, knowl-

edge about people with ID, having a child with a disability, contact with a person with ID, having school-age children, and the governorate where they live) has statistical significance concerning positive attitudes toward providing students with ID an IE in GEd?

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

The researchers utilized a purposive (i.e., participant's characteristics defined for a purpose that is relevant to the study) consistent sampling technique (i.e., specifying a subset of a large group where the elements in the subset satisfy a suitably chosen sampling condition) (Kutkov & Pagh, 2014). The primary researcher sent the survey link to twelve school administrators to solicit parental input. Specifically, the survey was sent to two administrators in each of the six governorates (i.e., school districts) in Kuwait. The link was sent via a messenger App. The administrators sent the link to parents who had elementary school students in general education classrooms. The survey was available to be completed over one academic term, which was four weeks. The researchers received a total of 281 responses from participants. Due to uncompleted answers, researchers did not utilize 104 responses which resulted in a total of 177 valid questionnaires for data analysis from Kuwait parents. The parents who were participants in the study represent a small subset of all the parents in Kuwait. The researchers used G\*Power to calculate the needed effect size of a minimum of 74 participants (Faul et al., 2009) with sub-sample sizes at a minimum of 30 for each category (e.g., male and female) (Roscoe, 1975).

Table 1 includes the results from the descriptive analysis carried out to examine the demographic context of the parents. The participants included 33 (18.06%) males and 144 (81.4%) females. Participants' ages ranged from 19 to 60 years old. Of the respondents, 2.3 % were aged 19 years and younger, 16.4 % were 20-29, 35% were 30-39, 32.8% were 40-49, 23% were 50-59, and .6% were 60 years and older. Participants' levels of education ranged from elementary education to higher education levels. The majority (62.1%; n=110) of parents who participated in this study hold bachelor's degrees, while 24 (13.6%) have diploma-associate degrees. One hundred thirteen (63.8%) of the parents stated that they know people with disabilities. Twenty-eight (15.8%) of the parents have a child with a disability and 136 (76.8%) have contact with a person with ID. Of the participants in this study, 134 (74.5%) are parents of children of school

age. About half of the responses were from parents living in AlJahra with the lowest participation (6.8%) living in AlAhmadi and AlFarwania governorates.

Table 1. Frequency and Percent of Parents (N = 177) by The Predictor Variables

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	33	18.6
Female	144	81.4
<b>Age</b>		
19 and younger	4	2.3
20-29	29	16.4
30-39	62	35.0
40-49	58	32.8
50-59	23	13.0
60 and older		.6
<b>Level of education</b>		
Elementary	1	.6
Middle school	3	1.7
Highschool	15	8.5
Diploma-associate degree	24	13.6
Bachelor's degree	110	62.1
Master's degree	10	5.6
Doctoral degree	14	7.9
<b>Knowledge about people with intellectual disabilities</b>		
Yes	113	63.8
No	64	36.2
<b>Child with a disability</b>		
Yes	28	15.8
No	149	84.2
<b>Contact with a person with an intellectual disability</b>		
Yes	136	76.8
No	41	23.2
<b>School-age children</b>		
Yes, Male student (s)	22	12.4
Yes, Female student (s)	29	16.4
Yes, Female and male students	81	45.8
No	45	25.4

#### Governorate location

Alasima	31	17.5
Hawali	17	9.6
AlAhmadi	12	6.8
AlJahra	91	51.4
AlFarwania	12	6.8
Mubarak Alkabeer	14	7.9

#### Instrument

The survey instrument required parents to read and consent to participate in the study. The survey informed participants that they were required to have an elementary-aged student in a general education classroom in the schools of the Ministry of Education in the State of Kuwait to participate. The time to complete the survey was stated on the survey at 10-15 minutes. To gather data, the researchers asked participants survey questions that collected parents' demographics, experiences, and attitudes toward people with disabilities. The survey described ID and a vignette description of a hypothetical student with an ID followed by a questionnaire that collected information on affective, behavioral, and cognitive attitudes (i.e. beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions). Table 2 provides an example of the vignette which features a male and female student. Participants would receive questions that featured either a male (i.e., Ahmed) or female (i.e., Norah) student based on the gender of their children. When a participant marked that they had one or more male children, they would get the male version of the vignette. When a participant had one or more female children, they would get the female version of the vignette. If the participant had more than one child and both genders, they received the male version of the vignette.

Table 2. Vignettes

Ahmed/ Norah: A boy/girl showing aspects of an intellectual disability. Ahmed/ Norah is a boy/girl of primary school age and has just moved to your town. He/ She is in the same class as your child. Ahmed / Norah has just started to read and write but has difficulty with math. Although Ahmed/ Norah can run and play like other children, he/ she sometimes forgets the rules of certain games. He/ She needs extra time to learn his/ her work and can be forgetful in class. Sometimes it is difficult to understand what Ahmed/ Norah says. He/ She enjoys playing music. For part of the day, Ahmed/ Norah receives extra learning assistance outside the classroom.

In the first part of the survey, the researchers collected information on the following eight demographics: (1) gender, (2) age, (3) level of education, (4) knowledge about people with ID, (5) having a child with a disability, (6) contact with a person with ID, (7) having school-age children, and (8) the governorate where they live to measure predictors for attitudes of Kuwait parents toward providing students with ID and IE in GEd. To answer the assessment questions, parents could click a drop-down button and submit their answers (e.g., yes/ no). In the second part, the researchers used the *Attitude Survey toward Inclusive Education (ASIE)* questionnaire to measure parents' attitudes. Previous research utilizing the ASIE shows a satisfactory scalability coefficient ( $H = 0.40$ ) and a high-reliability coefficient ( $\rho = 0.92$ ) (De Boer et al., 2012; De Boer & Munde, 2015). For the current study, the researchers tested the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha, which showed a high internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ). The researchers received permission from the original author (De Boer & Munde, 2015) to utilize and make revisions to the language in some items in the original instrument. The primary researcher, who is bilingual and Arabic is her first language, then translated it from English into Arabic language. The next step was to have bilingual experts in the field of special education review the Arabic version of the questionnaire to obtain the final accreditation version for this study. To test the survey before mass distribution, the researcher sent the survey to 13 reviewers. These reviewers examined the survey for clear language and directions. Based on feedback, minor revisions were made to improve the language in the questions and the possible answers.

The ASIE instrument consists of three dimensions. Each dimension consists of several statements, with a total of 24 statements (12 of them are negative and 12 are positive). The first dimension presents cognitive components or the "beliefs of parents" and consists of 13 statements. The second dimension presents the affective component or "feelings of parents", and it consists of seven statements. The third dimension presents the behavioral component or "behavioral intentions of parents" and consists of four statements. A 4-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree) was used for the instrument. The researchers put the revised ASIE instrument into Qualtrics Survey Software.

### Data Collection

The data for this research was collected from the online self-administered questionnaire distributed to parents via

school administrators in each of the six governorates in Kuwait. The data was collected during the last term of the school year. In the questionnaire, the participants were informed about the study's objectives and intentions. Participants were also required to provide their consent to engage in the research. The questionnaire was anonymous with data kept confidential. Parents' responses were automatically received when they pressed the submission button. The data analysis was processed after responses had been received, using SPSS Statistics 28.0.0 to explore the research questions.

### Data Analysis

The researchers followed the original assessment authors' data analysis process. During coding, the current researchers made the categorical variables into a series of dichotomous (0 and 1). The researchers analyzed the demographic information of the parents first and then their responses to the AEIS. In the data analysis, the researchers analyzed descriptive statistics, correlations, and multiple regression analysis. The researchers used ANOVA for the analysis of variances and Spearman's rho statistic to examine the interaction effects or correlations. The researchers then used multiple linear regression to answer the research questions regarding selected parent demographic attributes prediction of positive attitudes toward providing an IE to students with ID in GEd.

Descriptive statistics (frequency, percent, and standard deviation) were utilized to analyze the demographic responses and all items on the questionnaire. The researchers collapsed the four categories on the 4-point Likert scale into two categories to get either agree or disagree choices on the questionnaire items. The agree category presents the positive attitudes and the disagree category presents the negative attitudes. The researchers used correlation to estimate if there is a relationship between each of the selected attributes and the parents' attitudes. A multiple regression analysis was applied to identify which of the selected parents' attributes were predictors for positive attitudes.

To answer the primary research question regarding the attitude of providing an IE to students with ID in GEd, the researchers analyzed descriptive statistics such as percentile, means, and standard deviations. The descriptive statistics are presented for several individual items reflecting the three attitude components (i.e., beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions). The researchers performed ANOVA (i.e., Analysis of Variance) to analyze the possible effect of parents' demographic attributes (i.e., gender, age, level of education, knowledge about people with ID,

having a child with a disability, contact with a person with ID, having school-age children, and the governorate where they live.) on parents' attitudes.

To explore the research questions, the researchers examined the effect of the demographic variables on Kuwait parents' attitudes toward providing students with ID an IE in GEd. The responses to questionnaire items are on an ordinal scale and do not meet the assumption of being on a continuous scale for linear regression. To begin analyzing the data, the researchers averaged the responses to the 13 items on parents' beliefs, the 7 items on parents' feelings, and the 4 items on the behavioral intentions toward providing students with ID an IE in GEd. The averaged responses were on a continuous scale and hence the researchers used linear regression to assess the effect of the demographic variables on averaged responses.

For the linear regressions, a backward elimination procedure was followed to ensure that the final selected model for each response variable retained only the most influential predictor variable(s). For all statistical tests, a confidence level of 95% was assumed and a p-value of  $\leq 0.05$  indicated a strong influence of a demographic predictor variable on the response variable of interest. More specifically, in the multiple linear regression, the predictor variables with a significant effect ( $p \leq .05$ ) or marginal effect ( $0.05 < p \leq .10$ ) on the response variable were retained in the final selected model.

## RESULTS

### Overall Attitudes

Looking at the overall attitude of parents within the three components of parents' attitudes, the results of the descriptive statistics found in Table 3 show an average score of 3.01 (SD= .534), CV=.18, showing that the data are clustered closely around the mean illustrating a high score of reliability. When analyzing each component separately, the average score of beliefs of parents was 2.87 (SD= .600), CV= .21, the average score of feelings of parents was 3.05 (SD= .662), CV= .22, and the average score of the behavioral intention of parents was 3.52 (SD= .516), CV=.15. Overall, the descriptive analysis indicated that much of the data observed are clustered tightly around the mean with the tendency to negative skew (-.607).

When analyzing individual items more in-depth, parents' beliefs about the inclusion of students with ID were positive, in general. However, parents were skeptical about the ability of general education teachers to meet the individual needs of students. According to the descriptive

statistic scores on the items reflecting feelings, parents are not very concerned about being in contact with a child with ID. For example, parents would not mind if a child with ID would be the best friend of their children or if a child with ID invited their son/ daughter to his/her house. Similarly, the scores on the items reflecting the behavioral intentions of parents indicated positive outcomes. For example, parents would help a child with ID who might be teased. However, at the level of knowledge on how to communicate with a person with ID, parents were less positive. For example, they would not know what to say to a child with ID and they may want to stay away from him/her.

### Attitudes Towards Providing Students with ID an IE In GEd

Using the collapsing technique and simple arithmetic, the data shows that 26% of the parents who participated in this study, either disagree (6%) or strongly disagree (20%) and 74% either agree (43%) or strongly agree (31%) on the questionnaire items. When approaching this topic more precisely, the data from the three components of parents' attitudes show positive attitudes, in general. The beliefs of parents were 67% positive, parents' feelings were 79 % positive, and 90% of their behavior intentions were positive. Insert Table 3.

### Meta-Analysis of Attitudes

A regression analysis of the questionnaire data was used to examine the demographic factors influencing the attitudes of parents toward providing students with ID an IE in GEd. The model summary shows that the multiple correlation coefficient (R), using all the predictors simultaneously, is .299 and the Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is .06, meaning that 6% of the variance in parents' attitudes can be predicted from the gender, age, level of education, knowledge about people with ID, having a child with a disability, contact with a person with ID, having school-age children, and the governorate where they live. Note that the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is lower than the unadjusted R<sup>2</sup> (.09). This is, in part, related to the number of variables in the equation.

From the coefficients, only "gender" and "knowledge about people with ID" are significant (.04, .02), but the other variables add to the prediction of parents' attitudes. Because several independent variables were used, the reduction of the number of variables was used to help find an equation that explains more of the variance in the dependent variable, once the correction is made. Thus, the researchers utilized the concept of parsimony with mul-

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Different Attitude Statements for the Three Attitude Components

		Mean	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
<b>Beliefs of Parents</b>		2.87	.600	.21
Q1_R	Including students like Ahmed / Nora is NOT a desirable practice for educating typically developing students (C)	2.82	.893	.32
Q5	I believe students like Ahmed / Nora should be given the opportunity to be included in general education schools (C)	2.96	.950	.32
Q8	Children like Ahmed / Nora can do many things for themselves (C)	3.01	.742	.25
Q11	Students like Ahmed / Nora have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developing students (C)	2.88	.881	.31
Q12	Children with intellectual disabilities are able to make new friends (C)	3.12	.709	.23
Q13_R	Having a child like Ahmed / Nora around our house would be too much responsibility (C)	3.46	.648	.19
Q15	Children like Ahmed/ Nora behave properly in a general education classroom (C)	2.62	.796	.30
Q17_R	Children like Ahmed / Nora are a burden to their families (C)	2.94	.844	.29
Q19_R	General education teachers cannot meet the individual needs of students like Ahmed / Nora (C)	1.88	.802	.43
Q20_R	Children like Ahmed / Nora are often sad (C)	2.66	.760	.29
Q22	Children like Ahmed / Nora are interested in as many things as my children (C)	3.21	.698	.22
Q23	Children like Ahmed / Nora know what people expect from them in the general education classroom (C)	2.47	.747	.30
Q24	Children like Ahmed / Nora can be educated in the same school as typical students (C)	2.68	.875	.33
<b>Feelings of Parents</b>		3.05	.662	.22
Q2_R	I feel upset when I see a student like Ahmed / Nora (A)	3.05	.967	.32
Q4_R	I would not like it if Ahmed / Nora would be my child's best friend (A)	3.25	.870	.27
Q6	I would allow my child to go to a child with an intellectual disability house to play (A)	3.03	.738	.24
Q7_R	I would mind having a child like Ahmed / Nora living next door to us (A)	3.19	1.025	.32
Q9_R	I would worry if Ahmed / Nora sat next to my child in class (A)	3.14	.814	.26
Q10_R	I would worry if a child with an intellectual disability would play at our house (A)	3.08	.815	.26
Q18	I would not mind if Ahmed / Nora invited my son/ daughter to his/her house (A)	3.07	.683	.22
<b>Behavioral Intentions of Parents</b>		3.52	.516	.15
Q3	I would approve of inviting Ahmed / Nora to my child's birthday party (B)	3.43	.654	.19
Q14_R	I wouldn't know what to say to Ahmed / Nora (B)	2.75	.787	.29
Q16_R	I would try to stay away from Ahmed / Nora (B)	3.38	.673	.20
Q21	I would help Ahmed/ Nora if he/ she was being teased (B)	3.60	.605	.17
<b>Overall Parents' Attitudes score</b>		3.01	.534	.18

R= Revised item, C= Cognitive, A= Affective, B= Behavioral

multiple regression with the smallest number of predictors needed.

The ANOVA shows  $F = 2.790$ , which is statistically significant. This indicates that the predictors significantly combine together to predict parents' attitudes. The average parents' attitude about providing students with ID an IE in the GEd was affected by the main effect of gender and the knowledge about people with ID only. Specifically, the attitude of the parents towards providing students with ID an IE in GEd averaged over all items of the questionnaire in the study was negatively affected by their gender and knowledge about people with ID. The multiple R for the overall equation was  $.299$ ,  $R^2 = .90$ ,  $F(6,170) = 2.790$ ,  $p < .04$ ,  $.02$ . For the perceived competence  $\beta$  was  $.162$ ,  $-.175$ .

A correlation was computed to investigate if there was a statistically significant association between the predictor variables in the study and the dependent variables (parents' attitudes: beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions). The researchers used a nonparametric measure of rank correlation, Spearman's rho coefficients, to investigate a monotonic rather than linear association as there were outliers and there were levels of skewness in parents' attitudes (i.e., beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions;  $-.607$ ,  $-.436$ ,  $.792$ , and  $-1.007$ ) within the data, which violated the assumption of normality. The correlation doesn't imply causation; however, it evaluates a monotonic relationship between two variables that contributed to answering the research questions. Thus, the researchers calculated Spearman's rho statistic to compute the relationship between the selected parent attributes and the questionnaire's components, and whether or not they are negatively or positively related to the attitudes of parents.

Data showed a significant association between the overall attitude of parents and the predictor variables "knowledge about people with ID" and "contact with a person with an ID" ( $r_s [177-2=175] = -.219$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $r_s [177-2=175] = -.148$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The direction of correlations was negative, which means that parents who do not know people with ID and/ or contact with a person with ID tend to have a less positive attitude toward providing students with ID an IE in GEd. The  $r^2$  indicated that approximately 6% of the variance in the attitude of parents can be predicted from the knowledge about people with ID and contact with a person with ID. Beliefs of parents and the predictor variable, "knowledge about people with ID" ( $r_s [177-2=175] = -.177$ ,  $p < .05$ ), were also significantly associated.

Another significant association was found between the beliefs of parents and the predictor variable, "contact

with a person with an ID" ( $r_s [177-2=175] = -.171$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The direction of correlations was negative, which means that parents who do not know people with ID and/ or contact with a person with ID tend to have negative beliefs toward providing students with ID an IE in GEd, and vice versa. The  $r^2$  indicated that approximately 5% of the variance in the beliefs of parents can be predicted from the knowledge about people with ID and contact with a person with ID.

Similarly, the feelings of parents and behavioral intentions of parents have a significant relationship with the same predictor variables, the same as with the overall parents' attitude and beliefs of parents, and to the same direction of correlation ( $r_s [177-2=175] = -.168$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r_s [177-2=175] = -.191$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The  $r^2$  indicated that approximately 6% of the variance in the feelings of parents can be predicted from the knowledge about people with ID and contact with a person with ID. While the  $r^2$  indicated that approximately 3% of the variance in the behavioral intentions of parents can be predicted from the knowledge about people with ID and contact with a person with ID. Parents who are living in AlAhmadi governorate tend to have negative beliefs toward providing students with ID an IE in GEd in comparison to other governorates ( $r_s [177-2=175] = -.173$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

At the level of the relationship among the selected attributes, there was a significant association between "level of education" and "gender", with a negative direction of correlation toward females ( $r_s [177-2=175] = -.338$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This relationship indicates that males were more likely to have higher education (e.g., master and doctoral degree) compared with females in the sample of this study. Another significant relationship was found between "age" and "knowledge about people with ID", with a positive direction of correlation. Older parents tend to have more knowledge compared with those who are younger ( $r_s [177-2=175] = .152$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In addition, "age" was found significantly associated with the possibility of "having a child with a disability". The direction of correlation was negative ( $r_s [177-2=175] = .152$ ,  $p < .05$ ), which means the possibility of having a child with a disability would be increased among older parents.

There was a significant correlation between the possibility of "having a child with a disability" and having "knowledge about people with ID" ( $r_s [177-2=175] = .230$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with a positive direction of correlation. This relationship indicates that when parents have a child with a disability, they would know people with ID, and vice versa. Another relationship found significantly associated was between "yes, I have contact with a person

with ID” and “yes, I have knowledge about people with ID” ( $r_s [177-2=175] = .201, p < .01$ ). The positive direction of the correlation between the two responses indicated that parents who have contact with a person with ID are more likely to have a piece of knowledge about people with ID, and vice versa.

### Predictor Variables

For each of the components of the questionnaire (i.e., beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions), the demographic variables responses of each of the parents averaged over all items were regressed again to identify the most influential variable among them that predicted the average response. Multiple linear regression was undertaken to explore if different demographic variables were influential enough to cause significant differences in the parents’ attitudes across the three components of the questionnaire.

Results from a multiple regression analysis showed that the predictor variables “knowledge about people with ID” and “contact with a person with ID” were influential variables ( $p < .01$ ), on the beliefs of parents toward providing students with ID an IE in GEd. The beliefs of parents about providing students with ID an IE in GEd were negatively affected by their “knowledge about people with ID” and “contact with a person with ID.” The model summary showed that the multiple correlation coefficient (R), using the concept of parsimony to find an equation that explains the most significant variance in the dependent variable after the correction is made, is .284 and the Adjusted R2 is .05, meaning that 5% of the variance in parents’ beliefs can be predicted from the knowledge about people with ID and contact with a person with ID.

The ANOVA analysis indicated  $F = 3.010$ , which is statistically significant. This suggests that all the predictors, examined in this study, are significantly combined to predict the beliefs of parents. The average of parents’ beliefs about providing students with ID an inclusive in GEd was affected by the main effect of “knowledge about people with ID” and “contact with a person with ID”. The multiple R for the “beliefs of parents” equation was .284,  $R^2 = .08$ ,  $F(5,171) = 3.010, p < .01$ . For the perceived competence beta was -.145, -.157. The predictor variables “gender” and “knowledge about people with ID” were influential variables ( $p < .01$ ), on the feelings of parents toward providing students with ID an IE in GEd.

Feelings of parents towards providing students with ID an IE in GEd were negatively affected by “gender” and

“knowledge about people with ID”. The model summary showed that the multiple correlation coefficient is .287 and the adjusted R2 is .06, meaning that 6% of the variance in parents’ feelings can be predicted from “gender” and “knowledge about people with ID”. The multiple R for the “feelings of parents” equation was .287,  $R^2 = .08$ ,  $F(5,171) = 3.064, p < .01$ . For the perceived competence beta was .148, -.181. The predictor variable “knowledge about people with ID” was an influential variable ( $p < .04$ ), on the behavioral intentions of parents.

Behavioral intentions of parents towards providing students with ID an IE in GEd were negatively affected by their “knowledge about people with ID”. The multiple correlation coefficient is .237 and the adjusted R2 is .03, meaning that 3% of the variance in parents’ behavioral intentions can be predicted from only their “knowledge about people with ID”. The multiple R for the “behavioral intentions of parents” equation is .237,  $R^2 = .08$ ,  $F(4,172) = 2.557, p < .04$ . For the perceived competence beta was -.163.

### DISCUSSION

This study aimed to analyze the attitudes of Kuwaiti parents toward providing students with ID an IE in GEd. Results from this study share some similarities and other differences with the research literature. Based on the results of this study, the majority of Kuwait parents hold positive attitudes toward providing students with ID an IE in GEd with only a quarter of the parents holding negative attitudes. A study conducted in Romania found similar results to the current study that parents, in general, have positive attitudes toward inclusion, especially those who have children with disabilities (Soponaru et al., 2016). However, the current study findings are contrary to the results of a study conducted in Egypt that found parents were generally not supportive of the benefits of inclusion for children with ID (Abdelhameed, 2015). However, the current study confirms previous studies about the attitude of parents of students with a disability as they are less concerned about the inclusion of students with ID than parents of typically developing children (e.g., De Boer & Munde, 2015; Al Neyadi, 2015; Radovanović et al. 2022).

While negative attitudes were found to be associated with the lack of “contact with people with ID”, positive attitudes were found to be associated with “gender”. Female parents are more likely to hold positive attitudes than male parents. These results are contrary to the results of a study conducted in Hong Kong that found male par-

ents exhibiting more positive attitudes toward inclusion than female parents (Lui et al., 2015). Another study showed that both female and male parents have positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disability, however, female parents' attitudes were influenced by their past interaction with people with disabilities while male parents' attitudes were influenced by mothers' attitudes (Soponaru et al., 2016).

Although "there are no services available for Kuwaiti parents that offer them basic information and instructions about their child's disability" (Al-Kandari & Al-Qashan, 2010, p. 24), the current study shows that parents who exhibited a positive attitude are the ones who either have a child with a disability and/or have contact with people with disabilities. This study indicated the importance of contact with people with disabilities on their attitude and level of knowledge about disabilities. Parents who have a child with a disability and/or have contact with people with disabilities are more knowledgeable about students with ID. This conclusion mirrors the results of previous studies that investigated the attitudes of parents toward the inclusion of students with ID (Gasteiger-Klicpera et al., 2013; Green et al., 2007).

Considering the beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions components of parents' attitudes, it appears that parents' behavioral intentions are more positive when compared with their feelings and beliefs. In this study, individuals with contact with students with ID had more positive attitudes about inclusion. Based on these results, an important takeaway in improving the attitudes of individuals about inclusion is to facilitate direct contact between students with ID and others for exposure. This contact and improved attitudes can lead to the adoption and implementation of more inclusive experiences in Kuwait.

### Limitations

There were limitations to this study. A survey method was the only instrument for this study. The number of female parents was nearly six times the number of male parents. The participants in this study had school-age children. It is difficult to compare data presented in the current study with those reported in published international research on this topic as there are no identical definitions for IE in developing countries (Alkhateeb et al., 2016).

### Implications

Specifically, this study sought to increase our knowledge about Kuwait parents' attitudes toward providing students with ID an IE in GEd. This study contributes to the field of education for students with ID in Kuwait as it provides decision-makers data on parents' attitudes towards providing students with ID an IE in GEd.

### Future Research

Future research should expand the participant sample to include greater numbers of male parents and more parents of young adults with ID. The focus of this study was on ID. Other researchers might want to investigate the attitudes of the parents of children with different types and severity of the disability. Future research could expand beyond the survey method utilized for this study as conducting interviews with parents would give a wider understanding of parents' attitudes, especially those who express negative attitudes.

### CONCLUSION

In this study, the researchers investigated the attitudes (i.e., beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions) of Kuwaiti parents about providing students with ID an IE in GEd classrooms. The most significant result from this study contact with students with ID contributes to positive attitudes toward providing students with disabilities an IE in GEd. The findings of the study demonstrate the importance of providing access to an IE in general education schools for students with ID. The results of this study provide a case for countries, like Kuwait, that do not currently include students with ID in GEd settings to not wait for positive attitudes to occur before implementing IE opportunities. The results provide a rationale for providing an IE to students with ID in GEd to provide opportunities for contact with students with ID to contribute to positive attitudes.

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### DECLARATION OF INTEREST STATEMENT

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