

**TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK FOR YOUNG MALES WITH
LEARNING DISABILITIES IN RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA**

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the difficulties that individuals with learning disabilities encounter while transitioning to work in Saudi Arabia. Existing programmes have been identified that help such individuals in transitioning to work, while factors that restrict individuals in this transition to work have also been identified.

My aim at all points has been to illuminate and analyse the issues that confront people with learning disabilities with a view to easing the movement of young people from school to work in Saudi Arabia. Three main research strategies adopted in the study to gather relevant data were a cross-sectional study using interviews, case study, and critical incident analysis.

The attitudes of people in Saudi Arabia – resting mainly in history, tradition and culture – were found to be central to the difficulties in this transition process, with presumptions about the incapability of people with learning difficulties working in an organisational environment. The other underlying factors that exacerbate the challenges faced by these individuals include the lack of awareness of their parents regarding the rights of children with disabilities, inappropriate government policies, and overprotection of the children by their families.

Employment is crucial post-school because it enhances individuals' independence, reducing dependence on third parties for emotional, moral and physical support. However, there was found to be a need for improvement in the training programmes for young people with learning disabilities approaching school-

leaving age – particularly in relation to the use of assistive technology – to help them deal with the social challenges of the workplace and gain equal employment opportunities.

From my findings, I conclude that people with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia are often seriously restricted in the transition to work because of culturally embedded resistance to the idea of their potential. This resistance extends to inconsistencies in the role of the government in ensuring that the authorities tasked with protecting the rights of people with disabilities play their roles appropriately to promote the rights of these individuals in job applications and employment.

Recommendations are made about changes needed in public information about disability, in the provision of enhanced programmes of support for school leavers, and in improved coordination amongst stakeholders, and particularly between schools and employers.

Published Work

Reference is here given to material published in advance of this thesis.

Alanazi, A. (2018). The difficulties witnessed by people with intellectual disability in transition to work in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Educational and Pedagogical Science*. 12(4) Pp 526-535.

Alanazi, A. (2018). Critical incident analysis technique to examine the issues faced by the individuals with learning disabilities. *World Journal of Education*. 8(5) Pp 17-23.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
AAIDD	American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
EHC	Education Health Care
SENCOs	Special Educational Needs Coordinators
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
LD	Learning Disabilities
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RRSEP	Rules and Regulations of Special Education Programmes
SEN	Special Education Needs
SETs	Special Education Teachers
ABA	Applied Behaviour Analysis
IFSP	Individualized Family Services Plan
DTI	Discrete Trial Instruction
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IDC	Intellectual Disability Centre
MSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
IOS	International Organisation for Standardisation
SIS	Social Intensity Scale
IDRS	Intellectual Disability Right Service
DDC	Developmentally Disabled Children
CIT	Critical Incident technique
CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
RSEPI	Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes

Dedication

I would like to dedicate my thesis work to my parents, daughters Leen, Hanin, Lara, Ruaa and my wife who have been constantly supportive and encouraged me to complete my thesis. I would also like to thank and offer special gratitude to my brothers and sisters in Saudi Arabia for their guidance in finishing my thesis work.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The lives of adults with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia: the need for this research

I took the decision to research the topic of adults with learning disabilities and their lives, focusing on what they face after completion of school in Saudi Arabia, as this topic has not been addressed by Saudi researchers to date. My research centres on adults with learning disabilities and their difficulties in transitioning to employment. Employment is a gateway to independence, yet little attention, as I shall show, has been given to enabling young people to achieve employment in Saudi Arabia.

It has been noted that adults with learning disabilities face problems gaining employment in Saudi Arabia due to the recent reduction in vocational training opportunities (Alnahdi, 2018). Ministry officials often neglect to develop programmes for adults with learning disabilities. This has resulted in the increased difficulties experienced by these young people (Ahmed, 2015). In addition, the programmes for vocational rehabilitation initiated by the Ministry of Social Affairs, along with the employment programmes undertaken by the Ministry of Labour, have failed to provide young people with special needs with the skills required to meet the challenges they may face in modern society (Alajmi and Al-Batal, 2016). Adults with disabilities face difficulties due to the lack of job opportunities. The demography of Saudi Arabia is that of a ‘developing’ nation, with young people constituting 60% of Saudi society. This is problematic for the young disabled person (Alkhateeb, Hadidi and Alkhateeb, 2016), with such an expanded stratum of youth in the general demographic (and the Saudi cultural context is covered in detail in Chapter 2). There are different kinds of rehabilitation and training programmes for adults with learning disabilities which can be undertaken after their graduation from school. However,

these programmes are often unsuitable for gaining qualifications for the current job market (Alharbi and Madhesh, 2018).

In addition to this, a major problem relates to the officers, authorised by the Ministry of Labour, who are engaged in providing training, advice and employment. These officers lack the necessary experience for dealing with young people who have learning difficulties. Furthermore, it has been found that some employers have increased the complexity of their job application procedures, which makes it harder for disabled young people to apply, thereby further limiting their employment opportunities (Abo-shoera, 2014).

A limited literature, then, shows that adults with learning disabilities often face challenges in relation to their new jobs. And when in a job, lack of feedback and training adversely affect how they are able to perform their job responsibilities (Alhazmi and Ahmed, 2018; Al-saif, 2018). Research has also shown that the problems faced by adults with learning disabilities in the workplace include information processing, writing skills, time management, and organisational skills. In short, it has been observed that the current programmes of job training require improvement in providing support (Alsaqabi, 2011).

It has been also observed that adults with learning disabilities lack necessary 'life skills' in relation to employment in Saudi Arabia. They lack knowledge, for example, of the actions that can be undertaken to curb the negative reactions of the companies employing them (Altman, 2017). However, there are certain charitable institutions, such as Prince Sultan Charitable Society, the Saudi Society for Special Education and King Salman Foundation for Disability Research, which have been established for the purpose of providing training, counselling and employment to people with learning disabilities.

It has also been observed that there is an equity issue as young people with such disabilities from more privileged families financially have access to many training opportunities in centres with highly skilled trainers and modern equipment (Alzarea, 2009). This helps in training them and enhancing their skills, which proves helpful for them in the Saudi labour market. However, people from low-income families often cannot pay for these training programmes and this restricts their knowledge and skill development (Alharbi and Madhash, 2018).

Previous studies have concluded that the Saudi government is largely responsible for the dilemma faced by these adults, with conclusions relating to the negligible assistance to people with learning disabilities (Hameed and Aslam, 2015). In addition, previous research has noted the absence of government offices providing guidance or counselling services to disabled students after their graduation from school. This has adversely affected the improvement of skills and knowledge of these adults (Hameed and Aslam, 2015). Regarding the satisfaction levels of families towards the services offered to these individuals, various studies have found that they have been experiencing an intolerable situation leading to continued suffering. However, this is contrary to what has been stated in the Saudi media with respect to the efforts of the government directed towards adults with learning disabilities and their families in Saudi Arabia (Alsaqabi, 2011).

The issues faced by adults in the workplace include the negative attitude of employers towards employees with learning disabilities. In addition, studies have explored the lack of protection towards the rights of the adults with learning disabilities in the workplace in Saudi Arabia (Al-Sharqi, Hashim and Ahmed, 2015). There is an absence of any kind of protection provided to employees with disabilities in relation to their financial rights, as well as the absence of incentives for good performance (Alwasil, 2017). However, feedback from the companies operating in the Labour Office in Riyadh have confirmed

that recruitment of adults with learning disabilities has proved beneficial for these companies. It has been observed that employees with learning disabilities tend to respect their working hours and gain professional experience rapidly. Furthermore, these employees also display a great desire for building relationships and social communication with other people (Khoja and Sheeshah, 2018).

The qualities of adults with learning disabilities were investigated in the research of Alnahdi (2013) that focused on the work performance of disabled people in Saudi Arabia. This revealed negative perspectives towards the possibilities and capabilities of this group, including people with learning disabilities themselves (Alajmi and Al-Batal, 2016). In the smaller cities in Saudi Arabia, such as Al-Kharj, Aljouf and Al-Qassim, there are no services or programmes for these adults. In these cities, there is widespread poverty and many individuals face difficulties in adapting to the situations involving the use of their skills and capabilities. In fact, there is a lack of government services to assist individuals with learning disabilities towards participating in the training programmes aimed at their skill development (Algahtani, 2017).

Family involvement in encouraging employment is crucial (Alkhateeb, Hadidi and Alkhateeb, 2016). It encourages independence for times when reliance on family becomes unrealistic. However, caution is needed, given the added psychological pressure which may be felt if too much emphasis is put on the need to work (Alkhateeb, Hadidi and Alkhateeb, 2016). Clearly there are differences between family expectations and it will be difficult, given the lack of support coming from state and regional services, for families to understand where encouragement may elide into pressure.

There are various reasons for the failure in the development of programmes to serve people with learning disabilities. The relatively few employers who actively become

involved in employing disabled people and the restricted number of vocational training centres in most Saudi cities is a key issue. In addition, there is a concentration on certain areas, while ignoring others in the provision of services. However, the new Vision 2030 has generated hopes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has helped in organising new plans (Al-Assaf, 2018). These programmes and plans relating to education, training and employment will be commensurate with the number of disabled people in each city of Saudi Arabia. Officials of the Saudi government who were involved in the establishment of this vision have promised a fundamental positive change with respect to such training programmes (Al-Assaf, 2018).

Saudi Arabia and its history, culture and traditions

Much of the discussion in this thesis will centre on Saudi culture and its influence on provision for children and young people with learning difficulties in general, and on school/work transition in particular. As a background to this discussion, a brief account is given here of this background, history and culture, with a focus particularly on civil society and the labour market. The points introduced here are elaborated in subsequent sections of this chapter.

General

Saudi Arabia is the largest country of the Arab states and the largest in the region. It is the home of Islam and the home of the two holiest places in Islam. The country was united in 1932 by Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, whose family still rule. The House of Saud created the Saudi national identity and continues to actively build this identity (Haykel, Hegghammer, & Lacroix, 2015; Lacey, 2009). As a non-democratic monarchy, there are strong social hierarchies and limited civic institutions (Lacey, 2009). Ties of blood and patronage mean

that there are limited opportunities to influence policy for those without connections to the ruling élite.

Religious authorities (ulama) are the main alternative power source to the government, although the policy and aims of the ulama and the government are usually closely aligned. Limited civil society raises problems for those who are interested in achieving social or policy change. With particular reference to the project of developing a more inclusive education system, with greater connections fostered between schools and employers, the lack of institutions such as teachers' unions, federations of headteachers, inspection services or quality improvement agencies presents major challenges.

Gender

Women are very under-represented in the Saudi labour market, and this is bound to have an influence on school-to-employment transition although there is some evidence that this is changing (Al-Rasheed, 2015). There are deeply rooted ideas about how women should act, which are understood by all Saudis. The clear demarcation between the way men and women are treated in Saudi culture has presented issues for the way in which I have framed this research: because I have been unable to offer two entirely separate analyses, which might have drawn attention away from the central focus, I have focused on males for my empirical work, while identifying differences in the way that males and females might have been treated as the analysis proceeds.

Migration and the Labour Market

Saudi Arabia has a very high proportion of migrant labour and this in turn has an effect on the willingness of employers to consider employing disabled youngsters. 32% of the population are expatriates and this group accounts for 57% of the labour force and 89% of

the private sector workforce (de Bel-Air, 2014). Migrant workers are drawn from a wide range of countries with workers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia being the largest groups, but also large numbers drawn from regionally close and culturally similar countries such as Egypt, Syria, and the Sudan. These foreign workers are largely based in the construction and the retail and wholesale sectors and in service to private households.

The availability of migrant workers means that many employers are unenthusiastic about employing Saudi workers (Hooley, 2017), which exacerbates the problem of employment for those Saudis with any additional difficulty such as a disability of any kind. The current organisation of the Saudi labour market has resulted in a number of social problems, with native Saudis often unemployed and marginalised. The growth in the size of the youth population in the demographic has exacerbated some of these problems. One of the guidance professionals Hooley spoke to stressed the significance of these issues.

The labour force is almost dominated by foreigners. Indians, Pakistanis and Philippines are everywhere by the thousands. Saudis seem to be the owners or patrons mainly. Saudisation is a very difficult goal at least in the short and middle term. At least for low wage jobs (Hooley, 2017: 289).

As far as policy toward disability in the labour market is concerned, as I elaborate later in this chapter, the government provides a monthly financial allowance for disabled people who cannot find work. This process has been criticised by many recruitment professionals as encouraging the majority of relevant individuals to stay unemployed (Alsaqabi, 2011; Alnahdi, 2013; Abo-shoera, 2014; Abed and Alrawajfh, 2017).

Education

There is a low demand for technical education and poor alignment between the skills developed by the education system and those needed in the labour market (HRDF, 2016).

Sultana and Watts (2007) argue that the education system in Arab states is characterised by elitism and selectivity, memorisation and rote learning approaches and that teachers are weakly professionalised. They also highlight the fact that there is an increasing significance associated with higher education while vocational education is often neglected. The general characteristic to be noted here is of formalism and inflexibility, both of which are unlikely to offer a climate responsive to new ideas about education-to-work transition.

Learning disability in Saudi Arabia

Various changes take place during the transition from school to the workplace, and these are especially acute for individuals with learning disabilities. Challenges arise from the changes that take place when an individual transitions from being dependent to becoming independent. Therefore, according to Alnahdi (2016), it is necessary to adhere to an effective transition plan to achieve this change successfully. People with learning disabilities face various challenges during their professional and personal development. For instance, Al-Zoubi and Rahman (2016) found that, in transitioning from school to work, people with such disabilities experience difficulties in terms of mental, physical, sensory, and behavioural wellbeing. The difficulties occur because of the differences between the school and work environments, especially where the former is characterised by a well-ordered and supportive framework while the latter is characterised by strict deadlines and work schedules. In relation to this, it is important to conclude that the dependence of people with learning disabilities on others complicates their transition from the academic environment to the professional environment of the workplace (Alquraini, 2011).

For decades, incidence of disability was believed to be low in Saudi Arabia; however, the figures were distorted as many people with a disability were concealed. Disabled people were often not allowed to attend social gatherings or appear in public places; they were only seen in public during a visit to a hospital or educational environments. They generally suffered from social stigma which also affected their families; people held strong prejudices against them. Although the sense of stigma has now diminished, people with a disability continue to suffer because of social prejudices which ultimately hamper their growth (Al-Jadid, 2013). In this respect, this research seeks to undertake a detailed and critical study to examine and understand key factors hindering the development of disabled people in Saudi Arabia, namely the attitudes, programmes and facilities that may enhance or obstruct the integration of young people with disabilities to the world of work.

In addition to understanding the context of disability in Saudi Arabia, which motivated this study, I have undertaken to draw on my experience as a teacher of young people with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia. This personal awareness emerged from teaching at the higher end of the secondary age range. It was evident that when young people with such difficulties left school they appeared to experience great difficulty moving on to work. At first sight there appeared to be three major problems at the root of this difficulty. First, there appeared to be inadequate preparation in school for this transition; second, there seemed to be deep-seated cultural and historical factors which militated against the assimilation of people with any kind of disability into the world of work; third, there appeared to be resignation and passivity amongst parents about the possibility of young people with learning difficulties having any kind of productive future in employment. These issues are serious, not just for the young people and their families, but also for wider Saudi society. If traditional Saudi culture is to develop into the more modern, inclusive society that recent political changes suggest are the desired goal, it is necessary

to implement changes on a number of fronts, not least in education. The problems that confront school leavers with special needs seem to be significant – almost as a microcosm of what happens in wider society. Accordingly, an aim of this research was to examine the possible reasons for the difficulties encountered by school leavers moving to work, and to seek reasons for both active and passive resistance to the move to employment. It was surmised that the resistance could come from the home, the school, the employer, or from wider society. It was resolved that the structure of these resistances and how they operated should be explored in more detail.

Terminology

Learning disability

The terms ‘learning disabilities’ or ‘intellectual disabilities’ are usually used interchangeably whenever they are used in a health and social care context; however, people with learning difficulties often prefer the term learning disability instead of intellectual disability (Hardie and Tilly, 2012). In the UK, the term ‘learning difficulty’ is used alongside ‘learning disability’ and the terms refer to anyone who has a limited ability to process new or complex information and learn new skills.

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) legislation of the UK prefers using terms such as ‘profound multiple learning disabilities’ and ‘moderate learning disability’ since they denote learning impairments of a different extent in different individuals, while in the US the term ‘learning disability’ is used for individuals who have specific learning disorders associated with reading and writing like dyscalculia, dyslexia and dyspraxia (Peer and Reid, 2016).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) defines ‘learning disorder’ as ‘a neuro-developmental problem of biological origin’, which can be

characterised on the basis of continual difficulties in accomplishing academic skills (American Psychiatric Association, 2015). A terminological shift can be noted, from ‘intellectual disability’ to ‘learning disability’ in the UK (Sellars, 2011). I have therefore chosen to use the term ‘learning disability’ as my main descriptor for the young people in whom I am interested in this research.

Rehabilitation

Another central term used in this research is ‘rehabilitation’, which has been discussed in various contexts and in various ways. In the field of medicine, its interpretation has undergone considerable change over time, particularly from the years before the First World War and after. According to World Health Organisation (WHO) (2011), rehabilitation can be defined as a combination of measures that support people who experience or might experience an inability when performing or maintaining optimal functioning while interacting with their surrounding environment. Although the concept of rehabilitation is broad, its role and functions are not limited to disability. It aims at improving an individual’s functioning by facilitating an improvement in the ability of a person to perform tasks independently, particularly tasks like eating and drinking (Weedon, 2016). It typically occurs for a particular period of time and might involve single or multiple interventions delivered by a single or a group of rehabilitation workers and might require careful attention from the acute or initial phase of recognising the health condition through to post-acute phases and maintenance (Wehman et al., 2014).

Research background

A shift from school to a workplace setting brings several changes in the life of people with learning or intellectual disabilities, as significant changes have occurred from dependence to intended independence. This is a crucial phase of life that requires effective transition

planning (Alnahdi, 2016). In this context, several challenges are encountered by people with learning disabilities while growing and developing personally and professionally.

The findings of preliminary research (Al-Zoubi and Rahman, 2016) on disability highlight that people with learning disabilities encounter numerous challenges with respect to behavioural, physical, developmental, mental and sensory aspects while transitioning from academic life (school) to work. The challenges mainly arise from moving from a comfortable, externally ordered and guided framework used at the school level to the workplace setting which incorporates tight work schedules and deadlines. The transition from academic career to professional career creates more challenges for people with learning disabilities due to their restricted capabilities and high dependence on other individuals to function more independently (Alquraini, 2011).

The research setting for the study is Saudi Arabia, where, until 1996, children with learning disabilities remained largely ignored in Saudi Arabia. It was only after the acknowledgement of these children by special education professionals during the screening and diagnosis of children at school, that their needs were officially recognised. The official adoption of the term 'learning disability' as used in the west replaced the use of informal descriptors (Al-Zoubi and Rahman, 2016). With the introduction of these terms and concepts into official discourse, disability and normalcy parameters were redefined, as a consequence of which the special system of education became an active institution which sought to identify children with a learning disability in regular schools. With the introduction of new concepts of learning disabilities, significant changes can be noted in Saudi Arabia; for example, in ideas about the difficulties faced by these students in their transition to work (Algahtani, 2017).

Research problem

The transition of students with learning disabilities from school to work has received little attention in Saudi Arabia. The few initiatives that have been instituted include the Regulations of Special Education Institutes and Programmes (RSEIP) that emphasise the provision of effective transition services to people whenever they are required. Moreover, the programmes of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA) of Saudi Arabia have also made a dedicated effort towards rehabilitating people with physical or mental disabilities by training them in an appropriate occupation, along with supporting them to become more productive individuals who are sufficiently skilled to communicate effectively with members of the wider community (Alnahdi, 2016). One of these initiatives is providing rights to people with learning disabilities to study in a mainstream school rather than in a special school. The stage of transition from the high school to post-school (or employment) of these specially-abled people is crucial for their parents and families (Robert, 2007). Legislation has been enacted with regard to safeguarding and supporting people with disabilities. The main legislation in this respect consists of the Legislation of Disability, the Disability Code, and the RSEIP (Alquraini, 2011).

People with learning difficulties often face issues that hinder them from making an easy transition from school to work, from whichever culture they originate. As Atherton and Crickmore (2011) point out, most people with a learning disability, wherever they live, are discriminated against in the workplace. They go on to point out that organisations often try to avoid hiring disabled people. Another difficulty experienced by people with a learning disability is that they are often socially excluded. In society, it is observed that people have the misconception that people with a learning disability are not capable of doing their tasks independently and thus they are treated differently in society (Lacey and Ouvry, 2013). In Saudi Arabia, these factors are likely to be exaggerated because of ingrained

prejudices rooted in culture and history (Lacey and Ouvry, 2013). I shall examine some of these in the literature review and as my fieldwork progresses.

Several studies have observed that consideration of the perspectives of people with disability is crucial when determining the utility of training programmes facilitating their transition from educational institutions to the labour market (Martin, 1999; Purcell, 2000; Lin, 2008; Shier, 2009; Yazici, 2011; Crawford, 2012; Anastasiou and Kauffman, 2013; Wehman, 2014). Furthermore, it is important to determine the impact of social factors such as the culture of Saudi Arabia, the behaviour of people towards disabled employees, awareness among families and individuals, social rights for disabled people, and the challenges they face. It has been revealed that these social factors have a significant impact on the employability of people having a learning disability in Saudi Arabia (Althabet, 2002; Al-Shammeri, 2003; Almuqel, 2006; Al-Nahdi, 2014; Al-Dabas, 2015). It has also been observed that only a few studies have highlighted the importance of the effectiveness of the training and development programmes in facilitating the school to work transition (Phelps and Hanley-Maxwel, 1997). The literature also states, according to Test et al. (2009), that it is necessary to assess the outcomes of transition plans and their utility, as a lack of awareness has been observed among students and their parents, which is the result of the country's cultural traditions, habits of thinking and mores. These findings highlight the considerable research conducted in the past regarding the challenges encountered by persons with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia in respect of education and employment. However, there is a significant absence of adequate study in the context of the challenges encountered by persons with learning disabilities while transitioning from study to work and the factors triggering such challenges. This highlights a gap in the existing research in Saudi Arabia which the present research intends to address.

It has been further found that, in comparison with developed countries, reliable official statistics on the incidence and prevalence of disability, impairment and other properties of the socio-demographic population are not available for Saudi Arabia. Further, despite awareness in the field of healthcare, there is a highly limited availability of demographic data regarding the population with disabilities of various kinds.

Research aim and objectives

The aim of this research was to examine the difficulties encountered by individuals with learning disabilities in their transition to work in Saudi Arabia. To address this aim, the following objectives were developed:

- To investigate the difficulties encountered by individuals with learning disability while transitioning from school or training programme to work in Saudi Arabia;
- To explore the existing programmes in Saudi Arabia that are helpful for individuals with learning disability in undertaking this transition;
- To study the factors that have a positive implication for individuals with learning disability while transitioning from school or training programme to work in Saudi Arabia;
- To suggest suitable measures for the community and government regarding the transition of individuals with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia

Research question

The following central research question was developed to specify the focus and scope of this research: *'What factors inhibit the successful transition of young people with learning disability from education to work?'*

In respect of this research question, some sub-questions were developed to address this question in a systematic and critical manner. These are:

Research sub-question 1: *What are the difficulties faced by individuals with learning disabilities in the transition from school/ training programme to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?*

Research sub-question 2: *What kind of programmes support them in this transition?*

Research sub-question 3: *What are the factors that facilitate or complicate this transition?*

Research sub-question 4: *What are the benefits of work for these individuals and for wider society?*

Research significance

This study focused on evaluating the experience of disabled people regarding their transition from school to work, and the difficulties these young people faced during this transition. It did this by accessing the views of the young people themselves and the views of their families and supporting professionals, with the findings here triangulated with my own understandings as a professional working in the area. There has been no study hitherto which explores the voice or the personal experiences of these individuals themselves as well as professionals working with them in the Saudi culture.

An extensive review was carried out of a diverse range of available literature highlighting the types of challenges having an impact on the transition phase from high school to labour market. Previous studies had highlighted the lack of effective training and development programmes for people with learning disability, and there had been only limited research into the factors influencing the transition of students with learning disability from study to work. This research therefore aimed to investigate these issues and to determine some effective steps that could be implemented within the training and

development programmes for disabled people to enhance their transition phase and ensure employability in Saudi Arabia (Abed and Alrawajfh, 2017).

This research gathered the views of the families and communities of individuals with learning disabilities regarding the issues faced by these individuals in gaining employment after completing their studies, in addition to their views on the available training programmes. A principal objective of this study was to identify the difficulties faced by people with learning disabilities during the transition phase from rehabilitation or school to the labour market in Saudi Arabia. In this regard, it was intended that the detailed investigation conducted in this research would provide useful data to guide future national and local government initiatives which could have a positive impact on the school/work transition of persons with learning disability. It was also intended that this investigation would be helpful in highlighting the hindrances facing people trying to overcome their disability, which would help in improving the training programmes delivered to people with a disability. This should lead to enhancement of their skills which should, in turn, increase their chances of gaining meaningful employment.

The research work aims to have an impact on the system in three ways. Firstly, it could help policy makers to understand the issues faced by people with disabilities from the perspectives of themselves and their families in attempting to secure employment in Saudi Arabian industries. Secondly, it could identify the utility of the training and development programmes available for such individuals to enhance their employability. Lastly, it could identify the impact of those social aspects which are hindrances for people with learning disabilities when trying to secure employment in the Saudi Arabian labour market.

Moreover, this research work could help professionals and policy makers to identify the opportunities in the existing development and training programmes available for the

people under investigation. Several studies have found that the facilitators of training programmes do not have the potential to assist people to gain employment in the Saudi Arabian industries (Al-Mousa, 1999; Al-Ajmi, 2006; Alquraini, 2011; Alnahdi, 2014). Furthermore, studies have highlighted the weaknesses of the facilitators and the training programmes, in the view of the family members of disabled people (Almuqaql, 2006; Al-Otaibi and Al-Sartawi, 2009). Hence, it was important to consider the views of those individuals who have a learning disability in order to judge the effectiveness of the programmes and the capability of the facilitators. The need to hear the voice of stakeholders is emphasised by studies noting that people with learning difficulties are capable of decision-making and can express their own views on the challenges they face (Al-shammeri, 2003; Alhano, 2006; Al-Muqaql, 2008; Yazici et al., 2011).

Organisation of the research

The data examined in this research and the findings thus obtained have been organised into specific chapters to ensure an appropriate flow of information that can help in answering the research questions and address the research aim. In this regard, the research is structured into eight chapters, whose purpose and content are stated below:

Chapter 1: Introduction- This chapter aims at presenting the focus of the research work, in order to inform the reader about the aim and objectives of the research study. The chapter presents the background of the study and provides justification for conducting research on this topic. It also discusses the problem statement; research significance and outlines the structure of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review- This presents the findings of the existing literature about the difficulties faced by students with learning disabilities, both in affluent countries of the

west and, more specifically, in Saudi Arabia, while transitioning from school to work from the perspective of a broad range of commentators, researchers and other scholars on this subject. The purpose of this chapter is to lay down a robust theoretical and conceptual foundation for the research and identify the gaps in the existing literature that can be addressed with the help of the findings of the present research.

Chapter 3: Methodology- This presents and justifies the methods, tools and procedures used in this research to address its aim and objectives, along with the key underlying justifications and assumptions for applying them here. For this purpose, the chapter explains the research's philosophy, design, approach and methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4: Cross-sectional study using interviews- This chapter presents the research findings gathered with the help of the semi-structured interviews regarding the difficulties faced by the students with learning disability while transitioning to work. The findings of the interviews are analysed with the help of thematic analysis and discussed in the light of the literature review.

Chapter 5: Case study- This chapter presents case studies of the difficulties faced by particular students with learning disabilities while transitioning to work.

Chapter 6: Critical incident analysis- This chapter offers analysis of critical incidents deriving from the personal experience of the researcher as a teacher. These critical incidents emerge from autobiographical accounts.

Chapter 7: Discussion- This chapter synthesises the findings from the previous three chapters, presenting the combined findings of the entire research and discussing them in light of the literature review.

Chapter 8: Conclusion and recommendations- This chapter summarises the findings of the research with the aim of addressing its aim and objectives. It also presents recommendations for future research and for making improvements to the transition of individuals with learning disability from education into work in Saudi Arabia.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature: general issues

While the previous chapter discussed the rationale and background of this thesis, this chapter presents the pertinent theoretical underpinnings of the conceptual framework of the study. In the perspective of Hart (1998), a literature review should encompass selected published and unpublished documents that contain the data, ideas and evidence written from an analytical perspective to address the research aims and to express certain views on the subject of the research. From the standpoint of Hammond and Wellington (2015), the review of the literature allows the researcher to establish an overview of what has already been examined in the field of study. Conducting a literature review enables the researcher to define the subject of the research through the identification of the key underlying concepts, theories and ideas that are associated with the study. It provides a locational and historical context, establishes the research already conducted on the research question, along with the methods and approaches applied for conducting the research, so that any gap in the existing literature can be identified, which can be addressed with the help of the proposed new research.

The literature review works as an important resource for the study in terms of filling important gaps, addressing the limitations, and explaining the need for doing more research in the area. Flick (2014) described three types of literature that could be significant when conducting qualitative research, namely: (1) Theoretical literature about the topic of the study; (2) Empirical research that involves discussing earlier research in the field of the study or similar field; (3) Methodological literature about the methods used in conducting work in the relevant area and justifying the reasons for a certain choice.

The literature review chapter presents the synthesis and extracts of the central findings, ideas and research methods that emerge from the examination of the existing literature sources and discusses them. Further, this chapter aims at presenting the critical examination of the research studies and theories that emerge from the existing literature, demonstrating the originality of the findings of the existing literature. Conducting a literature review has been a challenge because of the limited resources and restricted access to the sources about persons with disabilities in the work environment, especially in Arabic countries. In respect of the conduct of this literature review, it should be pointed out that its focus has been on including the studies and sources directly related to the subject of this research, which is individuals with learning disability.

In addition, there was a limited amount of statistical data available regarding the employment of persons with disabilities. A rigorous effort was made to explore numerous sources of literature from the Ministry of Labour, but there was an absence of any new, up-to-date statistics from the department. This was a major challenge while conducting the literature review. The socio-cultural factors of Saudi Arabia were also a hindrance in undertaking an inclusive study of persons with disabilities, and, for reasons I explained earlier in this chapter, data has often been limited to that relating only to males.

In this research, a comparison between the UK and Saudi Arabia has been undertaken in the context of the transitioning of individuals with learning disability from school to work and programmes and services relating to this transition. A comparison with the UK has been chosen because it is a developed country and could allow a critical examination of the prevailing efficient services, practices and programmes for a smooth transition of individuals with learning disability from school to work. On the other hand, while Saudi Arabia is my home country wherein, I can investigate the feasibility of these practices to

be applied. In addition to that, pursuing a PhD. in the UK further exposed me to the well-developed and organised programmes for the young persons with disability that were effective in preparing them for work and thus motivated me to compare them with that my home country, Saudi Arabia. I also realised that the comparison with the UK will be more useful in determining the shortcomings and weaknesses in Saudi Arabia, based on which the areas for improvement in my home country can be explored more appropriately.

Researching the literature for this topic

A detailed strategy of library research has been integrated in this research study which aims at evaluating the information with respect to the transition from school to work for young males with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

For this purpose, a number of research databases were examined such as EBSCO host, PsychInfo, and Google Scholar, along with the Saudi digital library, the student library, and the education resources information centre to gather scholarly articles and academic publications on transitions of the individuals with learning disabilities. Based on the articles thus gathered with the help of key word research, the shortlisted articles were studied to access their abstracts to ensure that their content and findings were in alignment with the aim of this research on difficulties experienced by persons with learning disabilities at the time of transition from school to work. The articles thus selected on this basis were used as a secondary data sources for this study.

In the process of this library search, it was observed that there was a lack of research on the subject due to the absence of proper academic resources or data about young people with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia. In addition to this, the sources such as the Ministries of Social Affairs, Education and Labour, and the families of people with

disabilities, have been used for reviewing the relevant literature on the subject of the research.

The history of special education in the UK and Saudi Arabia

The following section discusses the development of the field of special education in Saudi Arabia and the UK. The contrast is an interesting one since the UK has developed a complex, multi-layered approach to special education and inclusion over more than a century, while Saudi Arabia's provision is relatively young, and has depended on deriving many of its ideas and practices from the West. The United Kingdom was chosen for the contrast because of my extended study here, and my familiarity with the nation's educational system. Saudi Arabia was chosen also for contrast because it is the author's land of origin. In the majority of developed countries, including the UK, attempts to provide education to those with disabilities have been in place since the 19th century (Hurt, 1988). Hence, there are many phases that the provision of special education has gone through. Gradual development of the field was directed by numerous education-related policies, commission reports, and documents of an international character. On the other hand, comparable development of special education in KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) can only be traced from the middle of the 20th century. Nevertheless, special education in the KSA has been supported by a few legislative changes and initiatives. Like to the UK, it has evolved through several periods.

The first period of special education in the UK involved specialists who educated individuals with sensory impairments prior to 1900 through charitable donations (Wilson, 1967). Successively, the UK government established special educational facilities for disabled individuals either physically or intellectually (Farrell and Ainscow, 2002). According to Farrell and Ainscow, special education in those times lacked legislation that

would standardise its provision. In contrast, special education in the KSA started in 1958, when evening classes were launched for learning to read and write by means of the Braille system for visually impaired individuals (Al-Dabas, 2015). Before the programme commenced, individuals with such impairment were dependent on their relatives for educational support, as well as for provision of social and financial needs (Al-Ajmi, 2006; Al-Quraini, 2010).

In the next identifiable period (i.e. between 1962 and 1973), people with various disabilities formed an increasing number of groups which were eligible for provision of special education services by the Saudi government. Thus, special services were provided to individuals with mental impairments, as well as those with impaired sight and hearing (Al-Dabas, 2015). However, this initiative lacked support by any legislative measure issued by the KSA (Al-Ajmi, 2006). By contrast, the development of special education in the UK during this period was directed by various Education Acts (Hurt, 1988).

The third developmental stage of special education in the UK – between 1944 and 1970 – involved significant changes which revoked the possibility to categorise a child as uneducable at school. These changes were applied by means of the Education Acts of 1970 in England and Wales, 1974 in Scotland, and 1984 in Northern Ireland. Particularly, with the 1970 Education Act in England and Wales, children with mild impairments were for the first time officially integrated into regular primary schools (Tomlinson, 1982). Nevertheless, special schools remained open. According to the legislation, such facilities should be allowed to exist as a means of addressing the needs of children with severe impairments and provide them with separate educational services (Lauchlan and Greig, 2015).

Likewise, as the number of children in need of special education in the KSA increased, the Directorate for Special Education was established in 1974. Its main objective was to transform the programmes of special education in the country (Al-Mousa, 2010). The proposed changes involved integrating mildly and moderately disabled children into ordinary public schools, recognising that certain children have impairments of language, speech, and have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Al-Dabas (2015) stated that in the 1990s, the Saudi government department in charge of managing special education launched the classification system for disabled students, defining various kinds of groups. Its intention was to address their needs as accurately as possible.

On the other hand, student classification into various groups according to their disabilities in the UK was stopped after the Warnock Report's (1978) recommendations and the following modification of the Education Acts (1980 in Scotland, 1981 in England and Wales, and 1986 in Northern Ireland) (Hornby, 2011). One of the Warnock Report's recommendations was also to replace the term 'disability' with the term 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN). As a result of these changes, several programmes of international educational organisations, e.g. UNESCO, were modified. In 1981, the changes that the UK government adopted were sanctioned at the UNESCO World Conference on Educational Provision for Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, the conference emphasised the importance of integrating SEN children into ordinary schools (Runswick-Cole and Hodge, (2009). Following this development, the number of SEN children in ordinary schools in the UK increased; the number of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools, both primary and secondary, increased proportionally by more than 70% (Beveridge, 1999). Similarly, the changes recently proposed in the KSA, which will be further discussed below, aim to integrate over 50% of disabled students in regular schools (Al-Quraini, 2011). Nevertheless, even on such a

scale, the transformation of education of disabled pupils in the KSA remains way below the standards of special education in countries such as the UK, US, Norway, Finland, etc. (ibid).

All of this suggests that the overall philosophy of the field of special education needs in the UK, as well as in other western nations, has been changing profoundly and this change has also influenced education in practice. In the same way, special education in the KSA has also evolved, but from a different starting point and with more embedded cultural traditions to confront. While progress has been made, it is nevertheless very gradual in both nations; in the KSA, it is due to the lack of legislation and perhaps cultural resistance, and in the UK, it is the continuing existence of separate schools for SEN children that the Education Acts of 1980, 1981, and 1984 allowed (Al-Quraini, 2014).

The next, fourth period of development towards integration, recently also to inclusion, commenced formally in the UK by the issuance of the UK Green Paper in 1997 and in the KSA by passing the first education legislation, called the Disability Code of Practice, in 2000. In the Disability Code of Practice, the role and responsibilities of personnel working with children with special educational needs are outlined (Al-Mousa, 2010). In contrast, the UK Green Paper suggests attempting to ensure that every child is provided effective education in the mainstream school system (Attwood, 2013).

The recommendation to provide all children with the best possible education in mainstream schools, as well as the outline of personnel responsibilities in the KSA's Disability Code, were further supported in 2001 by Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI) in the KSA, the second act concerning education that the country has passed (Al-Wabli, 2003), and the Special Educational Needs and Disability

(SENDA) Act (Woodfine et al., 2008) in the UK. These acts established sanctions against discrimination and unfair treatment of SEN individuals (Al-Quraini, 2011).

The Children and Families Act 2014 makes it mandatory for the schools in England to design a policy in relation to supporting individuals with medical conditions. Furthermore, it has been observed that the UK government has published significant statutory guidance which declares that the schools are mandatorily required to support young individuals with learning difficulties. In addition, the provisions of this act also provide the local authorities with the responsibility to involve the children and families in the decisions and discussions with respect to their education and care along with providing mediation, advice and support services (Rotatori et al., 2014).

The Special Education Needs (SEND) and Disability Code of Practice 2015 provides statutory guidelines regarding the policies, duties and procedures which are related with the Children and Families Act 2014. It provides guidance to organisations engaged in supporting young people and children with special needs. The provisions of this act are considered in addressing the issues encountered by the children with disabilities. In addition, the provisions of this act also extend to young males and provide support for young males with disabilities. In this context, the provisions under this act prove beneficial for providing support to individuals with disabilities (Peer and Reid, 2016).

The RSEPI 2001, passed by the KSA, endorsed provision of services concerning only a single continuum of integration, namely locational. The UK Green Paper, on the other hand, recommended three continua of integration – locational, social, and functional – besides being concerned with the SEN themselves (Beveridge, 1999). These kinds of provision already exist in both special and regular schools and may be either categorical, or un-categorical. It is probable that provision will take place in special schools, special

premises located either in the ordinary schools, or attached to regular classes. In certain ordinary schools, provision or special support is provided to specific children with specific disabilities or impairments. The other SEN children, mostly the majority, are educated fully in regular classes and are given support by specialists where necessary (Farrell, 2004).

In the KSA, children are often sent to special and ordinary schools without their possible disabilities being assessed or identified beforehand, mainly due to the lack of experts concerning the matter (Al-Gain and Abdulwahab, 2002). In contrast, prior to the existence of the Education Health and Care plan (EHC), children in the UK were assessed, their condition was identified, and they were given a statement before being placed in one of the three above-mentioned continuums of provisions (Nye et al., 2016). However, the EHC plan has replaced this statement by concentrating on providing educational, social and health support to meet the needs of students with special needs. The provision continuum, particularly that in the UK, was developed with the publishing of the White Paper. One of the paper's most important recommendations was to promote collaboration between various agencies in order for the children's difficulties and needs to be accurately determined and the services required to meet them being properly planned (Ware, 2014).

According to the paper, the personnel that should participate in such a collaboration comprise social workers, psychologists (both educational and clinical), special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), speech therapists, etc. (ibid). Even though these efforts in the UK help to minimise SEN diagnostic errors, distortions in reports concerning the diagnostics are still possible (Ellis, 2012). Nevertheless, the linked Green Paper had outlined certain guidelines designed to revoke or diminish any errors in the process of diagnosis. One of these measures was to allow the parents to choose what type of school

their child will attend, as was the custom in the past (Finn et al., 2006). Such initiatives are either still in development in the KSA, or do not exist at all.

In addition, a single assessment procedure has been developed in many countries to include children with SEN, from birth to 25 years of age, and the services called “a child in need plan” includes parents in all processes (CSC, 2014). According to Fisher et al. (2013), this procedure only extends the already existing principles and procedures, i.e. that the new EHC assessment guide was merely an extension of the original SEN statement developed to widen its reach to cover the age range from birth to 25 years. As has already been mentioned, there are no comparable assessment tools accessible in the KSA.

The practices concerning special educational needs are significantly different between the UK and KSA. The special education programmes in the KSA are still in development. On the other hand, the UK has progressed considerably in its efforts to create a more inclusive environment for every child in mainstream schools (Ainscow, 2013).

Children transition theories

Bronfenbrenner's Theory

Bronfenbrenner's Theory was propounded by an American psychologist, Urie Bronfenbrenner, who formulated Ecological Systems Theory. The theory explains how the inherent qualities of a child and his environment interact to influence his pattern of growth and development. The theory emphasises the significance of studying a child in the context of multiple environments, also termed ecological systems in the attempt to understand the pattern of his growth (Hayes, O'Toole, and Halpenny, 2017). The theory identifies that a child finds himself entangled with various ecosystems ranging from the most intimate environment of the home ecological system, moving outwards to the larger school system and

further to an even more expansive system in the form of society and culture. Each of these systems undertakes a pertinent interaction and influence each other in every aspect of the life of a child. According to the Bronfenbrenner model, the contexts of development are developed into five levels of external influence. These levels are categorised from the inmost level to the widest level, which can be identified as the micro-system, meso-system, eco-system, macro-system, chrono-system (Hayes, O'Toole, and Halpenny, 2017).

Coleman's Focal Theory

Coleman's Focal Theory focuses on the transition of an individual from the stage of adulthood to care. The theory was developed by Coleman and serves as a framework to facilitate the understanding of psychosocial transitions in middle and late adolescence. It emerged out of a large-scale study of adolescents from working and middle classes, whose attitudes and opinions about a comprehensive range of relationships were examined (Coleman, 1978). This included self-image, being alone, relationships, friendship, parental relationship, heterosexual relationships and large-scale situations. The findings were evaluated in terms of negative and constructive elements present in the relationship situations and the common aspects expressed by the young people involved in the study. Based on the findings, it was postulated that relationship patterns become focussed and most prominent with difference in age, but there was no pattern specific to age. This work led to the formulation of the focal model, which suggests that at different stages of age, specific kinds of relationship pattern are become more significant. However, no pattern is specific to a single age only. The patterns thus overlap, and different issues emerge at different times. Just because an issue is not the most significant feature of a particular age, does not imply that it might not be critical for some individuals at that age. It thus serves as a useful means to conceptualise adolescent development (Coleman, 1978).

The chief principle of Focal Theory is to establish that young people experience numerous changes during the period of early adulthood. Each new challenge can be addressed because each of them arises without any attempt to satisfy them simultaneously, which allows the adolescent to avoid stress. Under this theory, Coleman argues that concentration on a single problem at a time allows adolescents to pass through a stage without experiencing any major stress. The theory is useful in understanding young people's thoughts and what guides them to focus on one change at a time; clearly there could be negative outcomes for those who are required to cope with various simultaneous transitions. The theory also helps in understanding the extent to which the presence of the attributes, resources and arenas of comfort serve as protective factors while the adolescent is processing away from care.

Abbott (2001) explains that the focal model emerged out of the outcomes of the study of normal adolescent development. A critical examination of this notion is similar to any traditional stage theory but presents it in a comparatively higher flexible perspective of development and thus contradicts stage theory in three critical aspects. Firstly, the resolution of one issue cannot be seen as essential to tackle the next (Abbott, 2001). Moreover, it is clearly demonstrated that a small percentage of individuals tend to face more than one issue simultaneously. Secondly, the model does not follow any assumption that there are rigid boundaries between the stages; thus, the issues are not essentially associated with a specific age of developmental level. Lastly, nothing is immutable regarding the sequence involved. In the culture where the research was first conducted individuals were more likely to be encountering certain issues during the early stages of adolescence and various issues at other stages. Nevertheless, it is argued that the focal model is not centred on a specific sequence (Abbott, 2001).

Coleman and Hendry (1999) elaborated on these aspects and states; Coleman also considered the ways in which it was possible for young people to encounter a comprehensive range of transitions during the period of adolescence and yet appear to be adjusting in the absence of undue trauma and stress. In this respect, the literature presents a possible explanation regarding the successful adaptation of numerous young people to the developmental demands of the adolescent transition as provided by the focal model. Examination of this aspect has highlighted that adolescents cope with such transitions by dealing with one issue at a time. They thus spread the process of adaptation over a wide span of years, attempting to resolve one issue at a time (Coleman and Hendry, 1999). Various problems regarding relationships emerge as focal concerns are managed at different stages, such that the different stresses that are the outcome of the need to adapt to new models of behaviour do not tend to concentrate at the same time. In this context, children with learning disabilities are challenged by numerous issues, such as ignorance, prejudice and stigma from all directions and from multiple interactions such as parents, family, school, teachers, peers, society, neighbourhood and society at large. Consequently, the emergent issues and challenges encountered by them are more intense; they have a direct and significant impact on their mental, emotional and psychological development and further restrict their ability to cope with the transition from school to work. This restricted ability hampers the capabilities of children with learning disabilities to reach their maximum potential to learn, acquire the essential communication and social skills, and other technical and professional skills that would facilitate them at work. The restricted potential because of such challenging interactions throughout their adolescence manifests itself in the restricted potential during vocational training, which eventually impacts their process and stages of transition (Coleman and Hendry, 1999).

Hill (2001) further highlights that irrespective of the reason, the ones who have more than one issue to cope with simultaneously, tend to experience more problems. For instance,

where puberty and growth take place at the normal time, individuals are able to cope with such changes prior to other pressures from interactions with peers and teachers. On the other hand, for the late matures, such pressures are likely to be occurring simultaneously, and inevitably require more adjustments over a larger area. The literature further highlights that adolescents tend to encounter changes in the majority or all aspects of their lives and their abilities to cope with such changes are dependent not only on intrinsic strength and external support, but also the timing of the specific stress events. In cases where the disruptions are larger in number or require a lot of changes in a limited time period, they tend to be hazardous. Such major concurrent changes can be identified during puberty, while enrolling at a new school, and losing contact with an established group of friends and peer relations (Hill, 2001). This exceeds what can be handled by adolescents at that stage. This same situation takes place in the lives of children with learning disabilities, who have to undergo concurrent pressure and stress from their interactions with schools, family, teachers and peer groups. At one end, they struggle with abilities to communicate, express and learn; at the other, they have to face the social stigma, social exclusion, prejudices, remarks and peer pressure each of which takes place concurrently and hampers their ability to cope with each change and situation of stress and hinders their cognitive, emotional and psychological development further and makes the process of transition difficult for them (Hill, 2001).

Davis (2012) highlighted a pertinent criticism of the focal model: it is nothing more than a mere theory of events of life applied to adolescence. To a certain extent, this point can be considered correct, because the model argues that the more the number of issues a young person is required to cope with, the greater is indication of the likely stress (Davis, 2012).

Models of learning disability

This section consists of a literature review on the topic of learning disability. The review will consist of a comparison between the three main models of this disability: medical, social, and educational models. Furthermore, the literature review covers the contribution of the three models to the introduction of the term and its revision from ‘mental retardation’ to ‘intellectual disability’ and then ‘learning disability’. This literature review also examines the reasons why similar and dissimilar countries, such as the UK, the US, and Saudi Arabia, have termed.

Comparison of medical, social and educational models of learning disability

There is marked disagreement in the use of the terms deployed to refer to the disability under examination.

Medical model

Carlson (2010) suggests that the term intellectual disability is most often used in the medical field. Medical professionals still persist in calling learning disability, mental retardation (Carlson, 2010). More pertinently here, the medical model favours the term intellectual disability, defining it as any disability in which people are incapable of performing their intellectual functions properly.

Social model

In the view of Anastasiou and Kauffman (2013), the social model of disability defines disability owing to its origin in social factors, rather than the personal medical history of those affected. The social model of disability suggests that the main reason for a person's disability is the community or environment in which the affected person lives. Society can influence the individual as a function of his or her age and culture. The social model of disability also includes political factors that may affect the sufferer markedly. The political

factors may include civil rights or movements related to people (Anastasiou and Kauffman, 2013).

Educational model

According to Deiner (2009), the educational model of learning disability posits that a person is said to be intellectually impaired if that person is not able to learn properly or has a problem with learning (Deiner, 2009). The educational model determines whether or not people are intellectually impaired by analysing their behaviour in the learning environment. The most crucial means by which it is judged whether the person is intellectually impaired, or not, is by analysing their interactions with the other people in their environment (Foreman, 2009).

Contribution of models in the introduction of learning disabilities

According to Dimopoulos (2016), the medical model of disability is concerned with the health issues that are faced by an individual. If a person appears to have problems regarding learning, they are said to be intellectually disabled. McKenzie (2013) posits that the intellectually disabled person is better able to cope if the disability is identified early and treated in line with the medical model of disability. This model has as its goal the altering of perceptions of disability itself. According to Grossberg (2011), the medical model of disability personalises disability, casting it as a deficit located within individuals that require rehabilitation to correct the physiological defect or to amend the social deficiency. Thus, people who are intellectually impaired are criticised by the other people living in that same community.

Bekkema et al. (2014) concur with Grossberg's view in the sense that the social model of disability is related to the problems which people experience in their interaction with society, with the policies adopted by government, and problems related to the academic

field (ibid). Bekkama et al. (2014) strongly criticise the use of the term mental retardation and refute the existence of such a condition, seeing it rather as a common misconception.

According to Terzi (2010), the educational model is concerned with the mental ability of a person, and often designates disability related to intelligence, as with intellectual disability. The term is given to those who encounter problems while learning and interacting with others in the learning environment (Terzi, 2010). The education model is not concerned with the society or medical background of an individual, as it judges the subject according to learning abilities. The educational model postulates that a person can overcome the learning disabilities if society coordinates with the individual thus affected (Deiner, 2009). According to Grigorenko (2008), the educational model considers the intellectual ability of a person in terms of education and the response in terms of learning. The educational model emphasises that the disadvantaged individual with learning disability should be provided with services in an educational context and not in a health context. It has been determined that caring for a person with learning disability in an educational context, rather than in a health context, increases the effects of care and helps the disabled person to make decisions in terms of social functioning (Grigorenko, 2008).

Renaming mental retardation as intellectual disability or learning disability

According to Schalock et al. (2007), mental retardation is a term that has become a rare use and has largely been replaced by the term intellectual disability or learning disability. This shift can be defined by two constructs, namely, the disability construct and the learning disability construct (Schalock et al., 2007). The disability construct is used when a person is unable to perform his/her individual functions properly and fails to meet the criteria of the society, which results in failure in terms of the society's expectations (Ditchman, et al., 2013). Furthermore, in this construct, disability is regarded as a condition of the individual, in which the individual is affected by health issues. Also, a

person in this construct is impaired in terms of performing bodily functions, and confronts restrictions in their personal life (Dimopoulos, 2016). Owing to these health issues, the person is often neglected by society and therefore faces further difficulties.

The learning disability construct is a subset of the disability construct. This construct focuses on the interaction of a subject with the environment and, some skills in the concerned individual thus can be improve. The interaction with the environment can be considered in terms of the specific educational environment or society in general and, in the latter case, the disabled individual should be treated with care so that they will meet fewer difficulties (Anastasiou and Kauffman, 2013).

Bartlett, Lewis and Thorold (2007) contend that the term mental disability has changed to intellectual disability, and indeed that the approved terms for this condition have changed several times over the past two centuries. Historically, the terms used have included idiocy, feeble-mindedness, mental deficiency, mental disability, mental handicap and mental sub-normality (Bartlett, Lewis and Thorold, 2007). According to Bartlett et al. (ibid), the preferred term has been altered most recently owing to five major factors. The first factor is that the new term coined had to be specific and had to enhance the level of communication. The second reason asserts that the term should be used by the stakeholders. The third reason is that the new term should represent current knowledge and should be capable of representing future knowledge, in line with scientific advancement. The fourth element is that the term should be able to fulfil multiple requirements. Finally, the term must reflect accurately upon the groups maintained in the relevant society (Schalock et al., 2007).

Reasons for differences in terminology in the UK, US and KSA

In the view of Westwood (2015), the term mental disability has changed according to the advancement in science and the perception of people over the years, and it has mostly been replaced by intellectual disability. In the UK, learning disability is the most commonly used term, along with learning difficulty. The terms are applied depending upon the health and social issues found in the people under discussion. In the UK, learning difficulty is used as a term for a person who faces difficulty in learning (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2013).

According to Foreman (2009), in the US the term used for impairment related to intelligence, is intellectual disability. The usage of the term intellectual disability is growing in Anglophone nations, and where professional groups are active (Foreman, 2009). According to Armstrong and Squires (2014), in the KSA, the term used for impairment related to intelligence is mental retardation. This term is used for people who have specific learning disabilities and are not able to cope with social demands due to their inadequate functioning (Armstrong and Squires, 2014). Different terminologies for the topic of learning disability are used in the UK, the USA and Saudi Arabia because of the perception of the disability (Armstrong and Squires, 2014).

Cultural attitudes towards disabled people

Dissatisfaction with the role of clinical practices has motivated a shift in considering disability as central to the sufferer, to a focus more on the social and the cultural attitudes within the society. It is estimated that there are approximately 650 million people across the globe with disability because of physical, mental or sensory impairment and about one-third of children in developing countries continue to have little or no access to complete care or amenities (Unite for Sight, 2015). In the perspective of Aiden and McCarthy (2014), ethno-cultural beliefs and stigmas in different countries regarding

disability are associated with several social and cultural beliefs and practices. For instance, while attitudes in the UK now reject the stigma once surrounding disability, the extent to which the individuals in Saudi Arabia follow the integrative attitude propagated by the Prophet regarding disability is questionable (Aiden and McCarthy, 2014).

It has been observed that a cultural system like Saudi Arabia's still incorporates an approach designed on the grounds of stigma and stereotypes. Moreover, the approach that is unified to discriminate against an individual on the basis of mental issues can be portrayed as confounding facts, the social set of attitudes that incorporate institutional implications, fallacies, paternalism and ill mentioned description of personality traits. In this regard, it can be derived from the analysis of the cultural aspects and attitude of people residing in the UK and Saudi Arabia that stigma and its negative implications can deter an individual to a profound extent.

Mackelprang and Salsgiver (2015) explain that the western attitude towards disability has been transformed over a period and can be understood in three major phases. The first phase has been identified to have existed prior to the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, wherein the people suffering from disabilities were neither viewed as socially incapable nor were segregated from the society. They formed the part of the lower social classes along with the mentally ill and the paupers who survived on begging. The negative attitude towards such disabled people was not exclusive to them, rather; they were blamed for not working as able-bodied poor people, due to their laziness, sins or the sins of their parents (Salsgiver, 2015). This attitude gradually motivated the society to distinguish between the able-bodied poor people and the individuals with disabilities, which, in turn, led to the development of the specific attitudes towards disabled people and marked the beginning of the second phase, also termed the institutional phase. During this phase,

society began to emphasise care for people with disabilities and generated the growth of asylums and medical institutions. This attitudinal change led to a long and continuous process of segregating disabled individuals into special care units and removing them from general social engagement (Salsgiver, 2015). This transformed attitude led to the construction of a new passive identity, as disabled people were characterised as being weak and dependent. The development of social workers, asylums, counsellors and charitable homes could only ensure the success of further segregation of the disabled persons from society despite the noble intent of the caregivers (El-Hady, 2011).

The literature emphasises the advent of the third phase demonstrating the attitudes towards disabled people as the revolutionary social model in the later 20th century, which highlighted an approach that aimed to bring improvement in the way in which society perceived the disabled, but also to reintegrating them into society without any stigmatisation (El-Hady, 2011). During this phase, structural and technological tools were applied to assist disabled individuals to become less dependent on others, and to live a normal life in society. The literature emphasises that this phenomenon has predominated across all western countries, as they endeavour to radically reduce the phenomenon of disability (El-Hady, 2011).

Nevertheless, Bolt (2014) asserts that, despite such endeavours and developments, the negative impact of the second phase, the institutional phase, continues to hover over Western society. In this respect, the literature states that the disability continues to exist as a form of social exclusion in some western countries. There are also deeply ingrained prejudiced assumptions among people in western countries (Bolt, 2014). Such attitudes have been examined in the common perceptions towards people with disabilities and in the media portrayals of them that are incredible, critical and discouraging, and which indicate their contribution to the continuing psychological distress and low self-esteem of disabled

people. The literature has emphasised that, despite the positive objectives propagated by the modern approaches towards disability, stigmatisation towards them has been stubbornly rigid in the minds of people in western countries (Bolt, 2014).

Cultural attitudes toward disabled people in Arabic countries

As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is part of the Arabic cultures, I believe that talking in general about the Arabic cultural attitudes toward disabled people in this section might be more effective and accurate than focusing on just the Saudi culture. Consequently, this section includes a review of the Arabic and Islamic cultures to enable comparison with Western mores and attitudes.

In the context of the social and cultural attitudes of the people in the Arabian countries, Grames and Leverentz (2010) posit that, while western countries endeavour to improve their policies to overcome the inequality and segregation of disabled people and increase their social integration, the Arabian countries continue to garner funds and build institutes for the exclusive care of disabled people, thereby intensifying social stigma. This prevailing attitudinal phenomenon in the Arabian countries towards the disabled largely remains estranged from the social model of the disabled as developed in Western countries (Grames and Leverentz, 2010).

In this respect, El-Hady (2011) contends that, like many other social issues within the Islamic tradition, the fundamental social and cultural attitudes of the people towards disabled people in the Arabian countries can be understood from a single example led by Prophet Mohammed. During this incident, while being asked for exemption from general obligation of participating in the congregational prayer at the mosque by a blind man and seeking permission to pray at home because of his disability, the Prophet turned down his request and motivated him to attend the mosque like the others for prayers (El-Hady,

2011). The purpose behind encouraging the blind man to attend the congregational prayers at the mosque was primarily aimed at promoting an act of social cohesion. Physical presence and social integration negate the probability of constructed alienation and the development of any form of segregation. It reduces the scope of stigmatisation, thereby reducing the gap between the actual and the virtual social identity. The literature also emphasises that the primary fundamentals of Islam sought to give prominent roles and tasks to people with disabilities to ensure their integration and involvement in the society (El-Hady, 2011).

However, Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud and Shahminan (2012) argue the extent to which the Arabian countries follow and adhere to the integrative attitude of the Prophet regarding people suffering from disability; they argue that it is negligible, even in modern-day societies (Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud and Shahminan, 2012). The literature asserts that, despite the prevalence of some form of stigmatisation towards disabled people in western countries, the implementation of the social model of disability in the west is far more advanced than that of the Arabian countries in promoting social integration of disabled people. A significant number of the Arabian countries continue to be immersed in the institutional phase where a large sum of money is spent on facilities for people with disabilities so as to provide them with exclusive care institutions that are secluded from the general population. In such circumstances, the opportunities for continuing education and employment tend to be far narrower in the Arabian countries (Thompson et al., 2011; Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud and Shahminan, 2012).

Hannon (2017) agrees with this perspective and states that the shame and stigma associated with families with disabled children also tend to be more marked in the Arabian states than in western nations. This is possibly due to the comparative absence of institutions and organisations that promote equality, along with entrenched traditions of

discrimination of disabled people in there. Those with a disability in Arabian societies often feel discouraged from going out of their homes because of the judgemental attitudes of the people and the lack of easy access to practical assistance while moving outside of the house alone (Hannon, 2017). The literature further states that many Muslim families in Arabian countries treat their disabled children with support and sensitivity, while others are treated like normal children without being given any special treatment. Society in developing Arabian countries lack deeper awareness about the needs and abilities of the people with disabilities and their potential contribution. Many adults and children with disabilities are kept at home, being judged to be incapable of learning and requiring protection and additional care. Moreover, their disability may be highlighted more than their potential, which limits their rehabilitation, educational and social opportunities (Hannon, 2017).

Rotatori et al. (2014) highlighted the key issues associated with the genesis of disabilities in Arabian countries, in which a major controversy has been ongoing around the high rates of consanguineous marriages. Such marriages are closely associated with genetic or congenital disorders. Other sorts of cultural rituals and superstitions in the Arabian countries also include the notion that equates people with disabilities with saintly attributes, because of which the general population tends to believe that taking care of the disabled will enable direct access to Heaven when they die (Rotatori et al., 2014). Some Muslim families therefore take care of the disabled members in their families as a gateway opportunity to reach Heaven. This motivates family members to encourage their disabled offspring to become dependent upon them for their care. This dependency thereby restricts the independence of the disabled person, and their integration into society.

Perhaps inconsistently, another belief prevalent in Arabian countries is that those with disabilities are a problem for society; in addition, allied to this is the belief of a curse

associated with the sufferer. Each of these social and cultural beliefs and practices in the Arabian countries plays a cumulative role and this has a significant impact in restricting the social integration of those with disabilities in comparison with western countries where the recent move has, of course, been to integrate and include people with disabilities (Rotatori et al., 2014).

Saudi Arabia and the UK: A comparative perspective

Facts and figures on disability in Saudi Arabia

Covering 80% of the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Middle East, with about 65% of the total population concentrated in the three key administrative areas: Makkah, Riyadh and the Eastern Province. In recent years the government of Saudi Arabia has increased the budget for healthcare from 112.5 \$ (2008) to 257.6 \$ (2011).

Official statistics reveal that 33.3% of the population classified with a disability had educational difficulties, especially in reading and writing (General Authority for Statistics, 2016). 15.9% of people with disabilities could not read or write, while only 15.4% had finished their primary education. Only 14.1% of people with disabilities had completed secondary school, compared with 98% of non-disabled children. Another finding was that only 7.6% had completed their studies at the university and only 2.9% had been awarded an undergraduate diploma.

Compared with the general population of the disabled people in Saudi Arabia, the statistical findings on the demographic data further highlighted that about 40% of the male population with a disability and 70% of the female population with a disability were unemployed (General Authority for Statistics, 2016). In terms of the age of those who were unemployed and had a disability, the statistics also highlighted that 30% were 20 to 25 years old; 20% were 25 to 30, and 60% were 35 years old and over (General Authority

for Statistics, 2016). These findings reveal the unfulfilled potential of people with disabilities in respect of education, literacy, employment and economic status in Saudi Arabia.

The chief causes of disability in Saudi Arabia were road traffic accidents, cerebral palsy, heart attack, injuries of the head and the spine, inflammation and infection (Alrubiyea, 2010). Another factor is the consanguinity of relationships. In clinical genetics, a consanguineous marriage is defined by Hamamy (2012: 185) as ‘a union between two individuals who are related as second cousins or closer’, and Hamamy reports that Saudi Arabia has the highest rate of consanguineous marriages anywhere in the world. With the analysis of the overall rate of the consanguinity, it has been determined that 57.7% of screened families were found as consanguineous. Among these families, the most common cases were the cousin marriage (28.4%) and marriage with distant relatives (15.2%), while the rate of marriage with second cousins was 14.6% (El-Hazmi et al., 1995). Consanguinity has been considered to be higher among daughters, and it has been observed that 37.9% of married women had been engaged in consanguineous marriages (Warsy et al., 2014).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia dedicates itself to providing adequate opportunities, facilities, services and privileges to individuals with disabilities and attempts to enable them to take advantage of their rights (Aldabas, 2015). It also commits itself to providing maximum assistance to making them able to participate in the social and economic growth of the Kingdom and become more independent without the need to seek assistance from anyone. This aim of the Kingdom, concerning the equity principle, applies to all individuals of Saudi Arabia without any differentiation between healthy and disabled (Gaad, 2010).

In this context, it is evident that the Kingdom affirms its commitment towards the development of the national processes and systems that can ensure the protection of human rights of persons with disabilities. The recent conduct of the eight sessions of the Conference of States (13 December 2006) which were the parties to the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) emphasised that a sustainable society could be attained only by guaranteeing the rights of individuals with disabilities, ensuring their equal participation across all the social, economic and political aspects of the society and acknowledging it as the moral responsibility of the Kingdom (Arab News, 2015). Some relevant and concrete measures undertaken by the Convention for the promotion of the rights of the individuals with disabilities include the establishment of a specialised committee at the Ministry of Social Affairs. It is comprised of members from government agencies, civil society and individuals with disabilities to manage and coordinate the implementation of all human rights, services and activities for the development of individuals with disabilities in accordance with the provisions of the CRPD (Arab News, 2015).

In 2014, the Kingdom also formulated a high ministerial committee for a thorough examination of the status of the individuals with disabilities in the Kingdom and proposed some relevant recommendations to ensure the establishment of their rights in society. The committee at the Ministry of Social Affairs also committed itself to advising the Ministry of Economics and Planning to take essential steps for incorporating the rights of individuals with disabilities within all the development plans and ensuring incorporation of necessary standards in all initiatives for their full inclusion in society (Aldossari, 2013). In addition, to take steps for the promotion of awareness and acceptance of individuals with disabilities through their human rights as equal members of society, enabling them to

participate more actively in the society; media and awareness campaigns on the basis of the human rights framework have also been established by the committee (Alsaif, 2017).

Educational rights for the disabled in Saudi Arabia

The Legislation of Disability Act 1987 was the first legislation established in Saudi Arabia for individuals with disabilities and provided the crucial provisions that guaranteed rights of equality to those with disabilities in Saudi society (Al-Odaib and Al-Sedairy, 2014). The legislation included a number of articles that laid down a recognisable definition for disability and procedures of assessment and diagnosis to determine eligibility for special education services (Aldabas, 2015). It also demanded the cooperation of public agencies to provide rehabilitation services and training programmes to support the independence of individuals with disabilities (Alquraini, 2011). The disability code passed by the Saudi government in 2000 was another critical initiative that required agencies to support individuals with disabilities with welfare, rehabilitation, education, training and employment in all key areas.

Special needs education in Saudi Arabia was initiated in the mid-1950s when blind persons were taught the use of Braille (Aldabas, 2015). Since then, the initiative expanded across numerous areas of the Kingdom. These efforts included the establishment of the General Presidency for Girls' Education, which provides educational programmes for female students with disabilities (Alrubiyea, 2010). For further development in this regard, the Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RESPI) was established in 2001 along the lines of the US model (Aldossari, 2013), outlining the rights and regulations for students with disabilities in the Kingdom. It defined the critical categories for these students and assigned tasks for the professionals who worked with them. It also described the individual education programme (IEP) along with its elements and the individuals who must be involved in the participation and planning of this programme

(Alquraini, 2011). The RESPI also included the procedures of assessment and evaluation of students to determine their eligibility for special education and allowed for a free and appropriate educational framework for such students, along with access to early interventional programmes, transition and related services.

Article 2 in the Provision for People with Special Needs in the Kingdom was also established, which highlighted the responsibility of the government to fulfil the educational requirements and needs for individuals with disabilities (Aldabas, 2015). This involved education at all levels, ranging from pre-school facilities to general, vocational and higher education, in accordance with the abilities and potential of each individual. It also highlighted its commitment towards continuous support, services and regular updating of the curricula and the services provided in this regard.

Social welfare rights of the disabled in Saudi Arabia

The foremost official and practical steps in Saudi Arabia aimed at providing care for individuals with disabilities were taken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs when it opened a small unit in 1970 in Riyadh (Aldabas, 2015). The Ministry founded the first formal rehabilitation centre for individuals with disabilities. The first byelaw for the establishment of the rehabilitation programmes was issued through Decree no. 1355, which held the Ministry responsible for the establishment and execution of the general strategy for individuals with disabilities and conducting research to develop the plans (Al-Jadid, 2013). The responsibility of proposing systems for providing effective rehabilitation to individuals and preparing them to participate in the country's workforce through training and promotion of skills and competence was also allocated (Al Thani, 2006).

The aim of the General Rehabilitation Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs is to review and examine applications for individual or joint projects for the rehabilitation of

persons with disabilities by paying an amount of (8000 \$) to anyone who desires to establish a plan that fulfils the terms and conditions of the Ministry (Alrubiyea, 2010). An additional ministerial decree was further issued to approve the recommendations and included the need to improve the efficiency of the committee in coordinating the problems encountered by individuals with disabilities, supporting allowances for the families of individuals with disabilities and preparing a nationwide media plan to acknowledge people with disability and establish adequate means for protecting them (Alrubiyea, 2010).

Article 2 of the code of provision for individuals with disabilities in the Kingdom emphasised their right to access the benefits of social programmes that support the development of their social skills and competence. The integration of individuals with disabilities within mainstream society helps them to develop skills and competence to enable them to participate in social activities and functions (Al-Jadid, 2013). The rights designed by the Ministry of Social Welfare in Saudi Arabia for individuals with disabilities include monthly remuneration, financial benefits to their parents, discount of 50% to individuals on using public transport services, and (12000 \$) to vocationally qualified disabled persons for carrying out entrepreneurship activities (Saudi Press Agency, 2016). The other welfare rights include allotment of individual housing units, free medical services, access to appropriate equipment and job opportunities, financial support, education opportunities and open access to vocational training (Alfaraj and Kuyini, 2014). The institutions for disabled people and institutional welfare programmes facilitate social welfare for individuals with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. These programmes include setting up vocational rehabilitation centres, social rehabilitation centres, comprehensive rehabilitation centres, day-care centres and polio-care institutions (Saudi Press Agency, 2016).

Social welfare centres are situated in big cities so that the most efficient facilities and infrastructures can be made accessible to individuals with disabilities. The Vocational Rehabilitation Centres help individuals with disabilities in fulfilling their emotional, physical and intellectual needs (Al-Odaib and Al-Sedairy, 2014). They offer programmes related to bookbinding, dressmaking, carpentry, decoration, gardening and telephone operations. The social rehabilitation centres also address the needs of individuals who cannot undertake vocational training because of the severity or multiplicity of their impairment (Ministry of Health Portal, 2013). 22 rehabilitation centres have been opened altogether. In the event where a comprehensive rehabilitation centre fails to accept a child, the parent is provided with a benefit payment of 10,000 SR as a support for the upbringing and welfare of the child. The day-care centres aim at providing day-care services for children with disabilities under the age of 15. They offer programmes to improve social skills, education, entertainment, awareness and the attitudes of parents, as well as psychology and healthcare. The polio-care institutes set-up for paralysed children in the age group of three to 15 years plans at enhancing their competency to cope in society and in mainstream schools to raise their social status (Ministry of Health Portal, 2013).

Employment rights of the disabled in Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia recognised the rights of the individuals with disabilities to attain adequate employment opportunities. In this respect, among the number of measures taken by the government through the Ministry of Labour is the decree to include at least three employed persons with special needs within the calculation of percentage in Saudisation, within the Saudisation policy of the Kingdom (Alrubiyea, 2010). The labour law in the Kingdom has also been revised to emphasise its focus on the right to work for individuals with special needs. Also, it obliges those employers from the private sector employing 50 or more employees to provide employment to about 2% of their total workforce from among individuals with disabilities (Algahtani, 2017). The following

figure shows the percentage of disabled people of working age distributed in four categories which are (employees, looking for work with experience, looking for work without experience and disabled people of working age and have not applied for work).

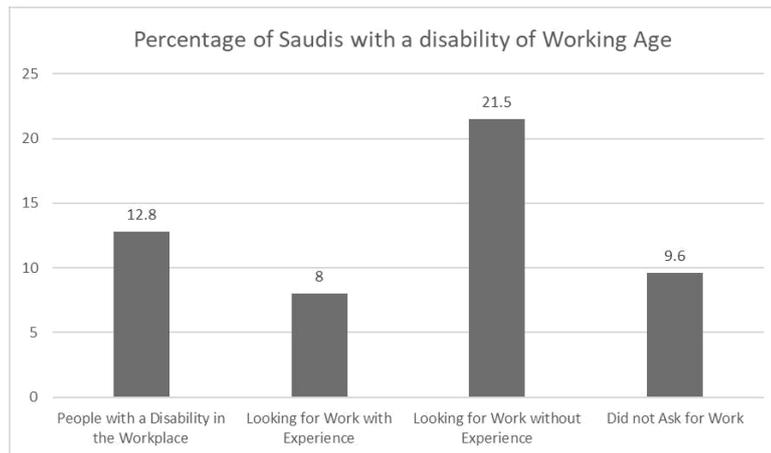


Figure 2.1: Percentage of Saudis with a disability of working age (General Authority for Statistic)

Article 28 of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabian Labour Law (Royal Decree No (D/51) dated 23/8/2006 amended) established the need for an employer to promote the employment of unemployed individuals with disabilities and to facilitate them with all required adjustments in the workplace (Alfaraj and Kuyini, 2014).

The Labour Law and the Implementing Regulations allows an employer to apply the same standards of competency and skill for the individuals with disabilities as needed from other employees. They are also entitled to the necessary facilities and assistance to fulfil their requirements through assistive technology, adaptation in the work conditions and engineering modifications in the work environment (Khoja, 2016). The employers are required to make modifications as per the disabled individuals to ensure they can access adequate washroom facilities, adjusted height of services and shelves, provide flexible computer software, provide adjustable keyboards, and computer systems that can be

controlled by lips, feet and screen readers. In addition to this, employers can give adjusted cars and suitable ergonomic chairs for disabled employees (Hogan Lovells,2017).

Employers are prevented from practising any form of discrimination against individuals with disabilities in respect of wages, growth opportunities, and development. Individuals who have a disability must not be excluded from promotion, vocational training programmes, or long-term employment owing to their disability (Alfaraj and Kuyini, 2014).

Another key initiative in Saudi Arabia in this regard, has been the 'Tawafuq Empowerment for Employment for Persons with Disabilities' programme which established the policies, legislation and procedures for employers that include incentives, quotas and subsidies. The prime focus of this programme was the establishment of a nationwide, fully inclusive private sector economic system by developing and improving the prevailing legislation and policies, providing adequate opportunities and employment services, delivering essential vocational training and making use of data tracking to support and promote sustainable employment of individuals with disabilities in Saudi Arabia (Tawafuq, 2018). The programme is firmly focused on inclusion by emphasising the promotion of inclusive employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities (Tawafuq, 2018).

It also seeks to provide quality services with beneficial outcomes by the use of technology and by ensuring the accessibility of all the e-platforms to offer training to the persons with disabilities. The provisions of this programme have been highly effective as is evident from the fact that, since the launch of the disability programme in the year 2014, up until 2016, it has facilitated the employment of 62,728 individuals with disabilities out of 648,000 such individuals in the Kingdom, in 31,790 companies. 17 companies were

partnered with the Business Disability Network, out of which seven firms have been able to increase the number of employees with disabilities. 45 additional companies have also applied for membership, and a number of employment channels have been opened during the inclusive job-seeking process (Tawafuq, 2018). The Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF), along with the Ministry of Labour, has sponsored the Business Disability Network that offers networking forums to employers to discuss issues or provisions regarding the employment of persons with disabilities (Khoja, 2016).

Educational rights for the disabled in the UK

In the UK there are various laws and regulations that must be followed by all education providers for treating disabled individuals equally (Blackburn, Spencer and Read, 2010). Blackburn et al stress the context of equity and inclusion within which such legislation is framed. Educational institutes cannot refuse to give admission to students based on their disabilities, as it is considered an act of discrimination.

Employment rights in the UK

Employment rights in the UK have been framed to ensure equal and fair treatment to disabled individuals. Employers are mandated to follow certain regulations and practices while recruiting staff for their organisations. The Equality Act 2010 was designed to safeguard the rights of disabled individuals and to ensure that they do not face issues owing to the presence of biases (Gov.UK, 2018). The Equality Act 2010 requires employers to provide policies, procedures, and practices at the workplace in such a way that the disabled people can easily access and understand them. In this respect, the organisations are required to design application forms, aptitude tests, proficiency tests, training programmes, job offers, and arrange interviews such that the disabled individuals can access them with ease. Employers are required to ensure that they do not differentiate disabled individuals from others in terms of pay structure, promotion, grievances, or

transfers. The UK government guides all private as well as public sector employers to implement reasonable adjustments for ensuring that disabled individuals are not put at any type of disadvantage in comparison to the individuals who are not disabled at the workplace (Foster and Fosh, 2010).

In this respect, the law directs employers to make provision for their employees with disability by allowing additional time for completing allocated tasks or assigning work proportionately that can be efficiently completed during normal office hours. People suffering from disabilities must be provided with special equipment, such as computers, chairs, and keyboards, that would make their work easier. Employers are instructed to make changes in infrastructure, such as to lifts and sanitary facilities, to facilitate the easy access and movement of disabled people from one place to another (Foster and Fosh, 2010).

Comparison of policies, programmes and education for people with disability in the UK and Saudi Arabia

As can be seen from the foregoing discussion of facilities in the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia, the two countries are very different in respect of their social, cultural, economic, political and technological norms with respect to disability and inclusion.

The differences are accentuated by prevalence. Saudi Arabia has a significantly higher prevalence of disability as compared to any other high-income countries (AlMubarak, 2012). The following tables present the key statistics concerning disability in the UK and Saudi Arabia. Table 1 compares the two countries' totals and percentages of people with disabilities.

Table 2.1: Percentage of disability in the UK and Saudi Arabia

	United Kingdom	Saudi Arabia
Total Population	65.1 Million	31.5 Million
People with Disabilities	19%	28%
Working Age adults with Disabilities	16%	21%
	(Office of Disability Issues, 2014).	(AlMubarak, 2012).

Table 2.2: presents the numbers of schoolchildren with various special needs in Saudi Arabia.

Table 2.2: Number of special needs students in the KSA

Type of disability	Boys	Girls	Total
Learning disability	13657	5932	19589
Learning difficulty	17842	6964	24806
Hearing disability	4613	1606	6219
Visual disability	1042	480	1522
Autism	725	100	825
Multiple disability	421	32	453
Total	38300	15114	53414

(Ministry of Education, 2017)

Table.2.3: presents the numbers of schoolchildren with various special needs in the UK.

Type of disability	Boys	Girls	Total
Specific learning difficulties	87,050	55,165	142,215
Moderate learning difficulties	147,188	96,789	243,977
Severe learning difficulties	2,134	1,169	3,303
Profound & multiple learning difficulties	585	374	959
Social, emotional and mental health	112,684	44,987	157,671
Speech, language and communication needs	132,115	58,399	190,514
Hearing impairment	7,292	7,270	14,562
Visual impairment	4,597	3,665	8,262
Multi-sensory impairment	1,132	539	1,671
Physical disorder	11,772	8,252	20,024
Autistic spectrum disorder	34,680	8,121	42,801
Other	30,319	19,649	49,968
Total	571,548	304,379	875,927

(Department of Education, 2016)

In order to prepare people with learning disabilities for the work environment and promote their independence, the education system of the country plays a significant role. In the UK, the government has implemented the Equality Act 2010, giving equal rights to education and employment to individuals with disabilities. These rights oblige schools and other educational institutions to incorporate disabled students. This legislation is monitored by the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy adopted by the UK government, reviewing the educational needs of students annually and preparing them for

the responsibilities and challenges of adulthood (Department for Education, 2017). This law also includes provisions against direct or indirect discrimination, unfavourable treatment, harassment and victimisation. Educational institutions are required to make reasonable adjustments, such as provision of educational aids and additional support, in order to facilitate the education of people with learning disability and prepare them for the practical work environment. This law is binding for educational institutions at all levels, from pre-schools and nurseries to universities and higher education colleges (Department for Work and Pensions, 2017).

In addition to government policies, institutions such as the British Institute of Learning Disabilities and Learning Difficulties conduct programmes that aid and encourage people with learning disabilities and their family members to get them enrolled in educational institutions. Implementation of these policies has resulted in a significant increase in the percentage of students with learning disability pursuing education, from 66.3% in 2006 to 88.9% in 2011 (Office of Disability Issues, 2014). However, this increase in the number of students is not reflected in the percentage of working-age people with learning disabilities that hold formal or degree-level qualifications. Moreover, fewer than 20% of the people with learning disability are able to attain employment as compared to the 65% who want to work and achieve independence. Those who are mostly working in low-wage environments in a part-time capacity. This has resulted in less than 33% of the people with a learning disability having a choice in their living arrangements (Papworth Trust, 2016).

As opposed to the modern educational system adopted in the UK, the educational system in Saudi Arabia is primarily based on the traditional Islamic religious curriculum. The government of Saudi Arabia first incorporated special education in the educational system in 1962, with the establishment of the Department of Special Learning in the Education Ministry. The policies and programmes adopted by the government in Saudi Arabia are

highly regulated by the Islamic regulations, which dictate that people with disabilities have equal rights to any other members of the community. This religious principle governing the policies of Saudi Arabian government are in agreement with the global shift in policies, and Saudi Arabia has modelled its special education policies according to the policies adopted by the US (Altamimi et al., 2015). The law in Saudi Arabia that monitors the provisions for special education is the Regulations of Special Education Programs and Institutes (RSEPI). The law outlines the goals of the special education programmes, including meeting the unique needs of the students with learning disabilities and supporting them in gaining the skills that are necessary to function independently in society (Alquraini, 2011).

Although RSEPI has assisted students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia, it has also presented a number of challenges for the students. The parents might not be able to interact with the students every day, which can lead to isolation (Abed and Alrawajfh, 2017). In addition, the students are not able to develop the social or communication skills that are necessary to be incorporated into society and the work environment as independent adults (Alquraini, 2011). In addition to the educational institutions, the KSA Government has established 38 official centres that train people with learning disabilities in the practical skills necessary for the work environment (Ministry of Labour and Social Development, 2017). The following numbers indicate the impact of these rehabilitation centres on the individuals with learning disabilities.

Table.2. 4: Impact of Vocational Rehabilitation Centres

Types of disabilities	Number of people
Disabled individuals with ability to work	180,000
Disabled individuals asking for work	25,000
Disabled males in Rehabilitation Centres	1300
Disabled females in Rehabilitation Centres	1250

(Ministry of Labour and Social Development, 2017)

It has been observed that about 21% of the people with disability continue training in the vocational rehabilitation centres and only 8% are able to find work after completion of the training. However, 58% people with disabilities are still unable to find employment in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Labour and Social Development, 2017).

The government of Saudi Arabia has also started a new project 'Tawafq', which is focused on training and employing the people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. In 2016, This programme has benefited 280 disabled people in Riyadh, Dammam and Jeddah, and has 68 specialists who train the people to work in public places, office environments and the information technology sector. A number of ministries, including Labour and Social Development, Education, Finance, Communication and Transportation, are involved in this project in addition to a number of private industries (Mobasher, 2017). The Ministry of Labour and Social Development has stressed the importance of self-confidence, and focuses on aspects of capacity, self-determination, and attitude in incorporating people with learning disabilities into the workforce of the country. The Ministry has developed rehabilitation centres that allow people with disabilities to meet their needs and ease their transition into the work environment (Saudi Television, 2017). However, the lack of specific definition and classification hinders the attempts of the government of Saudi

Arabia to develop the rehabilitation programmes and incorporate people with disabilities into the country's workforce (Alsharq, 2013).

Transition services from school to rehabilitation centre in S.A

In Saudi Arabia there are two major educational options for students with learning disabilities, namely: institutionalised education or mainstream education. Under the format of institutional schooling, students with disabilities are provided with specialised institutions for education according to their disabilities. In such institutions, the students learn along with other students with learning disabilities. This alternative for education is more popular among students with severe disabilities, autism or even multiple disabilities (Muthumbi, 2008; Alnahdi, 2012). In contrast to this format, the mainstream education programmes seek to offer special education programmes to the students with learning disabilities in regular schools. Such programmes include teacher-consultant programmes, itinerant teacher programmes, follow-up programmes, self-contained classroom programmes and resource room programmes. The education system in the Kingdom also offers middle and high school programmes for students with learning disabilities and considers them to be highly significant in implementing and providing transition services (Muthumbi, 2008).

High school education plays a crucial role in preparing students to live independently as adults and is significant for the intellectual development of students with learning disabilities; thus vocational training was added as a part of school education in the Kingdom. Nevertheless, it has been argued in the literature that there is an absence of transition services in Saudi Arabia and the vocational rehabilitation programmes are the only institutions to provide appropriate services to train and prepare people with disabilities for the labour market (Aldabas, 2015; Altamimi et al., 2015). Such services are similar to transition to work services; however, the main difference is that such services

are not linked to the schools and are able to serve only older people with disabilities in the ages of 16 to 45 years. It has been assessed that presently there are limited programmes that offer vocational rehabilitation for students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia and are operated under the direction of the Ministry of Social Affairs, which restricts the potential of the education system in the country to facilitate positive and successful transition (McDonnell and Hardman, 2009; Aldabas, 2015). It is evaluated that the limited number of such vocational programmes for students with disabilities and the limited capacity of each programmes creates difficulties for a majority of students with multiple disabilities to gain optimum benefit from such programmes (Alnahdi, 2012).

The literature review of Vocational Rehabilitation Centre has been conducted with the use of data and information provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA) of Saudi Arabia. To overcome the potential shortcomings of such programmes, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA) of Saudi Arabia highlighted that one of their key objectives for the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation was to rehabilitate people suffering from physical and mental disabilities to help them develop their capacities. It also sought to train them in different occupations, such as carpentry, electrics, sewing and others, to enable them to adjust socially, psychologically and professionally and enable them to work and earn money (Alquraini, 2011). These programmes are specialised for the rehabilitation of people with mental or physical disabilities by providing them training in any suitable occupation and assisting them to become more productive individuals who are able to interact effectively with the other members of the community. In this regard, the vocational training imparted to the students with learning disabilities is based on the training location. From this examination, it could be concluded that the training takes place in programme centres; however, in certain cases where optimal training cannot be provided, it is offered outside the centres. Such vocational rehabilitation centres for males

and females contain numerous sections and units that have specialised knowledge and ability to provide training in different occupations, such as carpentry, typing, electricity, painting, office work, secretarial work, engraving and sewing (Al-Ajmi, 2006; Alhossan & Trainor, 2015).

The examination of the literature on the extent to which the vocational rehabilitation programmes prepare the students with learning disabilities has revealed that a majority of employers refuse to employ people with disabilities on four key grounds. These are:

1. absence of general work opportunities;
2. low salary;
3. inadequate skills possessed the students with disabilities under the vocational rehabilitation programmes in respect of the skills required by the labour market;
4. A lack of commitment of appropriate legislation for people with disabilities (Issa, 2013).

Even if students with disabilities get jobs, they encounter numerous challenges in their day-to-day lives such as transportation difficulties, negative attitudes and discrimination from colleagues, low salary, and new and different machines in the work sites than those they were trained in during their vocational rehabilitation training. In addition to that, there are various other factors that create challenges and difficulties for the students with disabilities in getting jobs, which include globalisation and severe competition, as well as the information revolution. These challenges have a negative impact on people with disabilities because they generate circumstances that require them to possess higher skills and greater efficiency. The negative attitudes of the employers also generate lack of confidence regarding their abilities among the people with disabilities (Issa, 2013).

In this respect, numerous challenges have also been noted in the vocational programmes for the students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The curriculum of middle and high

school programmes for students with learning disabilities reveal an absence of transitional services (Alhossan and Trainor, 2015). This highlights that a major challenge in respect of transition for individuals with disabilities can be attributed to the system of middle and high school programmes in Saudi Arabia, wherein the students with disabilities are segregated in special classes and restricted from communicating and interacting with other students. Such interaction, participation and communication with peers in group activities are highly significant predictors for success in postsecondary education and employment (Alnahdi, 2012).

The specific knowledge and competency required by special education teachers who deliver transition services also play a key role. This analysis generates the argument that the preparation and competency of the teachers in participating in the transition programme is a pertinent challenge for Saudi Arabia and demands serious attention to improve the social and economic well-being of the individuals with disabilities in the Kingdom (Neece et al., 2009). Alnahdi (2012) indicated that there is a close association between the preparation level of the teachers and their satisfaction and involvement in the implementation of the transition activities. For serving effective roles as teachers and providing optimal vocational training to the students, it is important for the teacher to possess some essential competencies. These include the knowledge of agencies and system change, ability to work with others in the process of transition, capability to develop and manage individualised transition plans, skills for job development and vocational assessment, skills for job training and support, ability for assessment and knowledge of professionalism and legal implications (Neece et al., 2009; Alnahdi, 2012).

It is evaluated from the literature available in the previous studies that the practice of education services for students with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia has improved to a considerable extent by supporting them in attaining a higher quality of education in the

least restricted environment (Al-Jadid, 2013). Analysis of the literature on transitioning individuals with disabilities from school and/or vocational rehabilitation centres to work in Saudi Arabia has also shown that the teachers at such centres hold positive attitudes towards transition services (Gaad, 2010; Alnahdi, 2013). This demonstrates the significance of the attitude and behaviour of the teachers in facilitating the transition process. A positive attitude to students with disabilities, and to inclusion from the teachers is advantageous for the students with disabilities to assist them in attaining successful transition. Nevertheless, studies on teachers' attitudes in respect of transition services for students with learning disabilities have revealed concerns that the additional work required for transition planning creates unnecessary burdens for teachers (Neece et al., 2009; Al-Jadid, 2013). These studies also showed that teachers were unprepared to provide efficient transition services to students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia and needed further training in order to deliver effective transition services (Alnahdi, 2013).

In this context, it has been assessed from the literature that the teachers who were involved in providing transition services to the students with learning disabilities needed to possess related knowledge in addition to the skills and abilities essential to ensure successful transitions (Gaad, 2010). In relation to this, the role of family members and close friends was also considered to be a substantial element in the process of transition. Parental involvement and student involvement were also found to be crucial facilitators in the transition process (Gaad, 2010; Alnahdi, 2014). The teachers also considered students' self-determination to be a vital factor during transition planning and instruction (Grigal et al., 2003). In Saudi Arabia, the teachers still lacked adequate preparation and experience with the transition process to facilitate the students in moving from the school to the work environment (Al-Ajmi, 2006; Alhossan and Trainor, 2015). In the absence of significant work experience, the teachers failed to make a critical contribution towards the process of

transition unless they were assisted by the specialist agencies or external professionals. The analysis of these factors highlights the need for incorporating transition-related knowledge and training into special education programmes in universities (Neece et al., 2009).

Transition services from school to post-school in the UK

The education system in the UK provides a systematic mechanism that facilitates preparing students with learning disabilities for an appropriate work life after statutory education in the last years of their education. This transition planning for the young people with disabilities begins in the UK at the age of 14 years and can be understood as education services provided to students with autism (Westbrook et al., 2013). The services include facilities to enable students' movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education and integrated or supported employment. These services are offered to students with learning disabilities on the basis of their individual strengths, interests and preferences (Kirby, 2013). The transition services include instruction, community experience, related services, development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives. The transition services also include a coordinated set of post-school activities like vocational training, post-secondary education, adult services, community participation and independent living (Westbrook et al., 2013). The evaluation of the transition services offered to the individuals with learning disabilities in the UK thus highlights comprehensive mechanisms with specific and well-focused objectives. These elements hence serve as key indicators that create a difference between the transition services presented in the UK and Saudi Arabia and can serve as a valuable comparison backdrop to determine the gaps in the transition services in the Saudi Arabia.

The literature has also disclosed that the student with learning disability is often ignored in Saudi Arabia. In order to give students agency and commitment in their post-school trajectory, it is important that they are given a more central role in decision-making about further education, employment-based training or employment. In the UK, the structure of the transition process was primarily aimed at providing sheltered and supported employment avenues to the individuals with disabilities (Beyer and Kaehne, 2008). Nevertheless, there were some pertinent shortcomings associated with the transition process and these highlighted the need for the development of transition pathways to address the aspirations of the young individuals. These challenges include the lack of available personal support, hindrances from welfare benefit regulations, and limited alternatives for transportation (Beyer and Kaehne, 2008).

The UK's system also hosts numerous effective employment policies and programme initiatives that focus on suitable and assisted employment to the individuals with disabilities in the country. These policies and programmes have a potential to facilitate transitions from school to work for youth with disabilities. These include access to suitable work opportunities by providing practical assistance to disabled employees and employers (Crawford, 2012). The Jobcentre Plus provides points of contact for people who seek to leave welfare for work. The New Deal for disabled people also assists the young people with learning disabilities to get from benefits into paid employment. The programme also includes Work Step that fulfils a specialist function within Jobcentre plus for the individuals suffering from learning disability (Kirby, 2014). Connexions exist to provide general information and advice related to career development to the youth with learning disabilities. The Pathways to Work pilot programmes develop and implement coordinated support for individuals with disabilities who aspire to enter employment (Crawford, 2012).

The evaluation of these features in the transition services in the education system in the UK serve as a crucial basis to determine the gaps and shortcomings in the transitional services offered in Saudi Arabia and highlight the important areas which require specific attention to enhance the effectiveness of the transition services offered to individuals with learning disabilities. In addition to that, the government of the UK also promotes supported employment programmes that make a significant contribution towards employment of individuals with severe disabilities, and more specifically with those having learning disabilities (Work and Employment, 2011). Supportive employment also helps in integrating the individuals with learning disabilities into the labour market by providing them with specialised job training, employment coaching, transportation facility, individually customised supervision and assistive technology to help them learn and perform efficiently in their jobs. The literature on the outcome of supported employment through effective transition in the UK has helped individuals with learning disabilities, psychiatric impairment or traumatic brain injury, to get access to better employment opportunities (Work and Employment, 2011).

It has also been assessed from the literature that there is no specific model in the UK for vocational rehabilitation to facilitate transition from school to vocational training and preparation for employment; some key elements of it are provided with the help of National Learning Network (O'Brien et al., 2011; Duggan and Byrne, 2014). In the country, the rehabilitative training programmes are the responsibility of the Department of Health and the main objective is the transmission of social skills along with vocational skills. The rehabilitative training programmes are designed and developed to assist individuals with learning disabilities in developing social, personal and professional skills to progress towards greater levels of independence and integration in the community

(Duggan and Byrne, 2014). A key feature of the vocational rehabilitation centres in the UK that facilitate transition from education to work is supported employment.

Supported employment in the UK began during 1985 (McMahon and Chan, 2011). It is responsible for vocational rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and refers to sheltered workshops along with a wage subsidy scheme that operates without the support of a job coach. To enhance the effectiveness of the supported employment mechanism, the government of the UK undertakes various initiatives that provide a useful framework to provide improved quality of life to the people with learning disabilities (McMahon and Chan, 2011).

Transitional programmes in the UK provide a strong foundational role for disabled young people, especially when they enter employment. In the UK, such programmes fall into two primary categories: firstly, the ones that are separate and independent from individuals with disabilities and secondly the ones that are integrated and inclusive of such individuals. This allows the young individuals with disabilities to participate in the labour market and work together with non-disabled peers (Pandey and Agarwal, 2013). The UK hosts both kinds of programmes and they have proved to be highly effective in assisting young people with learning disabilities by providing them training and support to enter mainstream vocational training programmes and enable them to find employment opportunities to utilise their skills and even to invest in small enterprises, which has provided greater real social and financial independence (Pandey and Agarwal, 2013).

The intervention methods used in the transition training programme with the help of individualised work-based experiences include combinations of internship, apprenticeship, volunteer work, career exploration and paid employment (Carter, et al., 2010; O'Brien et al., 2011). These factors further highlight another crucial difference in the transition

services in the two countries, which supports the argument that the more holistic training for teachers and more comprehensive transition training programmes can serve to be highly effective in assisting students with learning disabilities to pursue a smooth movement from school learning to occupational working (O'Brien et al., 2011).

It has been further assessed from the literature that receiving transition services at the early age of 14 years leads to better vocational outcomes in comparison to receiving transition services later, by the age of 16 years, among students with learning disabilities. This helps students in the early transition stages to have more appropriate opportunities to be employed, in comparison to the individuals from the later transition groups. Such students with disabilities who have undergone early transition also have the potential to earn higher wages (Cimera et al., 2013; Intellectual Disability and Health. 2016). Transition services at an early age, before leaving school, help individuals with learning disabilities to prepare themselves more appropriately for post-school lives and pursue goal-oriented career development in future (Chen et al., 2014). Services that are initiated earlier provide a longer time for the preparation and navigation of the individuals and allow them develop more suitable skills and gain appropriate employment after leaving school. Students with disabilities who received transition services at the early age of 14 years were found to have a higher potential to be employed than those who received later transition services, at the age of 16 years (Chen et al., 2014).

Strategies in the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia to facilitate transition to work

The government of the UK has implemented a number of pertinent laws and policies that assist people with learning disabilities in the transition process by providing increased access to education, housing, social care, health, financial support and employment

(Northern Ireland Assembly, 2014). The areas of legislation and policy relevant to the transition of the people with learning disabilities are highly diverse and comprehensive.

The government of the UK has established a number of statutory bodies that are responsible for assisting young people with learning disabilities to gain better access to essential facilities and opportunities for transition, and for undertaking effective planning to ensure that their needs are addressed (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2014). In this regard, the key laws established and enforced under the legislative framework for transition planning in England include the Education Act 1996; Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001; Disability Discrimination Act 2005; Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Children and Family Act 2014. In addition to these, the government has planned for the transition services and facilities for people with learning disabilities in which a number of agencies and professionals are involved. Local authorities also play a principal role in transition planning by providing representatives from educational services, housing services and adult social care services (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2014).

However, the report by the Papworth Trust (2016) argued that, despite the prevalence of such comprehensive legislation and enforcement of a number of programmes for the transition of people with learning disabilities, the economic inactivity rate for young people with disabilities in March 2013 was 44.3%, which was four times higher than for non-disabled people (Papworth Trust, 2016). The rate of unemployment for disabled people was identified to be 12% in comparison to the 7.6% for the non-disabled. It was also found that adults with disabilities were three times (30%) as likely to have no or limited access to a formal qualification in comparison with non-disabled adults (11%) (Papworth Trust, 2016). About 53% of people with disabilities did not possess a qualification higher than level 3 in comparison to only 42% of non-disabled people. In

2013, young people with impairments were identified to be twice as likely as their peers to experience hindrances to education and training opportunities (Papworth Trust, 2016).

The UK government has also sanctioned a number of key policy measures that organisations are required to follow to assist the employment of people with disabilities (Gov. UK, 2017). In this respect, organisations in the UK are required to provide reasonable adjustments to facilitate people with disabilities by allowing them adjustments in the working pattern, providing mentoring and training, ensuring that information is provided to them in accessible formats and making alterations in the premises. It also mandates modifying and providing adequate equipment to employees suffering from learning disabilities and allowing them additional time during recruitment and selection procedures (Gov. UK, 2017).

In addition, the government of the UK has implemented 'Access to Work', which provides funds to organisations who employ people with learning disabilities. These funds are focused on special aids and equipment, travelling facilities to and from the workplace, communication support at the interview, and adaptations to equipment to provide maximum facilities so they can perform effectively in the workplace (Gov. UK, 2017). For people with learning disabilities, the government of the UK has also laid down policies requiring organisations to make adjustments for an employee with a learning disability. These policies require the organisations to alter the recruitment process to facilitate work trials rather than formal interviews, use support employment providers to provide work support to train them for a specific job profile and to provide information in accessible formats (Gov. UK, 2017). In addition to the government initiatives, a shift in social policy can also be observed in the UK, focusing on individualised solutions. This focus allows people with disabilities to acquire social communication skills and encourages the development of the assistive technologies that are essential for the labour market (Yates and Roulstone, 2013; Williams and Evans, 2013).

Similarly, the government of Saudi Arabia has also developed a number of policies that ease the transition of people with learning disability to the work environment, making amendments in labour laws, to foster equality in the recruitment process. The government requires that business organisations should hire one person with a disability for every three non-disabled employees (Ministry of Labour and Social Development, 2017). This has allowed the government of Saudi Arabia to encourage the recruitment and empowerment of the people with disabilities and development of infrastructure that is disabled-friendly (Collective of Authors, 2015). In addition to the labour law, the RSEPI also has provisions for transition services. The Fifth Article of RSEPI states that the primary goal of the transition services is to aid students in moving from the academic environment in the educational institutions to the work environment. This transition assistance is associated with students' individual education programmes and is provided at an early stage to equip students for transition (Abed and Alrawajfh, 2017). These transition assistance programmes facilitate the development of the students' communication and social interaction skills by providing access to assistive technologies (Alnahdi, 2013).

Likewise, in the UK, the availability of technology, social support and the shift in political and social policies has allowed the development of a more inclusive environment for people with disabilities in the UK. There has been a development of rehabilitation programmes here, allowing people with disabilities to gain necessary communication and technological skills (Gov. UK, 2017²). However, in the case of Saudi Arabia, research has revealed that rehabilitation programmes are lacking, for a number of reasons, including lack of coordination with the labour market requirements and unavailability of technology (Saudi Television, 2017). It has been suggested that involvement of private sector industries will be beneficial for a more effective development of rehabilitation

programmes. This will assist in developing assistive technologies and communication strategies and encourage collaboration between different authorities.

Difficulties faced by disabled individuals in the transition to work

The transition of a student from school to work is the most crucial part of moving from the stage of adolescence into early adulthood. In this process, young people face various difficulties and challenges in order to accomplish the next venture of life successfully. A major challenge for young people in this key changeover period is that of effective time allocation. According to Stewart et al, (2010), the teenager's discipline is judged by his/her handling of time. More precisely, the challenge facing the teenager is one of moving from an externally ordered and uncompromising framework, the school, to the context of work, where adult choices are expected in relation to work schedules and deadlines.

In addition to this, the difference in the academic workload and the professional workload also becomes challenging for students who enter into the work environment from school life. In general, the personal responsibility of the employee at the workplace differs from the responsibility of the student at school. In particular, the difference in personal responsibility in terms of handling successes and failures at the workplace is significant when an individual moves from school to work. In the context of the difficulties faced by disabled individuals in the transition to work, the challenges faced are comparatively more complex than for other individuals. In essence, individuals with learning disabilities tend to face more complex challenges than other individuals at this point in their lives (Carter, Austin and Trainor, 2012). Therefore, this discussion aims to focus on the transition of people with learning disabilities when they move from the school years to adult life. This discussion provides an overview of the common issues that are faced by the young people as they move towards the responsibilities of adulthood. People with learning disabilities

face various physical, behavioural, developmental, sensory and mental challenges while moving from one environment to another (Kirby, 2013). The issue of self-awareness among disabled children is one example that showcases the challenges that are faced by children with learning disability (Stewart et al., 2010).

Since children with learning disabilities tend to require higher levels of assistance than other children in terms of communication and self-care, these children are often less aware of themselves than their non-disabled peers (Schalock, Luckasson and Shogren, 2007). Furthermore, Deiner (2009) argues that these difficulties are exacerbated by the environment in which the disabled person lives; in particular, the influence of others in the shared environment may be detrimental. Research demonstrates that people with learning disabilities are neglected by society while the services provided to them are limited (Baroff and Olley, 2014).

The transition of children with learning disabilities from school to work also raises a number of challenges due often to issues to do with flexibility. These young people are often unable to perform tasks in a single procedure as effectively as other children. Those with learning disability may face problems in quickly adapting to new procedures and may be inclined to cling to familiar ways of doing things (Kirby, 2014; Michna, 2017). These children must invest time in adopting new procedures and require special assistance to guide them throughout this process of adaptation. Self-determination is an essential, integral part of the transition of a person from school to workplace and the incapacity of the child to acquire an adult sense of self-awareness acts as a drawback. In addition to this, the inability of some children to manage their own behaviour may be problematic; the many and varied issues regarding adaptive behaviour hinders progress and proves to be a significant challenge (De Ligt et al., 2012).

In addition to the above challenges, there are various other issues and challenges associated with children with learning disabilities in moving from school to work, such as the lack of suitable jobs for disabled people. The lack of appropriate jobs for young people with learning disability poses a major challenge; particularly because these children are then forced to work according to the approaches and methods employers who may not understand their particular needs (Michna, 2017). Young people with learning disability hence have to compete with non-disabled people and their learning disabilities are not taken into consideration (Davies and Beamish, 2009).

Moreover, the judgemental attitude of people towards people with learning disability is often observed among adults in the workplace. At the school level, the children with learning disability are provided with special assistance and guidance, but after the transition of these children to the workplace, they are introduced to the sudden negative attitude of other people, while special support has been removed (Cooney et al., 2006). Negative attitudes towards the employment of disabled people should be discouraged in the workplace, and approaches must be adopted to provide a positive and welcoming attitude to the disabled person (Cooney et al., 2006).

Pandey and Agarwal (2013) stress the need for training prior to joining the workforce. They emphasise the need for programme-specific training for disabled people during this sensitive transition period; this instruction may serve to equip this vulnerable group with essential workplace skills, the lack of which is likely to undermine their chances of success. Every individual has their strengths and weaknesses, which determine the nature of the work they can do. The prevalent lack of self-awareness among young people with learning disabilities therefore adds to the challenges that they face while selecting an appropriate job. The nature of the work provided to young people with learning disability should also be a concern for society, as these youngsters are unable to complete their work

effectively, as the tasks they are given generally do not relate to the skills that they possess. Hence, they are unable to perform all sorts of tasks that they are given at the workplace (Certo et al., 2008). Consequently, it may be inferred that the absence of formative training, as well as reassuring feedback, is one of the most significant lacunae in the transition from school to work.

In addition to the challenges that these individuals face, lack of coordination between the different departments in organisations about how to support them acts as another challenge. The young people are, first and foremost, victims of the lack of coordination between the different departments in the workplaces where disabled people are employed. Thus, there must be more coordination among people in the workplace so that any employees with learning disabilities do not feel isolated (Davies and Beamish, 2009).

From the overall findings of the above discussion, there is a requirement for some sort of transition procedure, perhaps a programme that the teachers at the school level could communicate to the children. Thus, disabled children would be more informed about the process of transition from school to adulthood. The procedure of transition is considered to be a result-oriented process, wherein the focus is on improving the academic and general achievement of the children with learning disability while moving from school to work. This should facilitate their progress, as it will build upon their knowledge regarding the employment procedure, post-school information, independent living and the participation of the individual in a group or community (De Ligt et al., 2012).

Teaching about the transition procedure will also likely ensure awareness about the needs, strengths and preferences of children with learning disabilities. The transition procedure involves a set of instructions that will develop the concept of employment among disabled children and enable them to achieve the post-school objectives of adulthood. The

instructions for the transition procedure not only ensure the covering of the needs of the children but also identifying their strengths (Michna, 2017). In addition, the transition services in the form of special education to disabled children may develop the skillsets that will be required while working in professional organisations. Therefore, the introduction of transition procedures, or services, to children with learning disabilities, will very likely benefit children during their work experience at connected organisations after the transition from school, and will also benefit participating organisations (Rauch et al., 2012).

A comparative view: contrasts with the USA and UK

The population with learning disabilities in the United States constitutes approximately 6.5 million people, out of whom 545,000 are under the age of 12 (Groce, 2004). As elsewhere, the individual with learning disabilities in the USA faces various challenges during the transition from school to work, such as ill-treatment from the other employees at the workplace, difficulty in competing, and lack of special training at the workplace (Groce, 2004).

However, the clear contrast with Saudi Arabia is in the fact that disabled people in the United States receive special assistance and education in public schools as a result of the declaration of the special education law under the 'IDEA' legislation (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). 'IDEA' mandates that children with disabilities are trained appropriately from their teenage years at school to compete and succeed in their transition from school to the workplace (Guralnick, 2005). Children are encouraged to prove their potential at the workplace and work according to the strengths that they possess, while overcoming the challenges and issues that they face. The various steps that the government has incorporated in its system for individuals with learning disability are further discussed later in this study.

There are various difficulties that are faced by individuals with learning disability in the USA, but unlike the situation that obtains in Saudi Arabia, most of these children are provided with special assistance from the early teenage years, so that the transition from school to work does not prove to be too challenging. Special provision made for children with learning disabilities and learning for the transitional period of the child adapting to the workplace is normally part of this provision (Alnahdi, 2012). Such involvement of children with learning disability in the practices of society encourages and builds their communication skills, which benefits them at the workplace (Ross et al., 2013).

Westwood (2015) contends that, in order to foster children's overall development, self-determination should form a central part of such growth. Furthermore, in the relevant transition period, skills, knowledge and abilities are stimulated. In the US approach, the above-mentioned core concept of autonomy is encouraged. Integral to this is clear identification of key strengths and abilities. This is in order to build the adaptive skills necessary for the smooth changeover from school to work.

Under UK regulations, established in the Code of Practice, the details involved in the transition process of the individual with learning disabilities must be laid out in a written plan (Harris, 2006). The legislative guidance provided by the government of the UK is considered to be very effective in comparison with that of Saudi Arabia as a response to certain issues and challenges related to the transition of young people with learning disabilities (Ross et al., 2013). The current position of the United Kingdom concerning the transition of young people with learning disabilities differs from its previous position as, today, a 'champion' is adopted for ensuring the successful transition of the child to adult services (Ross et al., 2013). Hence, the champion acts as a reference for every service at a national level.

Difficulties faced by young people with learning disabilities in transition to work in Saudi Arabia

The difficulties faced by individuals with learning disabilities in the transition to work in Saudi Arabia are different from the challenges faced by children in the USA and UK. A culture of acceptance of authority has discouraged disabled young people in Saudi Arabia aspiration (Al-Tamimi et al., 2015). Therefore, individuals with disabilities in Saudi Arabia do not focus on preparing themselves after school for the transition to work. In addition to this, the family members of the young people with learning disabilities do not prepare their children to focus on life after school (Akdar, 2017). Thus, the development of such ambition is the foremost challenge for children with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

The root cause for the lack of ambition among children with learning disabilities is the inappropriate education provided to students at the school level (Al-Quraini, 2014). Thus, the transition of the children with learning disabilities from school to work in Saudi Arabia involves various challenges. One of the major difficulties that the children in Saudi Arabia face is the shortage of teachers/specialists who are capable of providing transition services to the children with learning disabilities (Althabet, 2002; Alnahdi, 2013). Moreover, the opportunities that are available to young people with learning disabilities are minimal, as the number of students enrolled for the few special courses in Saudi Arabia is small (Al-Nahdi, 2012).

In addition to the discussed problems, various other difficulties are faced by people in Saudi Arabia during the transition process, such as the difficulty with transportation (Alsaqabi, 2011). Along with the negative attitude of their colleagues, introduction to new machines or technology during the vocational rehabilitation programmes also proved to be challenging for disabled people in the workplace (Atkinson et al., 2014; Aldakhil, 2017).

The culture of Saudi Arabia as a cause of inertia in learning disabilities

The foregoing discussion about challenges faced by individuals with learning disabilities in the USA, UK and Saudi Arabia reveals that there are major differences in history, tradition and culture between Saudi Arabia and these exemplar 'advanced' economies. The traditions and expectations of Saudi culture, at the level of both government and the family, serve to inhibit moves to successful transition from school to work.

In a comparative study of the USA and the UK by Engel et al. (2008), it was revealed that there was a deficit in the UK's approach to the education and training of the subject group. In particular, it was discovered that the UK needed to focus on the adult stage (ibid). Additionally, the services provided to children with learning disabilities needed to be improved in order to enable successful transition from school to workplace (Engel, Pedley and Aicardi, 2008).

Comparing the difficulties faced by individuals with learning disabilities in the USA and other countries, such as Saudi Arabia and UK, it has been revealed that the government of the United States has given significance to the children's adaptive skills, which are an essential part of their overall growth and development during the transition from school to work. The existence of a significant cultural difference from the people of Saudi Arabia affects the difficulties that the young people with learning disabilities face during the transition from school to work (Carr et al., 2016).

In comparison to the USA and UK, the difficulties faced by the people of Saudi Arabia vary in terms of the quality of the service and education that is provided to these children, the attitude of the Saudi community towards the employment of people with learning disabilities and the relationship that exists between the Saudi culture and jobs for people with disabilities (Alnahdi, 2012). It has been concluded that there is an urgent need for the

transfer of ideas regarding the approaches and methods that are adopted by the USA and UK to Saudi Arabia for implementing transition services in the KSA. This is likely to provide significant benefits to people with learning disabilities by overcoming the difficulties that they face during the transition from school to work (Alnahdi, 2012).

Views of teachers and parents toward the difficulties

In the view of teachers, students with learning disabilities need self-determination to deal with the environment of the workplace (Grigal et al., 2003) and in transitioning from school to work. Teachers can only help children if they understand the importance of student participation in the individualised education programmes organised by the school (Grigal et al., 2003). If teachers help the students to participate in meetings, then students can present their knowledge and skills in meetings, which will eventually enhance self-esteem. It is also possible that students can better manage social challenges (Bolt, 2014). Teachers should provide opportunities to students so that they can present and evaluate their choices; this element has been found to be lacking in schools.

In the views of teachers, the needs of a person with learning disability vary from primary school to high school. Therefore, it is essential that parents assist teachers to deal with students with learning disabilities. However, Hardman, Egan and Drew (2016) have illustrated that cooperation between parents and teachers tends not to happen, wherever the situation exists, and this is one reason why disabled learners have difficulty dealing in a social environment.

In the views of parents, teachers do not provide the required training sessions to students with learning disabilities in school; this view accounts for why they face difficulty in transitioning (Barnett and Crippen, 2014). Research has also found that it is a widely held view that teachers are not sufficiently qualified to provide training sessions to the students

(Al-Muaqel, 2008; Bidwell, 2017). Because of this lack of training, the young people are also not able to set their goals and learn the processes involved in decision-making. All these factors contribute to the difficulties that a student faces while transitioning from school to work (Janicki and Dalton, 2014). Grigal et al. (2003) contend that the parents are willing to help the teachers for the training sessions required by the students. If parents do not help the teachers and the students in developing independence skills, then the students face difficulty in transitioning from school to work.

According to Moon, Simonsen and Neubert (2011), one of the reasons behind the difficulties faced by the students in transitioning from school to work is the lack of vocational rehabilitation. The funds provided to the school are not sufficient for the students to get proper vocational rehabilitation (ibid). In the views of parents, it is important for the teachers to provide training sessions to students with learning disabilities in different schools, according to their needs. It has also been ascertained that the development of social skills is important for individuals having low- or high-level learning disabilities (Grigal et al., 2003). Personal and social skills can help the students to deal with their learning disabilities, and it also helps in the smooth transition from school to work (Davies and Beamish, 2009; Bolt, 2014). Furthermore, it is evident that teachers rely on help from parents and do not provide training to the students at different school levels (Hardman, Egan and Drew, 2016). The involvement of the children in meetings helps in boosting their confidence and forging self-determination as the meetings help them in making decisions while affording opportunities to present their choices (Williams and Evans, 2013). In addition, vital to the process involved in decision-making are the instructions involved in the practice of individualised education programmes for students with learning disabilities. (Grigal et al., 2003).

More specifically, the meetings which are integral to individualised education programmes impart the skills the person with learning disability needs to learn self-advocacy and goal setting. In these meetings, the children are exposed to a methodology through which to present their skills and abilities, in the course of which their self-esteem is developed. Parents are also allowed to present their views that the children should be given opportunity and proper training so that they can represent their skills and abilities in school. This, in turn, is so that the children can easily handle the environment of the workplace. Schools should provide separate training to students with learning disabilities to develop their self-determination skills. (Grigal et al., 2003). There are various barriers that a student encounters while transitioning from school to work. These barriers also affect the student after school and in employment. To gain knowledge about the barriers, 56 respondents were interviewed by Shier, Graham and Jones (2009). Among their findings were that one of the major barriers which the students encountered while employed was the problem of discrimination. In the interview, one of the respondents said that they faced challenges while securing their employment and the respondent stated:

I guess the biggest thing is, when I go to the interview, I don't usually let the employer know that I'm in a chair. Cause I find that if I do, it might scare them off, or it might give them a reason to say, 'don't bother coming in'. I did experience that with one person. ... I had asked the person whether the workplace was wheelchair accessible. And they said that they would get back to me and they never did.
(Shier, Graham and Jones, 2009)

It has also been found that the person with learning disability faces discrimination in the labour market, even though there are laws to prevent discrimination (Shier, Graham and Jones, 2009). Discrimination is seen in the labour market because disabled people are viewed as less skilled, less trained, and less knowledgeable compared to others in the same labour market. Skills and abilities are necessary to compete with other employees in the labour market. The skills and abilities

demonstrated in the labour market can help an employee to secure their position, as well as avoiding termination. Therefore, it is essential that the policy makers or the school provide the disabled students with proper training sessions so that they may be empowered. It is also important that vocational services are provided to people with learning disabilities so that they can better manage in the labour market (Emerson et al., 2012).

In the study conducted by Yazici et al. (2011) in Eskisehir, Turkey, disabled people could get employment under a policy-based quota system. As per the quota system, 1000 disabled people were employed in Eskisehir. The authors surveyed 32 companies of Eskisehir and the survey was executed among 421 disabled people and 31 employers of the companies. From the survey, it was discovered that there were some difficulties that a disabled person faced while working. The difficulties were: employees in the organisation had negative attitudes and behaviours towards disabled people; disabled people faced difficulty in joining any social activity conducted in the company; and the disabled people were unable to show their talents and abilities at their workplace as their employers assumed they were less productive (ibid, 2011).

In another study, by Owens and Beckman (2013), there were three types of skills which a person with learning disability was found to use throughout their life, namely: self-determination, skills related to independent living, and employment skills. It was found that the three skills could be achieved by the person with learning disability if the learning environment, academic challenge and employment environment were conducive to learning. Therefore, it is important that students participate in the programmes organised at the school level to improve their skills which may be useful throughout their lives (Owens and Beckman, 2013). It has also been observed that students face difficulty during

transition as the training programmes provided to individuals with learning disabilities are insufficient (Shier, Graham and Jones, 2009).

In summary, parents and teachers need to work together to empower the young people in their charge to discover and learn self-determination. Parents should support the school to develop the social and personal skills of students with learning disability. In the views of parents and teachers, self-determination development in students is necessary because of the potential advancement of self-advocacy, decision-making and learning how to make choices. It is also important for the students with learning disability that they demonstrate their views in front of people and get the opportunity to make decisions in the meetings because this will help them to deal with the environment of the labour market.

Factors affecting the transition to work

Lengnick-Hall, Gaunt and Brooks (2014) reported that the prevailing literature on persons with disabilities revealed that employers avoid the employment of people with learning disabilities because of concerns related to adequate job fit, productivity, claims for workers' compensation and accidents or injuries on the job. The most severe factors encountered were either those based on the perception of the limitations that emerge out of disability or on the assumption that the disability would lead to an increase in the cost to the employers (Agovino et al., 2018).

In the perspective of Mansour (2009), there are individual, management, cost and social factors that influence the recruitment of persons with disabilities. The literature elaborates that the individual factors refer to inappropriate social behaviour and include aspects such as working at the required standard, difficulty in adapting to changes, proper hygiene, working at a similar rate to the others. Management factors include negative previous

experiences, long-term planning by the employer, availability of additional assistance, availability of a large skilled workforce, and concern about issues in terminating employment (Alkawai and Algwayyed, 2017).

Employers may also be concerned regarding the safety expenses, occupational health, and higher rate of absenteeism associated with the employment of a person with a disability, which leads to a rise in costs (Kerby, 2014). The other aspects of cost-related concerns with recruiting persons with disabilities are extra supervision, access to productivity-based wages, cost of workplace modifications, and availability of subsidies and incentives for employees (Cimera, 2010). Social factors include belief in social responsibility, concern regarding negative responses from customers, enhanced community image, effective disability awareness campaigns, a pressure to employ other disadvantaged persons, lack of social integration in the workforce, and discomfort of others over observable disability (Mansour, 2009). In this regard, the following sections highlight the key factors that may influence the recruitment of persons with disabilities.

Impact of further education on employment

There are various factors that affect the employability of individuals with learning disabilities. The level of education attained by a job seeker is one of these factors. According to a report by Disability Rights (2015), in the UK, in addition to there being graduate vacancies, graduate employees earn 50% more than their non-graduate counterparts over their lifetime in employment. This means that less educated individuals are at a higher risk of unemployment and low wages. It is even worse in cases of people with disabilities because they are more likely to remain unemployed as compared to their non-disabled peers (Disability Rights, 2015). Exploration of higher education as a positive factor in enhancing the employability of people with disabilities has been widely covered in the literature (see Disability Rights, 2015).

Duggan and Byrne (2013) in a report for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) outlined that Ireland is supportive of people with learning disabilities by enhancing employment within its open labour market. In relation to this finding, McCormick and McRae (2005) indicated that people with learning disabilities working in Dublin supermarkets did not have entry-level qualifications for their jobs of choice. However, through on-the-job training and career enhancement practices, their potential was advanced and they were capable of performing their duties appropriately at the workplace just like their non-disabled counterparts (McCormick and McRae, 2005). The evidence that further education enhances the employability of people with learning disabilities has also been supported by several other authors outside the UK (Migliore, Butterworth and Hart, 2009; Grigal, Hart and Weir, 2012; Smith, Grigal and Sulewski, 2012). This is just an indication that people with disabilities can be supported in different ways, but mainly through further education, to help them develop the skills and work experience that are required by employers. Moreover, such evidence indicates that the UK is far ahead in empowering people with disabilities to enhance their competitive advantage in the job market, as compared to Saudi Arabia. In fact, there is a lack of adequate evidence indicating the status of this situation in Saudi Arabia as compared to the empowerment that has been reported in the UK and other countries across the globe.

Despite the general efforts of many legislatures in the west to support the employment of people with special needs, Chouinard and Crooks (2005) reported that certain Canadian politicians had opposed the initiative of funding people with learning disabilities, with the justification that these people should find other ways of solving their unemployment and poverty problems. This reveals a significant resistance, even in the affluent west, to positive action in this regard.

Some authors have suggested alternatives to providing further education for people with learning disabilities. Aitchison (2003) seemed to indirectly oppose any offer of further education by proposing the involvement of people with disabilities in leisure activities to substitute for paid employment. Leisure activities are non-work opportunities that disabled people can accomplish without having to pursue further education for skills development. As with the previously mentioned critics, this seems to oppose positive action.

The above critics (Aitchison, 2003; Chouinard and Crooks, 2005) have not considered the issue of empowering individuals with learning disabilities in terms of skills development and being absorbed in the formal workforce. To add to the counter debate, Powers (2008) asserted that equipping disabled people with technical skills and employability skills is appropriate but they should know that the job market is competitive; hence, they should be ready and willing to compete with the rest of the job seekers. Otherwise, they assert, people with disabilities should mainly be employed in the informal sector, as stated by Powers (2008). These attitudes often seem to be the ones that obtain in Saudi Arabia, as there is no legislative infrastructure to ensure that the welfare of these individuals is protected, especially in relation to receiving further education.

As discussed above, various commentators have supported the initiative of further education to enhance the technical and employability skills of people with learning disabilities. These commentators believe further education to be appropriate as it places disabled people on a par with their non-disabled peers seeking the same employment opportunities. However, on the other hand, critics argue that disabled people should be absorbed in the informal sector, should find different ways of solving their poverty and unemployment challenges, and should not engage in competitive job-seeking.

Impact of family involvement

The family unit acts as a crucial support and it is common for family members to adapt to the additional demands on their financial, time and emotional resources. People living with a developmentally or intellectually disabled family member frequently experience negative outcomes such as parental depression and added stress (Mubarak, Aldosari and Pufpaff, 2014). However, Schneider, Chahine and Hattie (2016) point out that different families encounter different outcomes, especially when it comes to their loved ones trying to enter the labour market. It is apparent that every family wants the best for their members, with independence seen as important for living a proper and happy life. Even so, Beyer, Meek and Davies (2016) claim that it is likely that people with learning disabilities remain largely absent from the full-time labour market.

According to Hellman (2002), it is common for families with children who have special needs to take it upon themselves to protect their children – and this will extend to ‘protecting’ them from the pressures of the workplace. When the time comes for these youngsters to enter the labour force, their family feels they may not be safe since they will not be around to monitor them all the time. Furthermore, families fear that their children would be exposed to some forms of bullying due to their disability. According to Elena and Carmen (2017), such thoughts lead parents to prefer that their children stay under the watchful eye of the family to guarantee their emotional and psychological well-being.

However, there are probably cultural differences here between Saudi Arabia and the west. Hellmann (2002) asserts that families in the United Kingdom stress the importance of assertiveness and independence, therefore they support their children in the quest of these attributes. As a result, these families encourage their sons/daughters to explore the job market and find their own footing (Schneider, Chahine and Hattie, 2016). Furthermore, families in the United Kingdom see it as appropriate for their children to enter the labour

market since they believe that such an act of inclusion will help these individuals develop good social skills. There is an attitudinal contrast here with attitudes held in Saudi Arabia (Mubarak, Aldosari and Pufpaff, 2014).

Alhazmi (2018) confirmed that some families in Saudi Arabia are sceptical about their children's capability to get a profession and enjoy a future of independence from the family. Most families in Saudi Arabia, due to their over-protective nature, would prefer to keep supporting their children within their family unit (Elena and Carmen, 2017). Most of the time, the over protectiveness may be due to the fear that their children may be discriminated against in the workplace or suffer from bullying that would eventually affect their emotional well-being. Additionally, these families do not necessarily believe in the independence of their children until their time of marriage, and this makes it difficult for these persons to acquire the social skills they would have learnt if they had had the opportunity to interact with others in a work environment (Mubarak, Aldosari and Pufpaff, 2014). In addition, families in Saudi Arabia do not understand that their children need to grow, face the outside world, and make a life of their own. In light of this, they make it impossible for their children to get real work experience, through only allowing them to work in establishments owned by family or friends (Elena and Carmen, 2017). They consequently fail to allow these individuals to gain the work experience through which they could acquire employment skills such as teamwork and communication. Such an attitude makes it difficult for individuals with disabilities to integrate properly into society.

Looking at both countries, there are stark attitudinal contrasts: most families in the UK but only a few in Saudi Arabia realize that the independence of their children with disabilities matters. Attitudes to transition to work correspond to these differences, with a tendency to protect the disabled school-leaver in Saudi Arabia rather than to encourage independence.

Attitudes toward disabled employees

Edwards et al. (2016) explain that there are a number of ways in which persons with intellectual disabilities face negative attitudes from employers, which restrict their opportunities for recruitment and professional growth. Such barriers usually include cultural, organisational and individual boundaries. The cultural barriers in the form of attitudes of employers include unconscious bias in behaviour, language and preconceptions of capabilities, along with the absence of committed leadership in an inhospitable culture (Edwards et al., 2016).

Nui (2013) highlighted that the negative attitudes of the co-workers and employers are a major barrier to the employment of disabled persons. In this regard, the first kind of attitude identified towards the persons with disabilities are the beliefs that disabled persons can become a major burden for the organisation; they would require increased attention and care and would create cost implications for the institution (Nui, 2013; Abo-shoera, 2014). However, simultaneously, there are also some positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities which highlights the hope of there being opportunities for their professional growth and recruitment (Altman, 2017). These opinions suggest that disabled persons are discriminated against, while disability support services are required to undertake an additional obligation to employ disabled persons.

The organisational barriers consist of a lack of adequate and accessible recruitment, promotion and processes for professional management. They also include lack of reasonable and prompt means for workplace adjustment, unclear management responsibilities and roles, a gap between policies and implementation, inadequate provision for targeted learning and development, and the effect of resource constraints (Edwards et al., 2016; Michna, 2017). Social inclusion and personal skills.

The report entitled 'Work and employment' by the World Health Organization (2011) asserted that restrictions to employability training are a vital aspect of the limited social inclusion of persons with disabilities, which restricts the development of their skills and eventual recruitment. Studies of organisations showed that persons with disabilities were not offered employability related skills training because of general accommodation and insufficient accessibility in the enterprise (Williams and Evans, 2013; Al-Ajmi and Al-Batal, 2016). Although this highlights employers' reluctance to employ persons with disabilities because of accommodation issues and expensive workplace adjustments, Cimera (2010) showed that a significant percentage of persons with disabilities refused to undertake training because of their disabilities.

In a similar vein, Turmusani (2017) highlighted the limited access to training facilities, limited prospects of employment, and inadequate accommodation in workplaces as being critical barriers to social inclusion of persons with disabilities. Social inclusion of persons with disabilities and related groups are at high risk. The literature asserts that social security includes safety nets such as employability programmes and benefits are essential requirements for integration in the labour market (Algahtani, 2017; Turmusani, 2017). The social inclusion of persons with disabilities requires undertaking adequate measures for development of skills through education and training (Abo-shoera, 2014). Consequently, poor communication skills were found to be a major hindrance that restricted the persons having jobs in public places (Akdar, 2017). In this context, Al-Ajmi, and Al-Batal (2016) argued that, to secure employment for disabled people; it is essential to pay attention to their social skills as they serve as a critical challenge in preventing this group from attaining suitable work. These skills are also a fundamental requirement to socialise with people in an efficient manner (IIDD, 2010; Bano and Anjam, 2013).

The role of government and coordination between the relevant authorities

Weedon (2016) asserted that care, education and employment needs should be provided and controlled by government, regardless of whether the citizen is disabled or not. In this respect, one of the most important desires of individuals with learning disabilities is employment, which is the critical means by which such persons have access to comprehensive inclusion and satisfaction (Weedon, 2016). However, the path from school to employment for young people with disabilities has been hampered by numerous challenges, one of the most pertinent ones of which is the conservative role of the government towards the employment of persons with disabilities. In Saudi Arabia, the government provides a monthly financial allowance for disabled people who cannot find work. This process has been criticised by many recruitment professionals as encouraging the majority of relevant individuals to stay unemployed (Alsaqabi, 2011; Alnahdi, 2013; Abo-shoera, 2014; Abed and Alrawajfh, 2017).

In the perspective of Grover (2018), financial allowances or supply-side factors constitute troublesome initiatives because they are premised on the idea that disabled people are unable to work because of their character or dependent nature. He therefore argued that support or financial aid should only be provided for those who face severe disabilities; this notion was strongly supported by Kocman (2018) and Algahtani (2018). Alrubiyea (2010) explained that most disabled people seek a suitable job not only for financial gain but also to gain acceptance from their community, while Algahtani (2018) added that government should reorganise the educational, social and professional plans and initiatives for this category. Critically, Al-Assaf (2018) concluded that the government's perspective on the employment of disabled people is reflected in recent statistics. Statistics for 2018 indicate that the proportion of workers with disabilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is male 4.8% and female 5%, while the percentage of disabled people who are unemployed is

male 57% and female 51%, which clearly highlights the limited effectiveness of initiatives undertaken by the government (Al-Assaf, 2018).

It has been further examined that, according to the International Labour Organisation (2016), the relevant authorities and entities play a key role in recruiting persons with disabilities by supporting them and offering reasonable accommodation. In this regard, the literature explains that certain workers might encounter barriers to accessing, advancing or continuing to be in employment because of the factors such as the physical environment in the organisation or the manner in which work is organised. Although the employers might not be able to accommodate every request for a change to a workplace, some modifications might be considered as highly disruptive to the functioning of the business. Nevertheless, the fact that an accommodation might introduce inconvenience for the employer cannot be considered as a significant reason for the rejection of reasonable accommodation (Domin and Butterworth, 2013). The facility of reasonable accommodation by the assigned authorities or entities helps in making the workplace more inclusive while ensuring that the business continues to operate in an efficient manner (International Labour Organization, 2016).

The report by the International Labour Office (2010) explains that the coordination between relevant authorities and entities can serve to be highly beneficial in increasing the opportunities for recruitment for persons with disabilities. Such coordination can be beneficial because it might lead to the creation of policy statements on inclusion of disabled persons and non-discrimination, benchmarking activities, networks of employee disability, measures that can be helpful in making the workplace, online environment and commercial distribution points accessible, and disability awareness training for the managers and co-workers (International Labour Office, 2010).

The literature also discusses how coordination between these authorities can help in promoting training, hiring and retention of disabled persons (Crawford, 2011). Such practices can involve techniques and programmes for specific recruitment and community outreach, reasonable accommodation for the fulfilment of individual needs, policies and practices for developing business to business relationships with the persons with disabilities. Other practices include internships, mentoring and leadership programmes for persons with disabilities and allocation of designated management staff training and knowledge of dealing with the subject (Domin and Butterworth, 2013). Furthermore, there is also a lack of adequate coordination between the officials who work in government and administration and the employers who recruit persons with disabilities (Alsaqabi, 2011). Alsaqabi also points out that there is also an absence of adequate coordination between the supervisors who work in the government offices to provide training and officials who hire the persons with disabilities. Such a gap in coordination and communication often serves to be detrimental in respect of the professional opportunities for the persons with disabilities as it restricts their chances for recruitment.

Rights regarding job applications for people with learning disabilities

Gov.uk. (2017) explained that the Equality Act 2010 offers protection to individuals with disabilities to enhance their opportunities for seeking employment. This Act covers areas regarding application forms, aptitude or proficiency tests, arrangements and training for interviews, terms of employment, redundancy, promotion and discipline and grievances. The existing law also gives employees with disabilities the right to access reasonable adjustments to prevent them from being at a disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled persons in the workplace (Gov.uk., 2017). For example, employers are required to adjust the working hours according to the requirements and convenience of the persons with disabilities.

Agovino et al. (2018) explain that, in respect of recruitment, persons with disabilities have significant rights under the prevailing law. In this regard, the law allows for seeking assistance while conducting a task that forms an essential part of the assigned work, obtaining support in participating in an interview, obtaining help in deciding if the interviewers are required to make a reasonable adjustment for their selection (Alkawai and Alwayyed, 2017). It also provides assistance for seeking help in monitoring and obtaining medical support (Gov.uk, 2018). In addition, the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities affirms the right to choose the job they want and affirms that the place of work must be accessible to them (Al-Qarouti, 2009). They have the right to work alongside persons without disabilities and have the right to get training and acquire new skills.

In the context of the implementation of the rights for employing persons with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia, Almousa (2010) revealed that the lack of commitment or deception from some sectors contributed to making these laws questionable within the legislation that supports adequate training and employment for disabled people at the workplace. In this respect, the Saudi government in 2001 launched sixteen articles for the protection of the rights of persons with learning disabilities, consisting of three articles for training while the remaining were for rehabilitation and employment (Alsaif, 2009). However, Saudi Arabia continues to be one of the most disadvantaged countries in respect of employment of disabled people, with only 5% of disabled job seekers employed in 2016 (Alwasil, 2017).

Lack of parental awareness about the rights of their children with disability

Schiemer (2017) explained that the parents of children with disabilities often find themselves completely unprepared and overwhelmed by the needs and responsibilities of caring for a disabled child. They undergo a plethora of emotions and pathos as they realise

the permanent nature and profound impact of it on their lives. As the attitudes toward the persons with disabilities continue to be affected by a range of negative stereotypes, parents also feel the need to cope with their prejudices and beliefs regarding the upbringing, growth and development of their child (Bidwell, 2017). The literature highlights that parents who are successful in coping with the disability of their child are those who can mobilise external and internal means of support to manage the special needs of their child (Doyle et al., 2018). Rockwell et al. (2009) explained that, along with the pressures experienced by parents, couples caring for a child with disability encounter additional challenges regarding reduction of time for each other, managing the traditional parenting role, dealing with loss and grief along with the care demands of the child, all of which also tend to plague the parents with feelings of hostility, pessimism and shame.

As a consequence of such emotions, some parents also experience projection of blame, grief, guilt, rejection, shock, inadequacy while some others also undergo feelings of depression, periods of disbelief and self-blame (Rockwell et al., 2009). According to Pavan (2013), a majority of such experiences and feelings primarily exist because of a pertinent lack of awareness regarding the rights of children with disabilities. This lack of knowledge usually overburdens the parents with the responsibilities and care of their child with the disability, but this can be shared with the wider society by taking advantage of the rights conferred to them by national and international law (Sharma, 2015).

In this respect, Fina et al. (2017) highlighted the provisions of the UNCRC stated in Article 23, that all children are entitled to their right to dignity, along with children with disabilities. This article ensures that children with disability have access to all possible support required for their comprehensive growth and development. In addition, it also highlighted that, despite the universal ramifications of the UNCRC and the socio-political mobilisation that led to the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disability, children with disability and their parents continue to be confronted with challenges every day and are compelled to compromise with the rights allocated to them. However, the factor that aggravates this issue is the parents' lack of knowledge regarding the rights of their children with disability (Fina et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, it has also been argued that the overprotection of parents towards their children with disability also hinders the child's growth and development because of being confined to an arena of extreme protection and care (Sharma, 2015; Abed and Alrawajfh, 2017). In such circumstances, children cannot become independent and explore their real potential and abilities to establish themselves in a professional or social environment. It also hampers the generation of confidence and inculcation of personal and social skills among the children with disabilities. However, this is also an outcome of the absence of adequate knowledge regarding the rights of the children which motivates the parents to assume the entire attention and responsibilities towards the protection and care of their child because they feel other social institutions will not do it (Fina et al., 2017).

Assistive technology

According to Vaziri (2014), assistive technologies could fulfil the needs of users in different ways by allowing them to undertake a task which they otherwise would not be able to do, or to do it more safely, more efficiently or more independently. It also includes any assistive products or technology, like equipment or instruments, that are adapted or designed primarily for enhancing a person's physical capabilities (Vaziri, 2014). The International Organisation for Standardisation (IOS) defines assistive products as especially designed or made available to be used by or for persons with a disability, to protect, train, support, measure or substitute for other activities or structures, and even to prevent impairments, participation restrictions or activity limitations. They might serve to

be helpful in facilitating mobility, vision, communication, hearing or cognition. The application of such assistive technologies helps in improving the working capabilities of persons with disabilities and makes them more employable (Heymann, Stein and Moreno, 2013). It enables them to utilise their skills and abilities adequately and thereby be more productive for the organisation, in a manner equivalent to the other employees without disabilities.

The use of assistive technology also makes persons with disabilities less dependent on others for supporting them and enables them to perform their work by themselves. In this regard, it allows them to use e-websites and related digital-mediated technologies to undertake effective communication, share ideas and interact with others in professional domains. This further enables the organisations to utilise their skills and abilities for the effectiveness of the group (Vaziri, 2014). In some countries, such as Saudi Arabia, e-websites might play a highly active role in recruiting disabled people, thereby helping them save time and money. Alghahtani (2017) reported that most disabled people who aspired to work applied for jobs through private e-websites rather than government offices because of the complex demands and long waiting periods. In this respect, Alsaqabi (2011) criticised the role of government in hiring disabled people in Saudi Arabia and revealed that thousands of disabled people had applied for work through government channels; however, the government was only successful in employing 5% of them. Electronic sites and the use of technology have emerged as supportive tools for people with disabilities globally, and they are being utilised not just for applying for work but also for training and communicating.

Nevertheless, there are some pertinent barriers to the application and the use of assistive technologies. In this regard, the World Health Organisation (2016) highlights that obtaining such technology is not always possible because of the barriers related to

products or services. These include lack of awareness; lack of governance including policies, legislation and national programmes, lack of facilities, lack of products, difficult environments, financial barriers and lack of human resources (World Health Organisation, 2016).

Employment of disabled people and their impact on society



Figure.2.2: The benefits from work (Alsaqabi, 2011)

In the perspective of Muller (2013), employing persons with learning disabilities is highly beneficial for employers and organisations. In this regard, diversity management is one key advantage, which can be described as handling diversity at the workplace (Graffam et al., 2002). Such a mechanism helps in promoting personal diversification in the organisation and thereby assists in minimising the negative aspects. It also helps in creating coordination between economic interests and social tasks. Employment of disabled persons also helps the organisation in obtaining a commercial advantage because it allows the employers to gain new opportunities (Crawford, 2011; Blahovec, 2017).

According to Murillo (2016), employing disabled people is one of the significant ways in which an employer can focus on the strengths and capabilities of those individuals. Murillo further explains that increases in productivity is an additional advantage of recruiting persons with disabilities. He asserts that persons with disabilities have the potential to fulfil the work requisites and responsibilities at their maximum capacities and, if given an advantageous situation, they can show a high level of efficiency in comparison

to the average employees (Alajmi and Al-Batal, 2016). This generates not only a sense of confidence and independence to the persons with disabilities, but also enables them to live a life of dignity and respect in the society (Alwasil, 2017). It makes them less dependent on the institutions of society for moral, physical and mental support and inspires them to live a life of courage and self-dependence, which also helps to increase the self-esteem of such persons (Murillo, 2016). People with disabilities can also help the organisation in seeking more profits with creative thinking (Institute of Personnel and Development, 2003). This is because such persons are accustomed to finding solutions that require flexibility, creativity and open-mindedness. This sort of creative thinking can be highly beneficial for the overall enterprise. In this regard, problem-solving processes can also be helpful for all staff members (Murillo, 2016).

Employment can serve to be highly effective in offering self-sufficiency and self-reliance to the persons with disabilities (Agovino et al., 2018). Al-Saqabi (2011) revealed that employees with learning disabilities were more adaptive and positive toward society compared to unemployed adults with the same disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The literature also reveals that employment can be helpful in generating confidence and feelings of being accepted as a part of the broader community (Hartnett et al., 2011; Abo-Shoera, 2014; Aldakhil, 2017). Linked to this, Al-Ajmi and Al-Batal (2016) asserted that people with learning disabilities should not be deprived of employment for unconvincing reasons, such as more protection from the family. The notion "non-employment of disabled persons" was refused by many organisations around the world because it suggested discrimination (Akdar, 2017). This also highlights that successful employability of persons with disability can send a persuasive message to all those who have been frustrated about their employability (Blahovec, 2017).

The Australian Network on Disability (2017) explained that employing persons with disabilities can be helpful for an employer to showcase a better image in the public sphere. An employer pursuing a sense of social responsibility can illustrate their engagement by revealing their commitment in the areas such as equality and anti-discrimination. This can be supportive for an enterprise which decides to be outstanding and to highlight its philosophy in the market. This indicates that the successful integration of people with disabilities can also have a highly positive impact on the reputation of the enterprise. Furthermore, it can be a decisive factor in the purchase decisions of consumers and enhance the satisfaction levels of the employees associated with such organisations (Al-Saqabi, 2011; Algahtani, 2017; Australian Network on Disability, 2017). However, the government also gains from the employment of persons with disability because it reduces the burden on the economy and decreases the rate of unemployment (Bonne, 2017). Consequently, the percentage of the population employed increases. This can also be helpful in raising the level of productivity and the gross domestic product.

Parents with disabled children commit their entire potential, resources and energy to providing an optimistic future for them. Employment plays a significant role in reducing the unfair social stigmatisation attributed to them because of their association with an individual with a disability (Blustein et al., 2016). It thus generates optimism among family members.

General issues

This chapter has presented the models of learning disability, and cultural attitudes towards people with disability, and it has provided a comparative perspective on the programmes and services provided to individuals with disabilities in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom and the difficulties they encounter while transitioning to work.

In addition, the chapter has examined the perspectives of researchers on the views of teachers, parents and individuals with learning disabilities towards the difficulties in making the transition to work, the factors influencing the transition to work, and the benefits of recruiting individuals with disabilities. To address these components in a clear and logical manner, this chapter focused on the main research questions, which included the programmes and transition processes for persons with disability, and then moved on to a study of the difficulties they encountered while transitioning from school to work. Furthermore, key factors influencing this process of transition that make it challenging have also been discussed in the chapter, along with the benefits of the employment of persons with disabilities.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The literature review undertaken in the previous chapter highlighted that the programmes for special education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are still in the process of development when compared to those in the UK, which has made considerable progress in its efforts to create a more inclusive environment for every child with learning disabilities in mainstream schools (Alnahdi, 2014; McMahon and Chan, 2011). The literature reveals that people with learning disabilities in Arabian countries still encounter issues and difficulties while transitioning from study to work, despite significant legislative and policy developments designed to improve their position in society (Alquraini, 2011; Altamimi, et al., 2015). The prevailing attitude in the Arabian countries towards disabled people continues to remain estranged from the social model for people with learning disabilities that prevails in Western countries, which makes putting policies and legislations into practice a key challenge (Al-Aoufi, Al-Zyoud and Shahminan, 2012; Carter, et al, 2010).

In addition, it has also been deduced from the literature that factors influencing the practical implementation of inclusion strategies for people with learning disabilities are subject to social-cultural influences, which highlights the need for research to identify the ways in which culture and other social factors create difficulties for those individuals while transitioning from study to work (El-Hady, 2011; Thompson et al., 2011). In this regard, this empirical study, based on the tenets of interpretivist and inclusive research, was conducted in Saudi Arabia in order to explore the experiences of those with learning disabilities and to examine the difficulties they encounter while transitioning from study or training stage to work. This was designed to help in obtaining a clear picture regarding the notion of inclusiveness in Saudi Arabia and in determining the key gaps in existing

legislation and policy measures (and in their implementation) designed to enable people with disabilities to lead a secure and economically independent life (Bolt, 2014).

For those reasons, this chapter outlines the rationale, questions, methods, and methodology that guides this research, and which addresses its core aims. This chapter also discusses the research process, focusing on the ethical issues to consider when studying those with disabilities (Berthold and Hand, 2013) and explains the different data collection methods and tools applied, along with the logic and assumptions that underpin the study as a whole.

Research philosophy

As this research seeks to explore the social reality regarding the cultural perspectives, feelings and experiences of those with learning disabilities during the transition from study or training stage to work, qualitative research methods were employed in this research. This approach was also used because it was helpful in facilitating a social inquiry about the ways in which society behaves, perceives and approaches those with this disability in Saudi Arabia in comparison to the UK (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). In the perspective of Denzin and Lincoln: “qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world” (2005, p.3).

On the basis of this definition, it can be understood that qualitative research endeavours to study phenomena in their natural settings and seeks to interpret them in respect of the meanings people associate with them. Therefore, to support the qualitative approach applied in this research, an interpretivist research paradigm was adopted. The interpretivist paradigm rests on the assumption that the social world is built upon shared and subjective meanings (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006), and to understand the social world we must examine those subjective and shared meanings. Chowdhary (2014) explained that

interpretative methodology is helpful in understanding a phenomenon from an individual's perspective and in investigating interaction among individuals and the cultural and historical contexts in which they exist (Chowdhary, 2014).

Scotland (2012) asserted that the interpretative paradigm is sensitive to individual meanings that might be influenced by subjective interpretations. Consequently, reaching broader generalisations is difficult under this paradigm (Scotland, 2012). Nevertheless, as interpretivism helps in examining the subjective meanings that prevail in society, and in acknowledging, reconstructing and understanding them without distorting them, it also promotes social consensus (GoldKuhl, 2012).

An interpretative philosophy was applied in this research because this research required a personal and flexible structure that would be helpful in deriving meanings in human interaction (Levers, 2013). It also allowed for an emergent and collaborative approach, which was helpful for gaining knowledge about the context of the research within prevailing social realities (Mack, 2010). Furthermore, as the interpretivist philosophy facilitates a more detailed understanding of motives, reasons, meanings, perceptions and other subjective experiences bounded by time and context, it was suitable for this research and assisted in exploring the reasons and factors causing difficulties for those with learning disabilities transitioning from study or training stage to work (Thorne, 2016). The application of an interpretative paradigm in this research helped to yield detailed insights and understandings of the cultural behaviour of people towards those with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia and to determine the ways in which it is different from other cultures. It was also helpful in exploring the experiences of people with learning disabilities, the extent of support they received and the neglect they encountered (Willis, 2007).

Research approach

The research approach adopted by a study provides a direction that helps in reaching a logical and rational conclusion. It assists the study, leads to suitable conclusions to address the research aims, and provides a framework for reasoning to be applied in order to make interpretations of the social world. Reasoning in research can be understood as the process whereby prevailing knowledge is used to make predictions, construct explanations and derive conclusions (Crowther and Lancaster 2012).

There are three common approaches used for academic research, namely: inductive, deductive and abductive (Bergh and Ketchen, 2009). While abductive and deductive research approaches help in gaining a conceptual understanding of phenomena, inductive approaches assist in in-depth verification. The goal of abduction is to explore the data, determine the patterns and suggest suitable hypotheses; the purpose of deduction is to develop logical and testable hypotheses based on possible premises; the purpose of induction is to approximate the truth by examining the prevailing social reality. As Yu (2005) explains, the abductive approach creates, the inductive approach verifies, and the deductive approach explicates.

Inductive approach

This research followed an inductive approach, under which the reasoning proceeds to a generalised conclusion, which is likely to be true but might not be certain in light of the evidence gathered. It moves from general to specific observations to broader generalisations and theories (Bryman, 2006). The conclusions under this approach are more likely to be based on premises. It involves collecting evidence, identifying patterns and developing a hypothesis or theory to explain the results. Blaikie (2007) explained that the conclusions reached with the help of inductive reasoning are not logical; rather, they

are cogent, wherein the evidence seems to be true, relevant, complete and convincing. Nevertheless, the arguments raised by inductive reasoning cannot be considered false (Blaikie, 2007). In this respect, it can also be stated that inductive research is primarily undertaken to examine social and behavioural problems and issues based on a subjective reality and which cannot be ascertained. Therefore, although inductive reasoning cannot yield certain conclusions, it can help in increasing human knowledge and can make predictions about previously observed phenomena (Willig and Stainton-Rogers, 2007).

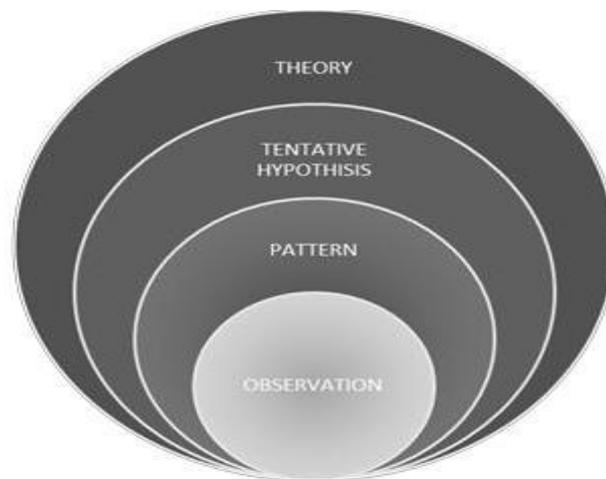


Figure.3.1: Schematic representation of inductive reasoning,
(Trochim & Donnelly, 2006, p. 17)

Rationale for selecting the inductive approach

In the context of this research, the inductive research approach was appropriate because this research moved from specific observations (difficulties faced by those with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia while transitioning from study to work) to some general conclusions about such transition (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2012). This is notwithstanding the frailty of the inductive approach in achieving conclusions and is using ‘inductive’ in the sense adopted by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Glaser and Strauss say that the inductive approach they advocate for use in the analysis of social research produces ‘theory [that]

fits empirical situations, and provides us with relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations and applications.’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 1)

Research design

Research design seeks to provide a well-defined framework that aligns the research problem with suitable methods of data collection and analysis. It provides an appropriate structure to the research by defining a reasonable strategy for the collection and interpretation of data in an organised and logical manner.

Creswell (2014) asserts that there are three kinds of research design used in social research: exploratory, diagnostic and descriptive research designs. Exploratory research design aims to explore a new phenomenon and is more useful when there is less awareness about the research problem. It involves the use of a combination of methods such as case studies, interviews, surveys and secondary data to reach logical and meaningful conclusions (Maxwell, 2013). Descriptive research seeks to examine and describe the different themes developed to address the research aim by facilitating an in-depth and detailed examination and evaluation of the research problem. It facilitates the interpretation of the gathered data and a determination of the relationship between the different research variables. Diagnostic research is associated with research in the field of scientific and medical sciences, which require experimentation (Mitchell and Jolley, 2012).

Exploratory research design

This research followed an exploratory research design, which helped in gaining a general overview of the research problem, and enabled conclusions to be drawn following exploration. This design is more suitable when the researcher is not completely aware of the research problem and requires an in-depth examination and evaluation of the problem to explore a suitable solution. It normally pursues an informal approach to gathering additional information about a research topic and postulates a working hypothesis

(Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger, 2010). The main aim of this research design is to identify the environment in which the problem occurs and the opportunities for remedies, or to find where the situations of research interest prevail and to determine the key variables that can help in addressing the identified research problem. Exploratory research design employs methods that involve an informal form of questioning to examine the underlying motivations, attitudes, and beliefs of the respondents through an interpretation of their behaviour. These methods make exploratory research design suitable for gaining insights and achieving understanding about a social phenomenon in cases where accurate information cannot be obtained through direct methods (Thomas, 2013).

Rationale for selecting exploratory research design

Exploratory research design was used in this research because, as this research examined the difficulties faced by those with learning disabilities transitioning from study to work, it was helpful in obtaining a better overview of the research problem and exploring the key underlying causal factors (Stewart and Shamdasani, 2014). Further, this research design is normally characterised by a high degree of flexibility and lacks a formal structure, which not only makes it in alignment with the inductive approach and interpretivist philosophy (thereby enhancing the credibility of the research) but also helpful in obtaining detailed insights into different aspects of a research problem by employing a range of methods for data collection and analysis (Stebbins, 2001). Within the overall research strategy, three principal design frames were used:

- interviews
- case studies
- critical incident analysis

The interviews were conducted with the parents, specialists and employees of the labour ministry to explore the factors causing difficulties for those with learning disabilities

transitioning from study to work. Case studies of two people with learning disabilities looking for jobs in Saudi Arabia were undertaken in order to evaluate individual cases and to facilitate detailed analysis of the issue (Supino and Borer, 2012). Critical incident analysis was used to offer specific autoethnographic accounts of my own experience as an experienced teacher of students in the process of transition.

Researcher and research participants

The participants in this research were recruited through official letters under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, and the researcher's sponsor (Al-Jouf University). The data were gathered primarily from vocational rehabilitation centres in Saudi Arabia, which offer training to persons who have a disability but are ready to work. The participants included persons who had completed the training and were looking for a job, their parents, specialists and supervisors in the work environment.

Positionality

It is important to explain my background as a researcher because it plays a crucial role in understanding the subjectivity of the research and also sheds light on my interest in the topic of this research. The literature emphasises the significance of the personality of the researcher in interpretivist-based research. This is because it helps in placing the researcher at the centre of the research, and the acceptance of the subjectivity of that position. From my perspective, this is a key factor in determining the success of my research.

My academic and professional background in the field of special education makes me better placed to understand the needs of the research participants, and my knowledge of the subject also allows me to understand the methods of communication and the psychology of the participants, in order to draw out the most relevant data closely related to the topic of

the research. My professional role as a teacher of persons with learning disabilities further puts me in a better position to understand their perceptions and the issues they face and help them deliver their message to schools/rehabilitation centres so that difficulties faced by individuals in transiting from schools to work can be revealed.

I hold a bachelor's and master's degree in Special Education (learning disability) and I have been teaching students with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia for ten years. I have also worked on projects to help parents who have children with disabilities to find suitable programmes and diagnosis centres. For the past ten years, I have been a member of the Special Education Forum, which has around 3000 members, including doctors, teachers, parents and people with disabilities. We provide assistance on issues related to people with disabilities, especially their lives after school. Currently, I am working with some friends to establish a website to help people with disabilities to find suitable jobs. Consequently, I considered that this research would provide me with valuable insights that would help me to understand the issues our students and ex-students encounter when they are seeking suitable employment; furthermore, this work could help them to gain access to a suitable and reliable platform to explore employment opportunities themselves.

At the time of writing, I am 37 years old and I come from Riyadh, which is the capital city of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I am married with four daughters. When I used to teach students with learning disabilities, I particularly enjoyed helping them (and their families) with their various issues and needs. I worked with my friend, who was teaching on the subject of students with aggressive behaviour. We conducted studies in Arabic in order to respond to and resolve the challenging behaviour of our students with learning disabilities towards others and themselves. Later, when I started my master's degree at King Saud University, I undertook research that was supported by my professors. This stage of my

life encouraged and inspired me to work further in this area and to research this subject in more depth, with a specific focus on people with learning disabilities experiences of life after school. My teaching and research experience with this group helped me in the process of collecting the data for my doctoral study. Indeed, this practical experience has informed my analysis and my interpretations.

Selection criteria/demography

As noted above, the data for this research were gathered and analysed using interviews, case studies and critical incidents. The interviews were conducted with 15 participants, consisting of directors and supervisors of different vocational training centres offering training to persons with learning disabilities, parents of persons with these disabilities and disabled employment officials in some companies and websites. The participants for the interviews thus included the director of the Vocational Rehabilitation Department at the Ministry of Labour, two supervisors at vocational rehabilitation programmes in Riyadh; four specialists who train the subject at vocational rehabilitation centres, four parents of individuals with learning disabilities who have graduated from the centres and are still looking for work, one Ministry of Labour official responsible for the employment of those individuals, two members of staff of companies with a large number of employees with learning disability in the city of Riyadh, and one supervisor at the Wasata, the largest e-website for the recruitment of disabled persons in Saudi Arabia. The selection of these participants was undertaken using a purposive sampling method, which is a non-probability sampling method drawing from a known population.

The second method of data collection and analysis used was the case study method, for which two case studies of individuals with learning disabilities were conducted, one of whom was looking for a job, while the other had recently left his job. Both case study

participants had completed their vocational rehabilitation programmes and were ready to work in Saudi Arabia. After a series of meetings with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development in Saudi Arabia, I was contacted by the supervisor, and the parents' names and phone numbers were offered to me, as they had given their consent to participate in the research. I contacted the two parents of the case studies (the two-case study young people have been named A and B in this study) and I explained my research goals and the main purpose of this study, as well as their children's rights. A's father informed me that all interviews must be conducted at their home, as A would prefer this, and that I must inform them one week prior to the interview, so that they could prepare. Likewise, I was told by B's father that all interviews must be conducted at his store, which has a suitable room, because B cannot go elsewhere to take part in an interview. B's father also required me to telephone at least three days prior to the interview.

The third part of the research design constituted detailed reflections on my own experience as a teacher of students with learning disabilities in a transition process. The critical incident approach enabled me to draw from my own experience and offered structure to the analysis of this personal experience. The critical incident approach is considered as a set of procedures which are used for collecting certain direct observations with respect to the human behaviour that have crucial significance and achieve the methodologically defined criteria. The approach offers a form of autoethnographic analysis that gives both a narrative and a structure to what might otherwise be discursive data.

Ethical considerations

Ethics are principles of conduct about what is right and wrong. They should define the behaviour and conduct of researchers and research organisations while they are interacting with research participants and respondents, users of the research, scholars and the

community at large. Miller et al (2012) emphasise that it is the responsibility of the researcher to consider whether any harm to participants may occur while conducting the research, and to ensure that a suitable and relevant method or procedure is followed to prevent this. Assessing ethical considerations helps to identify the potential harm that may occur and evaluate the ways in which the research may have a negative impact on the participants (Miller et al., 2012).

With regards to this research, ethical considerations in the key research areas were informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and communication of the results, and all efforts have been made to account for these. While collecting the primary data, it was confirmed that the participation of the respondents was voluntary, and no coercion was involved during the process (Bryman and Bell, 2015). For this purpose, a complete disclosure of the identity of the researcher was provided to all participants in the research. They were provided with detailed information about the aims and purposes of the research. Thus, participation was not only voluntary, but also involved the informed consent of the participants. A written consent form was therefore required from potential participants and their legal guardians (Shamoo and Resnik, 2014) – see Appendices 1 & 2.

The anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents was also maintained throughout the research and in the analysis – for example, by the use of pseudonyms. None of the questions used in the interview questionnaire were intended to elicit sensitive personal information. All opinions obtained from the interviews were kept confidential and used only for investigating the research related issue (Shamoo and Resnik, 2014).

Ethical considerations while interviewing disabled people

The term ‘human disability’ includes short-term or permanent impairment of a specific part of the body (World Health Organization, 2008). Special education has become

important for professionals as an important sub-discipline, because individuals with learning disabilities (ID) require special attention. In Saudi Arabia, the first special institution for children with learning disability was inaugurated in the early 1970s (Althabet, 2002). Institutions for students with such disabilities account for 58% of all the special education institutions in the country. In Saudi Arabia, by 2008, there were estimated to be 11 institutions and 718 special education programmes for children with learning disability. At that time, 1,244 students were enrolled in these institutions, while 11,085 children with this disability were pursuing their studies in regular schools (Directorate General of Special Education in Saudi Arabia [DGSE], 2008, as cited in Althabet, 2002).

Lewis and Porter (2004) conducted an in-depth research study on different aspects of children with learning disability and young individuals. This study developed a set of guidelines to facilitate researchers and others involved in professional work. These guidelines were in the form of several questions which researchers should ask themselves to guide their self-evaluation before conducting their study. These guidelines were divided into ten categories: aims of the research, access to participants, consent, confidentiality/secretcy/anonymity, recognition, feedback/ownership rights, social responsibilities, sampling, design and communication. These guidelines have been followed in my data collection.

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) has provided interview guidelines to determine the level and duration of support required by individuals with learning disability to enable them to become a productive part of a community. AAIDD proposed that disabled individuals should be made to feel comfortable by various means: being treated with patience; explaining the reason for the presence of all the personnel present; by introducing oneself and explaining the usefulness

of the activity; using probing questions; keeping interviews short; and interviewing (through questionnaire or otherwise) the family members or close friends. It was also suggested that the choice of venue should support the self-advocates' comfort. Language, tone and voice level should be normal and should not offend the individual since that may result in an unpleasant response. The people other than the individual to be interviewed should be the ones who are of concern; it should be the individual's choice to use those who know the individual well enough to talk about his or her likes or dislikes and any challenging behaviour issues. AAIDD's recommendations were followed in my own research.

The Intellectual Disability Rights Service is a private firm engaged in advocacy and legal assistance, which is devoted to serving individuals with learning disability. IDRS (2014) has formulated considerations which it follows while interviewing such individuals. The points to consider involve the preliminary assessment of the level of disability in order to make respective adjustments, use of simple and short sentences, slow explanation to keep up with the understanding level of the individual, and face-to-face interaction. IDRS also advises keeping the environment comfortable and body language appropriate. Questions should not be non-directive which may confuse the respondent or may result in misunderstanding, leading to the recording of incorrect data. Individuals with learning disability relate things to what they already know; therefore, this aspect should be exploited by the interviewer. One should reassure oneself of the understanding of the individual by asking him or her to explain what he or she had just understood. In such interviews, the support of a person, advocate or family members should be included, as this may help to obtain the consent and trust of a disabled person, without which he or she might not respond actively.

Hemmings and Moris (2004) studied the employment of people with learning disabilities. In their work they provided a set of ethical considerations for employers and employing agencies to follow when they are interviewing. They pointed out that individuals with this disability might be able to do certain jobs if they have acquired relevant skills with support. Employer support agencies' services can be provided by employers in order to design interviews. Support workers can accompany disabled individuals in interviews and help them to complete questionnaires which have tick-box responses. The support workers can prompt the applicant to mention relevant experience, rephrase the questions in a simpler way and their mere presence can build an applicant's confidence. They highlighted several tips for employers: use of clarity while speaking, exclusion of any kind of jargon, metaphors or complex phrases, use of two- to five-word long sentences, avoidance of hypothetical questions, directing questions at the applicant, considering rephrasing questions if the applicant is unable to understand, giving more time and showing patience.

When interviewing persons with learning disability, Modell (2006) noted that it is of prime importance to avoid thinking that such persons cannot yield any useful information. To gain useful information from such individuals, whether it is for research purposes or any investigation, several strategies can be adopted. Language is the most important factor to be considered while communicating with disabled individuals. Language should be sixth grade level. As suggested by the results of several research studies, questions should be short. Use of double negatives and abstract concepts (why, if and how) should be omitted. The interviewer should first develop rapport and start the conversation with general casual questions. Individuals with high disability levels are often taught to agree with one other. In order to avoid this condition, use of exclamatory remarks should be avoided which otherwise will make them conscious and not-confident about their answers. Modell (2006)

suggested that, in order to conduct better interviews, it is important that the interviewers are professionals and are equipped with basic cognitive and experimental knowledge.

Corona et al. (2014) studied the effective interviewing of individuals with learning disabilities in order to improve their role and participation in society. Their work combined conventional interviewing techniques with modern motivational and efficient procedures which involved the use of modern technology. In the initial interview sessions, questions were kept open-ended so that individuals could shape and direct the conversation according to their interests. Social networking sites were employed which resulted in the development of trust between the interviewer and the subject. In further sessions, respondents were taught how to record themselves and all the interviews were recorded in the form of films which were kept confidential for the sake of privacy. This research concluded that the use of technology along with conventional interviewing techniques could enhance the quality of qualitative research studies.

According to Anderson and Heath (2006), who worked on forensic interviews of DDC (Developmentally Disabled Children), it should be ensured before interviewing that the needs of the child or young person are clearly understood. Furthermore, they noted that it becomes crucial to learn about the child's requirements and level of his or her disability so that he or she has to make minimum adjustments which, in turn, will result in a stress-free environment throughout the interview. Parents and caregivers should be involved, and they can be interviewed as well. Interviewing them might be helpful in order to gain an idea about the nature of the disability or to collect information that is difficult to take from the disabled person.

Tideman and Svensson (2015) carried out a study of the role of self-advocacy in young individuals with learning disabilities, which they called "better welfare system in Sweden". The research was undertaken after an observation that, during the previous 15 years, several self-advocacy groups had been formed for young people with this disability. In this qualitative research study, two of the self-advocacy groups were contacted and 12 members of these groups were interviewed repeatedly over a time span of ten years. Starting with open-ended questions with no structure pre-designed, the interviews gradually and successively became focused. It was concluded that these self-advocacy programmes imparted a positive effect on individuals with learning disability. These groups helped the members to open up to each other easily and the right of the individuals to control their own life was also reported. This review on interviewing persons with learning difficulties shows that it is possibly useful to conduct interview-based research with people whose communication abilities are impaired as long as appropriate means are used to enable participants to contribute. If the preferences and participation needs of individuals are respected, their contribution will increase the credibility and usefulness of the research.

My work with people with learning difficulties in this research is new in the context of Saudi Arabia. Work on this topic with these adults (to the knowledge of the researcher) has never been conducted previously and thus offers original insights which incorporate the views of service users. I hope that the findings can be used to stimulate responsible state authorities to conduct further studies on a larger scale and use the subsequent results for the formulation of policies and projects for the well-being of people with learning difficulties.

The data for this research were gathered and analysed using interviews, case studies and critical incidents. The interviews were conducted with 15 participants, consisting of

directors and supervisors of different vocational training centres offering training to people with learning disabilities, parents of persons with these disabilities and disabled employment officials in some companies and websites.

The selection of these participants was undertaken using a purposive sampling method, which is a non-probability sampling method drawn from a known population. In this context, confidentiality has been maintained and the identity of the participants has not been disclosed in the findings of this research. The second method of data collection and analysis used was the case study method, for which two case studies of individuals with learning disabilities were conducted, one of whom was looking for a job, while the other had recently left his job. Both case study participants had completed their vocational rehabilitation programmes and were ready to work in Saudi Arabia. In this context, due consideration has been provided to gather the information and cite the work of authors and scholars in the case study findings.

Ensuring quality in qualitative research

Due to the diverse forms of qualitative research, there is an absence of any consensus among scholars regarding the assessment of any piece of qualitative research. A number of approaches have been suggested. I shall focus here on the work of Dixon-Woods as a summary of the position. He developed a checklist of questions that can be helpful in assessing the quality and relevance of the research question, a description and relevance for sampling, methods for data collection and analysis, evidence for claims, levels of support from the academic literature, interpretations and conclusions, and the level of contribution of the overall research paper (Dixon-Woods et al., 2005). However, it can be argued that these criteria, based on methodology, may not do justice to qualitative studies,

which differ in their philosophical and epistemological assumptions from positivist-based research.

From another perspective, it can be argued that the proposed fulfilment of the dual core criteria of systematicity and transparency in high-quality qualitative research can be considered essential. It is also essential that every stage of research logistics— formation of theory, study design, sampling, collection of data, analysis of the results and the conclusion – is required to be validated by a systematic and reliable system (Noble and Smith, 2015). This is helpful in assuring that the process and results of the research are robust and rigorous. In this context, Noble and Smith (2015) assert that six criteria for assessing the overall quality of qualitative research can be identified: clarification and justification, rigour in research procedures, representativeness of sampling, reflexive and representative rigour, transferability and generalisability. Each of these elements can be summarised in three quality assessment criteria for qualitative research: validity, reliability and generalisability.

Validity is related to the meaningfulness of the key components of the research. When the researcher seeks to measure behaviour, they are concerned with ensuring they are measuring what they actually intend to measure (Thomas, 2017). Although questions related to validity cannot be answered with complete certainty, the researcher can develop a strong case for the validity of their data. One of the most commonly used measures of validity is internal validity, which questions whether there is a relationship, and if there is one, whether it is causal or not. There are a number of threats to the internal validity of a research design, such as history, maturation, testing, selection, instrumentation, mortality, compensatory equalisation, diffusion of treatment. Another measure used for validity is construct validity, which explains how well the idea, concept and behaviour that are constructed in an operating or a functioning reality are transformed or translated. To

substantiate it, construct validity requires evidence of six types of validity: content validity, face validity, convergent and discriminate validity, and concurrent and predictive validity (Bryman, 2012). These six broad categories can further be reduced to translation validity and criterion-related validity. Translation validity seeks to examine whether operationalisation indicates the true meaning of the construct and endeavours to judge the degree to which the constructs can be accurately translated through operationalisation with the help of subjective judgements through face validity and examining the content domain through content validity. Criterion validity seeks to use statistical testing to judge the validity of the results and thus does not fit within the scope of this research (Wellington, 2003).

Most qualitative research seeks to study a specific phenomenon or issue within a specific population or an ethnic group in a focused locality, which indicates that the generalisability of the findings of qualitative studies cannot be considered to be an expected attribute (Bryman, 2012). Nevertheless, with the rising trends of knowledge synthesis, meta-ethnography and meta-narrative, the evaluation of generalisability is becoming more important (Leung, 2015). A pragmatic approach to examining generalisability in qualitative studies is to adopt the same criteria for validity, which is the use of a systematic sampling technique, adequate auditing and documentation, triangulation and multi-dimensional theory. Some scholars also support the approach of analytical generalisation, wherein one assesses the extent to which the findings of one study can be generalised to another with proximal similarity and similar theoretical models (Leung, 2015). Under a proximal similar model, the generalisability of one study in respect of another is assessed on the basis of similarities in place, time, people and other social contexts. Nevertheless, this raises questions on the suitability of meta-synthesis in respect of the basic principles of grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology. In this regard, it can be thus identified that any valid meta-synthesis must ensure two key objectives: the development of a theory

and a higher level of abstraction, to ensure generalisability in the qualitative research (Leung, 2015).

Despite these measures, there are a number of aspects of qualitative research that cause positivist researchers to raise questions concerning its quality, since their concepts of reliability and validity cannot be addressed in the same naturalistic manner (Wellington, 2003). In this respect, social researchers prefer to apply different sets of quality measures to assess the effectiveness of qualitative research and to distance themselves from the positivist philosophy. One of the most effective provisions made in qualitative research to ensure the quality of the findings is Guba's four criteria for the trustworthiness of qualitative research, which has been followed to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of the findings of this research (see Polit and Beck, 2010). These criteria are: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. One of the most important criteria addressed by positivist researchers is that of internal validity, which helps to ensure that what is intended to be measured in the research is actually being measured. An equivalent concept for the qualitative researcher is credibility, which seeks to evaluate the extent to which the findings of the research are congruent with reality (Hall and Rousset, 2016).

Credibility is identified as one of the key factors for qualitative studies and can be addressed in a number of ways (Bryman, 2012). These include the adoption of research methods established in the qualitative investigation, the development of an early familiarity with the culture of participating organisations before data collection begins, the use of a random sampling method, the application of a triangulation technique, iterative questioning, frequent debriefing sessions and even peer scrutiny of the research (Shenton, 2004). In addition, a reflective commentary by the researcher, the experience and qualifications of the investigator, a description of the phenomenon under scrutiny and the examination of previous research findings also serve to be effective measures for assessing

the degree to which the results of the research can be determined to be congruent with the findings of past studies.

In respect of this study, to ensure credibility in this research, the provisions made by the researcher included the adoption of recognised and relevant research methods; the development of familiarity with the behaviour and attitudes of participants in the research; the use of a design triangulation technique wherein case study methods, interview methods and critical incident analysis methods were used in the research for data collection; debriefing sessions between the supervisor and researcher; peer scrutiny of the research study; and an examination of previous research on the subject (Bryman, 2015; Polit and Beck, 2010).

The second criterion stated under Guba's four criteria for trustworthiness is transferability. For this, the provision of background data was undertaken to establish the context of the study, along with a detailed description of the phenomena in question to allow comparisons to be made. Dependability is the third key criterion for ensuring the quality of qualitative research and was ensured in this research by employing overlapping methods: the study used a combination of design formats and data collection methods, principally employing interviews, case studies and critical incidents. In-depth methodological descriptions have also been used in this research to allow the study to be repeated and ensure dependability. The last of Guba's criteria is confirmability, which can be addressed with the help of triangulation of methods to minimise the effect of investigator bias, admission of the beliefs and assumptions of the researcher, recognition of the shortcomings of the methods used in the research and their potential impact, in-depth description of the research methodology to allow the integrity of the results of the research to be scrutinised, and the use of diagrams to demonstrate audit trails. In respect of this research, the use of a triangulation method, a discussion of the research limitations and a

detailed description of the research methodology were undertaken to ensure confirmability and thus ensure quality and trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004).

The pilot study

A pilot study is a small project that is conducted as a preliminary stage of a larger research study (Ary et al., 2009). The pilot study is useful for gathering information about time, cost, events and feasibility. This information can be used to determine the sample size of the research study so that performance of the research study can be improved (Ary et al., 2009). This section gives a brief introduction to pilot studies in general, setting out the benefits of using a pilot study in research work. This is followed by a discussion of the pilot study used in the present research. In general, the benefits of a pilot study are as follows:

- It can help the researcher to develop a new hypothesis or to change an existing hypothesis.
- It is a preliminary test, which helps the researcher to go through the data collection procedures so that required changes can be made (Blessing and Chakrabarti, 2009).
- The main benefit is that problems which occur while conducting the research can be identified and addressed.
- It helps the researcher to save time and money by confirming whether or not the main study can be continued based on the pilot study (Blessing and Chakrabarti, 2009).

The above given are the general benefits of using a pilot study in a research work. In the present research study, the pilot study helped me to change and develop new research questions, also to generate new ideas for my study. In addition, it helped me decide about the data collection method, as the pilot study consisted of a sample that included both males and females with learning disabilities facing difficulties with their transition to

work. The pilot study guided me to extend the sample to include parents, specialists and supervisors in rehabilitation centres, and supervisors in private companies who are responsible for hiring disabled people. Changing the respondents shows that a pilot study enables a researcher to make alterations in the main study. The changed sample helped me to obtain clearer findings as I had a chance to bring together views from different people who have direct connections with the training and employment of disabled people in Saudi Arabia. The data were collected in the form of interviews because these provide in-depth knowledge, which is more easily obtained than by a survey method for such research (Blessing and Chakrabarti, 2009). In addition, it was seen from the pilot study that the interviews conducted with the male respondents were fruitful, as the respondents answered all the questions during the interview, unlike the female respondents.

Possible reasons for the inhibition of female respondents to be involved lie in culture and tradition, which were previously elaborated in Chapter 2. In short, one of the female respondents backed out just before the interview, and another female respondent did not answer all the questions except for the first one. Thus, the pilot study has been conducted with two males with learning disabilities. The pilot study helped me to decide upon the most useful data collection method to be used in the main study (Blessing and Chakrabarti, 2009), given the understandable inhibitions of the potential young women participants. I decided just to depend on the interview questions and conduct interviews with employers, specialists, supervisors, parents and two males with learning disability. The characteristics of the two male pilot study participants are described in table.3.1, below.

Table.3.1: Pilot Study Participants

Participant	Male	Male
Date of interview	16-7-2016	18-7-2016
Description	Has learning disability	Has learning disability

	Trained in rehabilitation centre Never work before	Trained in rehabilitation centre Has work experience
Period of unemployment	2 years	3 years

Data collection methods

Design frame

The design frames used in a research study are based on the research assumptions, questions and purpose of the study and the theories relevant to the study. Thomas (2017) specified that design is a structure and a plan, which contains programmes for the research. The most frequently used design frames in social research projects are: action research, case study, comparative research, ethnography, evaluation, experiment, cross-sectional studies, and surveys. In a research study, the design frame and the approach adopted are based on the questions being asked.

Significance and rationale for using the design frames:

Cross-sectional study using interviews

A cross-sectional study has been conducted in this research which has helped in collecting the relevant data pertaining to the aim and objectives of the study. A cross-sectional study is a type of observational study which helps in analysing the data from a population, as well as a representative subset, from the cross-sectional data at a specified time. The cross-sectional study in this research has been undertaken with the use of interviews. Furthermore, the cross-sectional study has been considered significant for this research as

this study is based on qualitative findings and observations. The study is based on the evaluation of transition from school to work for young males with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the use of cross-sectional design has helped in attaining this objective by specifying the cause of learning disabilities in the transition from school to work of young males.

The interview method is a systematic method used to speak and listen to people and to gather data for the research from the individuals through conversations. Alshenqeeti (2014) explains that the interview method is an interchange of views between two or more people on a subject of mutual interest and focuses on the social situatedness and human interaction for gathering knowledge (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Ferraro (2014) supports this and explains the interview as a conversation that seeks to gather a description of the perspectives of the interviewee on a specific topic. These definitions reveal that an interview is an extended conversation between two or more people, designed to gather in-depth information about a certain subject. Interviews can be structured, unstructured or semi-structured, based on the way they are conducted (Ferraro, 2014).

There are several advantages of gathering data using the interview method. It offers the opportunity to explore information in detail which might be inaccessible by questionnaire or observational methods. The presence of the interviewer at the site of data collection ensures mutual understanding as the interviewer can simplify or rephrase the language of the question if it is not understood by the interviewee and thus can obtain more specific and appropriate answers that address the specific requirements of the research being undertaken (Nind, 2008). The interview data can be recorded and reviewed for detailed analytical examination at a later stage, in an economical and unbiased manner. This method allows the interviewer to ask further questions or counter-question the respondent

to gain a more detailed perspective on a particular aspect of an issue. In addition, the interview allows the interviewer to observe the behaviour and attitudes of the interviewee along with collecting the information, which enables the interviewer to gain a more detailed understanding of the research subject (Alshenqeeti, 2014). In this regard, Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006) state that: “Interviews help overcome misunderstandings and misinterpretations of words or questions. As a result, the answers given are clearer. This is possible because, in case of doubt, the interviewer can ensure that respondents correctly understand the questions.” (Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2006, p. 120).

This quotation highlights the key advantage of the interview method: its role in obtaining detailed information on the subject of the research by allowing clear face-to-face communication with the respondents. The semi-structured interview is a particularly suitable method for gathering data where highly personalised data is required; there are opportunities to probe into the situation, and to support respondents who are not fluent in the language or those who have difficulties with the written language (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

The use of interviews in this research enabled an in-depth investigation of the problems and issues faced by individuals with learning disabilities during their transition from study to work. It served as the most effective medium for talking and interacting with the people with this disability in simple language, making them feel comfortable while discussing sensitive aspects of the transition to work. It added a human dimension to otherwise impersonal data which facilitated a deeper understanding of the social and behavioural aspects of the research topic (Nind, 2008). The data gathered using the interview method could be analysed with the help of the findings of the literature review.

Case study

A case study can be understood as the detailed analytical study of persons, decisions, events, policies or institutions. It is considered highly effective and useful to combine methods to explore and understand complicated issues specifically from the field of social studies (George and Bennett, 2005). In line with this objective, Thomas (2017) stated:

This combining of methods is often important in a case study: it can include as many different methods and procedures as necessary for understanding what is going on in a particular situation. So, a case study is like an umbrella, covering a whole range of inquiry activity. (Thomas,2017, p.156)

Mixed methods can be considered as a robust research approach where holistic and in-depth evaluation or investigation of issues is required. However, as a case study can be conducted over a sustained period, it is also recognized as a research strategy if an empirical enquiry involves investigation of a phenomenon within its real-life context (Creswell, 2014).

The limitations of quantitative methods in providing in-depth and holistic explanations regarding the social and behavioural issues associated with a research question have highlighted the significant role of the case study as a method for data collection (Zainal, 2007). The case study method allows the researcher to go beyond any quantitative statistical results and qualitative findings and to integrate them to explore the wider implications of the behavioural and attitudinal conditions by examining the perspectives of the subject.

A case study is more than just a type of qualitative research. It is a ticket that allows us to enter a research field in which we discover the unknown within well-known borders while continually monitoring our own performance; scalability; and our own, as well as general, existing knowledge. (Starman, 2013, p.42).

Case study as a design frame is beneficial in a research study as it guides the data collection and analysis strategies in the study (Thomas, 2015). In this research study, case

study was been used as one of the design frames, in order to gather relevant information regarding people with learning disabilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who encounter issues and difficulties while transitioning from study or training to work, despite significant legislative and policy developments designed to improve their position in society.

Various definitions of the case study have been outlined by many authors to clarify the concept of a case study. Starman (2013) defined a case study as identifying

- 1- The theoretical purpose. involving analysis of types of interaction among participants.
- 2- The practical purpose, involving the progress or development of the performance in a descriptive and analytical context.

Case studies seek to explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomena by facilitating detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of conditions and their relationships (Zainal, 2007). This research has made use of a case study method to examine the lives of two people with learning disabilities who are looking for employment and it explores the key challenges encountered by them in their everyday lives based on their social and professional interactions. The case study method has been highly effective in gaining a detailed insight into the lives of these people and has helped to explore the issues, challenges, and dilemmas encountered by people because of cultural perspectives, individual prejudices, and the discriminatory exclusive attitude of society in Saudi Arabia during the transition from study or training to work.

The significant criticism of the case study method of research which is integrated as a research strategy is directed at diverse levels, from the practical constraints to the abstract constraint presented by the use of this method. In addition, the case study research is charged with the criticism of causal determinism and non-replicability. Further, it has been observed that subjective conclusions and the absence of generalisable conclusions are considered major criticisms associated with the use of the case study method in research. These criticisms are also inclusive of biased case selection as well as the lack of an empirical base. These criticisms have emerged from those social researchers who value the ideals and philosophies (Idowu, 2016).

Apart from examining the specific challenges, this method helped me to understand the wider causes, sources and implications of these issues on the social, behavioural and professional development of people with learning disabilities. Case study also helped to identify the causes and the consequences of these challenges (Swanborn, 2010). In this respect, the first case involved a person with learning disability who had finished his vocational training and was working in Riyadh. After working for three months, he left his work in Riyadh because of the attitude of the people he encountered towards his disability and was at the time of the research looking for a new job. The major criticisms included in the case study are that the case study focused on an individual with the same disability who had pursued a training programme but was unemployed at the time of the research and was looking for a job in Riyadh.

Critical incident analysis

Critical incident analysis enables researchers to draw from their own experience to gain a detailed understanding of a particular phenomenon or cultural context. It draws upon multiple layers of understanding and helps in connecting the personal to the social and

cultural dimensions (Mendez, 2013). The major advantage of this method is that it provides access to the experience and the private worlds of the researcher and provides richer data for evaluation.

With interpretivist research, relations and interactions between people create knowledge, and this assumption reflects the unique use of critical incident analysis to observe and explore further in order to obtain insights, as the researcher becomes a participant in this observation (Backhaus and Matthias, 2000). The nature of this technique, which involves the researcher and participants in the same fieldwork, assists the researcher to collect facts or perceptions, by using some methods such as unstructured interviews or observations. For instance, when the researcher engages with participants and is a part of his/her study, he/she can draw information and observe their feelings, thoughts, and actions. The use of the critical incident technique (CIT) in qualitative research provides discursive data that need to be subject to narrative analysis. Furthermore, the data need to be categorised and coded inductively in accordance with grounded theory (Backhaus and Matthias, 2000). CIT studies have been classified into three categories: data generated studies, studies that use interpretative analysis of the CIT data, and CIT studies that implement the content analytic method (Gremier, 2004). The use of this classification helped in conducting the present research in an effective manner. I chose these incidents on the basis of the results of the interviews. In this process, I chose the case study on the basis of some crucial factors which affect my attitude towards working with people with learning disability. In addition to this, my review of the literature also allowed me to select critical incidents to which I could apply theoretical knowledge to the real life and practical environment.

The critical incident technique offers multiple advantages. The foremost advantage offered by this technique is the ability to access value-rich information, which is most relevant,

through the means of respondents' words, describing their experiences and perspectives refracted through the interpretation of the interviewer/researcher. A predefined context, determining significance or importance of a particular research variable, is absent in this method, allowing the respondents freedom to express their opinions. The research framework is then developed on the basis of events recollected by the respondents (which may include the researcher, bringing in an autoethnographic element), benefiting from the flexibility of the variables that can be addressed (Edvardsson, 1992). The critical incident technique is inductive in nature, meaning that rigid frameworks or hypotheses for development of the research process are not required. The informality and open-endedness of CIT allows it to make radical contributions towards the subject matter, supporting the development of new theories or concepts (Lockshin and Gorden, 1998). The final advantage offered by CIT is that it is a 'culturally neutral method', which offers content-rich data in the form of interpreted narratives. These narratives offer an in-depth insight into personal experiences of the respondents, contributing towards a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being examined.

There are potential fragilities to CIT, which include recall bias and low response rate. Misinterpretation of the respondent accounts may occur, resulting in flawed categorisation or coding and compromising of validity. In addition, the inability to remember precise details of the critical incident under investigation can also affect the outcomes of this technique, resulting in the misrepresentation of the event by respondents or by the autoethnographer (Chell, 1998). Lastly, respondents may not be available or willing to offer the detailed accounts of the critical incidents, which are required by this technique. This can result in a lower overall response rate, in turn, affecting the data reliability (Edvardsson, 1992). Despite these disadvantages, the merits of CIT are clear.

Critical incident analysis fieldwork

In relation to my research, I selected this technique to understand the perceptions of people with learning disabilities towards training programmes, to understand the factors, attitudes, and support offered by the government, supervisors, specialists and their parents to facilitate their transition to work in the Saudi environment. This research gave me a chance to reflect on the life of disabled people and observe the attitudes of people towards disabled employees, as I visited their work many times during my teaching experience and my master's study.

For this research work, then, there are three different design frames, namely: critical incidents, case study and cross-sectional study using interviews. These three perspectives have different implications for exploring the challenges encountered by the subjects in their transition to work. The case study focused on the individuals who were facing issues related to their learning disabilities. The prime implication of this case study was that it permitted the retrieval of common challenges faced by such people in their transition to work. In contrast to this, critical incidents were from my own past experiences related to working with people with learning disabilities, reflecting on the views of those I spoke with in my work. These incidents were directed to exploring the impact of the most influential factors affecting the transition of these individuals.

Critical incident analysis was used for this research because it gave access to my own experiences and facilitated a deeper understanding of the personal narratives of the participants. Presenting my personal story facilitated reflection on the issues encountered by disabled people during their transition from study to work and enabled me to empathise with their emotional experiences and reactions and thus developed a deeper association with the research problem (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011). As this research demanded a more in-depth understanding of the social, behavioural, cultural and professional

environment as encountered by people with learning disabilities, the critical incident analysis served as a crucial technique to analyse the research problem in a holistic manner (Mendez, 2013).

A sample of four real incidents from my teaching experience were selected for the research study. The real incidents were selected with the help of three major criteria. The first criterion specified that the incident needed to be based on the subject of the research. Secondly, the incident needed to form the actual basis for the collection of data with respect to the research. Thirdly, the real incident needed to present the discussion on the application of the critical incident technique in the research (Gremier, 2004). I would add that, in the context of this research, the incidents needed to be rooted in my own lived experience, given the autobiographical context of this element of the study.

The selection of these incidents was due to the direct relationship between the incidents in relation to the research problem. In this research I discussed the difficulties that were faced by young males with learning disabilities in their transition to work. I witnessed some factors that had a direct impact on these difficulties such as social communications, the attitudes of people toward young males with learning disabilities, the inefficient training programmes and the lack of awareness of parents of the rights of their children with disabilities (see page 221 for more details).

On the basis of my own observations, I found four common incidents faced by employees with learning disabilities. In this regard, employees with such disabilities often face issues related to socialisation and communication due to lack of self-confidence. This was the first incident that I faced. In the second one, the incident was about the lack of awareness among parents toward the rights of their disabled children. In addition to this, in the third critical incident, I felt that there was a lack of efficient vocational rehabilitation centres,

which made it difficult for such people to have chance of development. Lastly, in the fourth incident, I witnessed that there were negative attitudes in Saudi society toward employees with learning difficulties. I connected stories based on these incidents in order to link them with the research results.

Process of data collection

Table 3.2: All the participants in this study

number	Participants in cross-sectional study using interviews	number	Participants in the case study
1	General director of the rehabilitation centre	2	Individuals with learning disabilities
2	Supervisors in the rehabilitation centres		
4	Specialists in the rehabilitation centres		
4	Parents of individuals with learning disabilities		
1	Ministry official for employment individuals with learning disabilities		
2	Managers in private sectors		
1	Supervisor in e-website for helping individuals with LD in finding work		

Process of conducting interviews

The data collection process occurred mainly in Riyadh, where I observed and recorded matters associated with the problem I had chosen to research. For example, I wrote all the

information in my diary immediately after finishing any interview or visiting any places that were relevant to my research project. During this period, I interviewed and met several groups of people, such as supervisors, specialists, parents, disabled people, and co-workers. In addition, I had made many connections working as a teacher with students with learning disabilities which provided a valuable data source in terms of knowledge and experience of the difficulties that these students face during their study, training, or job search.

A letter was sent by my employer (Al-Jouf University) to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development in order to request that the data collection and interviewing processes be conducted at centres for the vocational rehabilitation of disabled individuals in the city of Riyadh. At the very beginning of my empirical study, I visited the General Director of the Ministry's Vocational Rehabilitation Department, who advised me to conduct the interviews at two vocational rehabilitation centres (East and West) in the city of Riyadh, to which he addressed two letters. It is worth noting that, upon discussing the thorny subject of the difficulties encountered by people with learning disability in making the transition from the vocational rehabilitation programme to the workplace, I discovered that the General Director of the Ministry's Vocational Rehabilitation Department was happy to disclose a great deal of information, which was certainly useful for this research, and he was therefore asked to be a participant in my research by allowing me to conduct an interview with him, which he was willing to do.

The next day, I went to the Ministry's Vocational Rehabilitation Department to interview the General Director, whom I requested to sign a consent form, having explained to him in detail the objectives of the research and his rights as a participant therein. Upon completion of this interview, I visited the vocational rehabilitation centre in west Riyadh,

where I first explained in detail the objectives of the research to the programme manager and a number of specialists and was then provided with a tour of the centre. Having discussed with the programme supervisor the status of vocational rehabilitation and its role in the employment process, I then decided to interview the programme supervisor and two of the centre's specialists. The choice of the programme manager as an interviewee was fully justified in my opinion, as he was fully aware of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. The programme supervisor then proposed the names of two specialists directly involved in the centre's work liaising between the employment-focused training project at the centre and a number of companies as prospective employers.

I also visited another vocational rehabilitation centre in eastern Riyadh, where I conducted interviews with the programme supervisor and two specialists. At this centre three specialists had initially been chosen upon recommendation by the supervisor because of their work, engaging families in programmes, and their close follow-up work on the condition of their students after graduation, extending all possible assistance to them to find suitable employment. Interviews with the supervisor and the specialists were scheduled on different days, upon their request (Dikko, 2016). Unfortunately, the third specialist declined to take part and excused himself on the day of the interview due to unforeseen family circumstances, so interviews were conducted with the programme supervisor and two specialists at the centre.

Interviews were also conducted with five parents of individuals with learning disability who had graduated from these two centres and were still looking for work (three from the eastern centre and two from the western centre). Four interviews were approved, while an interview with a parent from eastern Riyadh was discarded as nothing of interest to the research was added, and because the parent in question suddenly remembered a previous engagement after having been informed of his rights and the objectives of the research. All

interviews with both specialists and parents were conducted at either the eastern Riyadh centre (one supervisor, two specialists and two parents) or the western Riyadh centre (one supervisor, two specialists and two parents) except the interview with the General Director of the Ministry's Vocational Rehabilitation Department which was conducted at the Ministry. Having completed the first batch of interviews with both specialists and parents, I conducted interviews with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development official responsible for the employment of special needs individuals, and also with those responsible for the recruitment of the subjects at two companies in the city of Riyadh, in accordance with agreements concluded between these companies and certain government bodies to train and hire those individuals. Interviews were also conducted with an e-website for the recruitment of disabled individuals.

I visited the Ministry of Labour and Social Development to conduct an interview with the official responsible for the employment of individuals with disabilities. I also went to the Saudi Food Company and Panda (the second company) to acquire formal approval to conduct interviews with company officers responsible for hiring this segment of the labour force. The companies welcomed such interviews and expressed their willingness to cooperate in any way possible with any research that could eventually contribute to extending much-needed assistance to the disabled community in Saudi Arabia.

When collecting data through interview method, it is very important to have a selection of the most appropriate people for the interview purpose (Powney and Watts, 2018). Therefore, interviews were conducted with executives responsible for the recruitment of disabled persons at these companies (one supervisor from Panda and one supervisor from the Saudi Food Company). Finally, I conducted an interview with the owner of Wasata, the largest e-website for the recruitment of disabled people in Saudi Arabia, which is owned by a physically disabled individual. The main justification for the selection of this

particular individual to be interviewed was that he had great difficulty in finding employment, making him a considerable addition to the research, having experienced at first hand the difficulties encountered by the disabled in their search for work (Santos Jr, Black and Sandelowski, 2015).

The next chapter (cross-sectional study using interviews) relies on the findings drawn from the qualitative semi-structured interviews with those 15 participants to examine the difficulties encountered by persons with learning disabilities seeking appropriate work in Riyadh. The interview participants were asked 10-15 questions in a semi-structured interview, developed with the help of the literature reviewed, on the problems that were described earlier.

Process for conducting the case study

The case used in a case study is a subject of examination which is an example of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame that is termed an object within which the study is undertaken. On this basis, a case study is comprised of two elements: a practical component termed the subject of the case study, and the analytical or theoretical frame termed the object of the case study (Thomas, 2011). In my circumstances, the cases comprised two studies of individuals with learning disabilities, one of whom was still seeking employment and the other who had left his job. Both individuals had finished their vocational rehabilitation programmes and were ready to work.

The significance of classification in the case study is to offer clarity in identifying what is wanted, the purpose or goals to be achieved, and the means of achieving them (Stake, 2005). Some authors classify a case study according to other factors, such as the level of analysis and the number of cases (Starman, 2013). In this context, Thomas stated that: "As a typology in sense 'unrolls' the various considerations being made in the design of a case study, it perhaps implies that a series of separate design choices are made during the study

planning" (Thomas, 2011, p.518). The typology he suggests on the basis of this is shown in Figure 3.2.

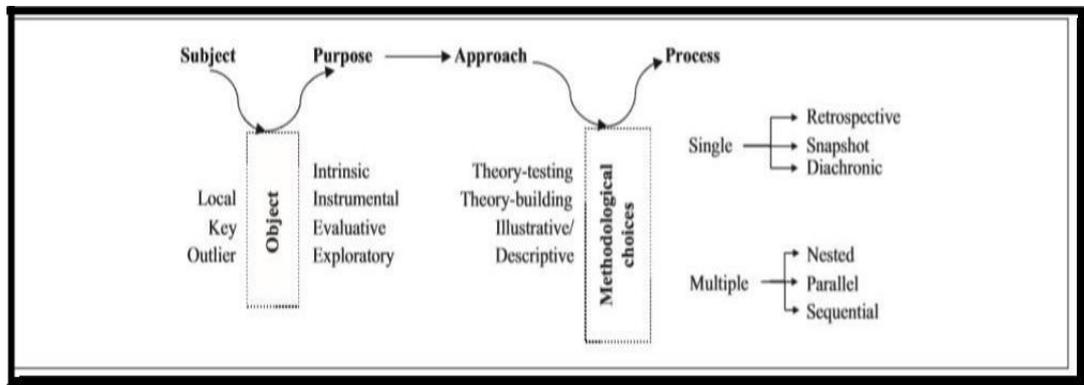


Figure3.2: Typology of case studies (*Ibid*)

A case study presents a perspective for interpretation and contemplation, which exists within the process of research design. It encourages a precise articulation of the necessity and distinctness among the subject and the object. Moreover, a typology encourages the consideration for illustrative and theoretical approaches, and decisions about the processes and methodological decisions (Thomas, 2011). The comparison of the two cases in this research was undertaken with the help of this typology, which thus served as the means for assessing what the case studies were endeavouring to achieve and to plan how to undertake them.

In respect of the case study conducted with these individuals, undergoing this transition formed the subject of the case study. The examination of the difficulties that they faced while looking for employment, as well as the effectiveness of the training programmes in the centres, the factors that affected this transition, and the benefits they might have derived from their employment, in conjunction with exploring demographic, educational, social, and medical information, formed the object of the case study used in this research.

In view of this, the instruments used in this study were interviews, observations and documentations, and these tools were used to record the obstacles that faced these individuals while they were looking for appropriate jobs, as well as the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation programmes in the centres where they were trained.

Interviews were developed to uncover the factors that may have affected this transition supportively or harmfully, and the benefits individuals could have derived from their potential employment. One interviewee had previously worked in Granada Mall in Riyadh, which gave me the opportunity to investigate the attitudes of non-disabled workers toward disabled people from his experience in the workplace. The first interviews were developed to explore demographic, educational, social and medical information. My sponsor (Al-jouf University) gave me a letter to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development in Riyadh, in order to help me randomly select two individuals with learning disabilities who were looking for work. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development was selected as it had responsibility for training and hiring disabled people. After that, introductory phone calls were made by the Development Department at the Ministry to parents, who had the authority, granted by the Ministry of Justice, to allow such interviews with their sons. During the introductory phone calls by the Ministry, parents were provided with a detailed background to the study. Thus, 12 parents' names and phone numbers were randomly selected by two supervisors who worked for the Ministry of Labour. Those supervisors, who were responsible for selecting the participants, were requested by me not to select females with learning disabilities, because it was very hard to interview them, as shown in the pilot study that I had previously conducted. Individuals at the Ministry of Labour were very keen to assist me in my data collection process. For example, I was asked to write several letters regarding my study goals and procedures, and I was also asked some oral questions so that Ministry staff could help me as much as possible. In addition, supervisors

mentioned that the Minister had asked them to provide whatever information the research required regarding the difficulties of hiring disabled people.

The identified case study participants were thus interviewed to examine the general and personal factors related to their employment process. These included their personality features, social status, medical status, education status, key strengths, weaknesses, goals and interests. After this detailed interview, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants to examine the key perceptions of the participants regarding the issues and problems they encountered during the transition from study or training programme to work.

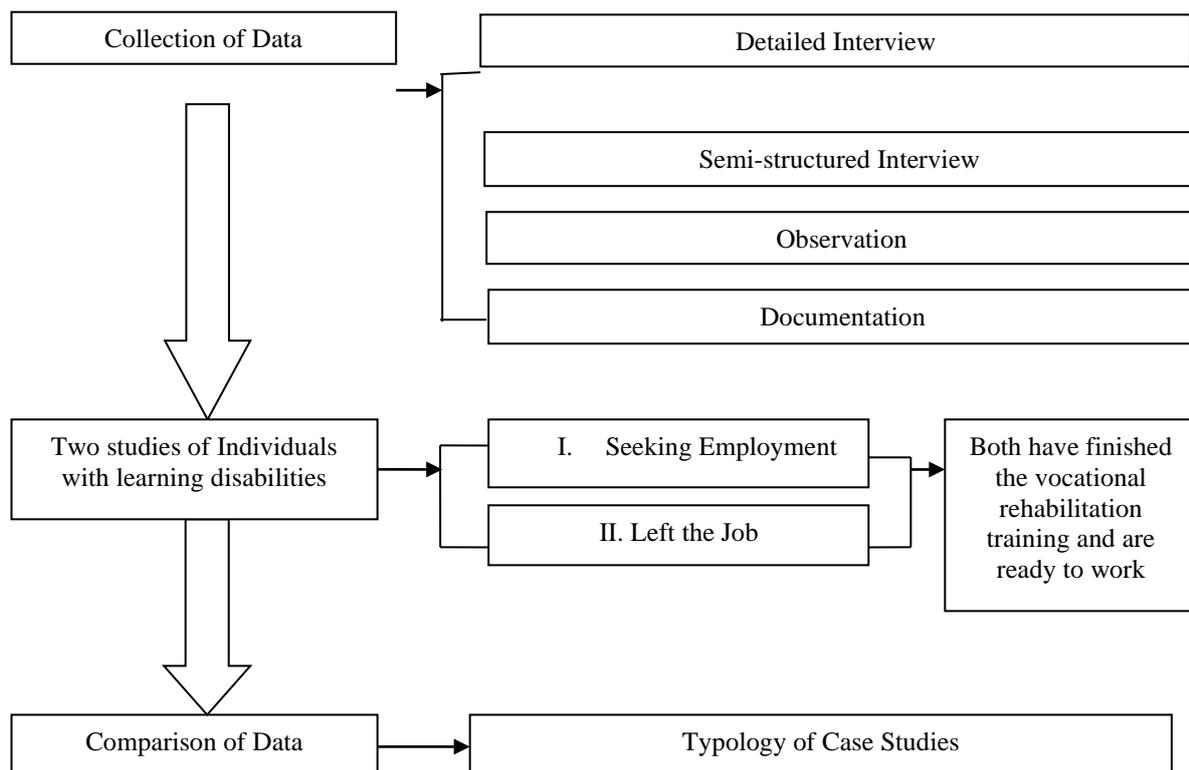


Figure 3.3: Process Map for the Case Study

Process of data analysis

Data analysis is one of the most important aspects of a research process, since it involves the examination of the collected data and the drawing of inferences that lead to logical conclusions (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). The present research study focused on the difficulties faced by individuals with learning disabilities while transitioning from the school environment to the work environment. The study focused on the Saudi Arabian culture, investigating the government programmes and policies that ease this transition. The study also examined the factors that assist in the transition to the work environment and the benefits gained by the government, the community, and the individuals with disabilities from their inclusion in the workforce. In order to address these research questions, primary data was collected through case studies and interviews, which are predominantly qualitative methods. I used NVivo software because it provided an organized structure for my data and it helped me to keep track and revise all my transcripts into a coding list. Also, this software helped me to take notes and emerge with clear ideas. In addition, through this software I imported all my information in one database so that I could access easily when I needed to.

NVivo is a computer-assisted qualitative analysis software (CAQDAS), which facilitates qualitative and mixed methods research. It is designed to help researchers using qualitative data to organise, analyse and gain deeper insights into unstructured or qualitative data which has been gathered in the form of open-ended survey responses, interviews, social media, articles or web-content. The use of NVivo makes the analysis of qualitative data more systematic by allowing easy data management, time saving and easy navigation through the data, thereby facilitating effective and detailed examination of the qualitative data (QSR International, 2017).

This research made use of thematic analysis, wherein codes and patterns are identified, and appropriate themes developed for the research. As shown in Table 3.2, the six steps of thematic analysis followed in this research were: familiarisation with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming the themes, and producing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The details of the ways in which these steps were applied in this research are discussed in the next section.

Table 3.3: Phases of thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke

Phase	Description of the process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarisation with the data 	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generation of initial codes 	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching for themes 	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing themes 	Checking the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic “map” of the analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining and naming themes 	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definition and names for each theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing the report 	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis

(Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 87)

1-Familiarisation with the data: This step requires the researcher to get a detailed sense of the data and helps in forming an evidence-based understanding of the issues and critical aspects related to the research. This is the stage wherein the researcher is required to familiarise themselves with the data gathered from the interviews and notes by undertaking a continuous review and listening to the recorded information (Hilal and Alabri, 2013). Such immersion into the data helps the researcher to become familiar with the scope and boundaries of the research (Ven, 2013). This phase is said to be highly significant for the researcher because it offers an opportunity to become more engaged with the data gathered with the help of the interview. For this purpose, I gave careful attention to listening to all the interviews and examined them in the light of the secondary data, took notes and drew ideas to form the codes and then the themes. I realised that this phase was very helpful for me because it created the foundation for the overall thematic analysis and enabled me to delve deep into the context of the research and to understand their application to address the aims of the research. I also realised that, although this is the most time-consuming stage in the overall process of thematic analysis, it is highly worthwhile because it helps in developing a deeper understanding of the data and creates a foundation for the analysis.

2-Generating initial codes: This phase begins when a researcher has become familiar with the data and has identified a list of the ideas that capture the meaning regarding the segments of the texts. This phase requires the integration of the data retrieved with the researcher's interpretation and reflection on the gathered information. This phase requires attaching key words which can serve as the basis for the thematic analysis (Hilal and Alabri, 2013). For the purpose of this step, the ideas have been transformed into more organised and relevant forms and developed into codes from which sub-themes and themes could be drawn. Within this step I was able to draw the codes such as 'coordination',

‘awareness’, ‘vocational training’, ‘society’, ‘training programmes’, ‘limited programmes’, ‘media’, ‘technology’, ‘social inclusion’, and others. However, during this phase, I did not follow rigid rules or a specific process of labelling, rather I attempted to interpret and understand the relevance of each code and identify the ones which created more meaning for the in-depth understanding of the social phenomenon associated with the transition from study to work for persons with learning disability.

3-Searching for themes: This stage involves the categorisation of the different codes into potential themes and assigning the suitable coded extracts to the identified themes. In respect of this step, I referred the theories, concepts and the contextual background literature associated with the subject of my research and endeavoured to develop suitable sub-themes on the basis of which I could design main themes for the thematic analysis (Ven, 2013). For this purpose, I also examined the gathered data and the codes drawn in the light of the research questions and determined the theoretical affiliation after integrating my own interpretations. This phase ended when the overall set of themes and sub-themes had been linked to the underlying meaning of each theme.

4-Reviewing the themes: The purpose of this phase is to review and revise the identified sub-themes and themes and examine if they are coherent and compatible with the data in the research (QSR International, 2017). This served as a crucial phase in my research and helped me in revising, adapting, adjusting the themes and developing more organised and clear themes. Under this phase, I endeavoured to align the themes more closely with the research questions and make them more succinct and clearer.

5-Defining and naming themes: This stage begins when the researcher has developed a suitable map of the data and helped in organising and developing the final themes for the

analysis (Ven, 2013). In this phase, I developed the themes for the thematic analysis such as ‘Lack of coordination between various entities’, ‘Lack of awareness among their parents about the rights of their children’, ‘The lack of awareness and poor education of the families’, ‘Absence of tools and equipment to provide effective training’, and ‘Instructors and trainers need to be trained and qualified’. These themes were aimed at addressing the research question that sought to examine the difficulties encountered by the individuals with learning disabilities in transition from school to work.

6-Producing the report: This is the final stage, in which the researcher is required to select detailed and complete extracts as examples and align them with the research questions and the associated literature to discuss them with respect to the research question/s (Hilal and Alabri, 2013). This involved the detailed discussion of the themes and is discussed in the data analysis chapter in this research.

CHAPTER 4: CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY USING INTERVIEWS

Introduction

This chapter consists of the analysis and discussion of the findings gained from the semi-structured interviews regarding the difficulties faced by individuals with learning disabilities in transition to work, as well as programmes, factors and benefits in relation to this transition. In my previous chapter, I addressed the research design and methodologies used in the data collection and data analysis. This chapter and the two following chapters (the case study and the critical incident analysis) encapsulate findings, analysis and discussion as headings.

In this chapter I analyse and discuss the responses drawn from the findings and connect them with the literature review that was outlined in Chapter 2. Note that all names used in this chapter and the next chapter were pseudonyms in respect of the rights of their participation and confidentiality. In this chapter, the relevant themes were obtained from the semi-structured interviews and associated with my research questions in order to present extracts from my raw data to support the points to be evaluated. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), selecting vivid examples from the data leads the researcher to capture the essence of the point under investigation. Furthermore, checking the accuracy of my data and addressing the rigour of my ideas were important goals of this chapter.

Once again, at the beginning of this chapter, it is appropriate to restate my research questions:

- 1-What are the difficulties faced by individuals with learning disabilities in the transition from school/training programmes to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?
- 2-What kind of programmes support them in this transition?

3-What are the factors that ease or complicate their transition?

4-What are the benefits of work for those individuals, for their community and for the government?

Thematic Analysis

As stated in Chapter 3, the process of coding for thematic analysis comprised six phases namely:

1-familiarising myself with the data,

2-generating the codes,

3-searching for themes,

4-reviewing the themes,

5-defining and naming the themes, and

6-producing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The development of the themes on the basis of the codes and key questions is illustrated in Table 4.1; while the remainder of the chapter discusses the themes in light of the findings of the interviews and the literature. All interviews were coded according to the codes in column 1, which represent phases 1 and 2, above. These codes emerged out of the analysis; examples of the coding from the raw data are given in Appendix 3.

A note on translation

As noted by Van Nes et al (2010) there are certain challenges of language differences in qualitative research, when participants and the main researcher have the same non-English native language and the non-English data lead to an English publication. There are issues in that interpretation of meaning is the core of qualitative research, and, as translation is

also an interpretive act, meaning may get lost in the translation process. Van Nes et al recommend that researchers should work in the original language as long and as much as possible. They also recommend using ‘fluid’ descriptions of meanings in discussions rather than attempting accurate verbatim translations. I have attempted to follow these recommendations.

Table 4.1: Codes and research questions

Codes	Addressing these key questions ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination • Awareness • Vocational training • Society 	Difficulties encountered by individuals with learning disabilities in transition from school to work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programme • Limited and ineffective programme. 	Role of vocational rehabilitation centres and programme in facilitating individuals with learning disability in this transition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media • Technology • Attitude • Skills • Political factors 	Factors that influence the employment of individuals with learning disabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy and capability • Social inclusion • Economic development • Social development • Personal development 	Potential advantages of the employment of disabled people

Consistent with the tenets of qualitative inquiry, I attempted to gain a holistic view of the ground that I was examining, and with that end in mind I did not formally disaggregate the commentary from my respondents according to their status in my enquiry. I thus analysed their commentary together, but for ease of understanding of the origins of the comments I have made clear where comments originated by giving person codes, as shown in Table 4.2. The analysis of the comments made by different kinds of respondent has enabled a triangulation of commentary wherein comments made by respondents at one part of the policy/practice spectrum may be confirmed or disconfirmed by those at another part.

Table 4.2: Person codes of participants

Respondents	Person Codes
Director of the Vocational Rehabilitation Department at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	A
Supervisor 1 with the vocational rehabilitation programme in Riyadh	B
Supervisor 2 with the vocational rehabilitation programme in Riyadh	C
Specialist 1 training intellectually disabled students at vocational rehabilitation centres	D
specialist 2 training intellectually disabled students at vocational rehabilitation centres	E
Specialist3 training intellectually disabled students at vocational rehabilitation centres	F
Specialist 4 training intellectually disabled students at vocational rehabilitation centres	G
Parent 1 of the intellectually disabled individual who graduated from the centre and is still looking for work	H
Parent 2 of the intellectually disabled individual who graduated from the centre and is still looking for work	I
Parent 3 of the intellectually disabled individual who graduated from the centre and is still looking for work	J
Parent 4 of the intellectually disabled individual who graduated from the centre and is still looking for work	K
Ministry official responsible for employment of intellectually disabled individuals	L
Officer 1 of a company with a large number of intellectually disabled employees in the city of Riyadh.	M
Officer 2 of a company with a large number of intellectually disabled employees in	N

the city of Riyadh.	
Supervisor at Wasata, the largest e-website for recruitment of the intellectually disabled in Saudi Arabia	O

Rq1: What are the difficulties faced by individuals with learning disabilities in the transition from school/ training programme to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

In response to the questions asked with regard to the difficulties faced by the individuals with learning disabilities in transition from the school environment to the workplace, Respondent A, the Director of the Vocational Rehabilitation Department of the Ministry of Labour stated that: “The individuals with intellectual disabilities come across numerous issues while making transition to workplace from rehabilitation programme”.

In support of this, the respondent further added that:

Lack of awareness among their parents about the rights of their intellectually disabled sons and lack of coordination between various entities, concerned with their training and subsequent employment act as a major setback in assisting the intellectually disabled person to get proper employment.

Adding to this, Respondent B (Supervisor) also stated that: “A key obstacle for the recruitment and training programme is the attractiveness of the monthly allowance, rather than the future careers of their intellectually disabled children”.

Respondent B gave further evidence in support of this point: “Many parents refuse to allow their sons to go for pre-employment interviews at the different companies, as they fear losing their monthly allowance. The key reason for families’ perception is explained by their lack of awareness and poor education”.

In contrast to this, Respondent B said that: “There are some families that are greatly interested in the rehabilitation programme administered to their intellectually disabled sons”.

The views of both respondents are further supported by the literature review, which revealed that one of the most important factors that creates difficulty for intellectually disabled individuals is the absence of collaboration between various agencies and family members of the children to determine the difficulties, needs and services which are required for meeting the requirements of intellectually disabled persons (Ware, 2014).

In context with the response received for the questions in the interview conducted for the factors that influences the recruitment of the disabled people, Respondent C, the Specialist (1) working on the rehabilitation programme in Eastern Riyadh, stated that:

There are many problems, whether during the vocational rehabilitation phase, the post-vocational rehabilitation phase or the job-hunting phase. During the vocational rehabilitation phase, we need tools and equipment to provide effective training; instructors and trainers need training and development; and assistance from the private sector is needed for the professional training programme, the Ministry of Labour has so far failed to respond to the many letters that we sent in that connection.

Respondent C further stated: “There are numerous problems concerned with the post vocational rehabilitation phase: the key problem is related to the unavailability of disabled–friendly transportation, which is so intense that a lot of students turn down jobs just because it is quite far from their own homes.”

Supporting the views of Respondents, A and B, Respondent C stated that: “The weak coordination between senior officials at the Ministry of Labour and the vocational rehabilitation centres to such an extent that individuals with learning disabilities don’t know where to go after completion of the professional training”.

The most noticeable factor is the respondents’ negative attitude towards intellectually disabled people. The views of Respondent C (specialist) are not

compatible with the views of various authors presented in the literature review section. The research conducted in Saudi Arabia shows that intellectually disabled people are neglected by the society and the opportunities and services provided to address their needs are also minimal. The society also creates a negative pressure on the family of disabled individuals (Deiner, 2009; Baroff and Olley, 2014).

Further, Respondent D, the Specialist (2) in the rehabilitation programme in Eastern Riyadh, stated that: “Society at large has to trust and believe in the capabilities of the disabled people and that they can work effectively in many sectors if given half a chance.” Similarly, the data presented in the literature review section also emphasises that the lack of support from society and absence of political policies at the central level affect the use and integration of technology for the betterment of intellectually disabled individuals in Saudi Arabia, thereby highlighting a key difficulty that influences the employment of the persons with learning disability (Gov. UK., 2017).

Rq2: What kind of programmes support them in this transition?

The findings of the research have revealed that a number of programmes have been developed by the government of Saudi Arabia to assist individuals with intellectual disability in preparing and managing the transition. In this context, the findings of the interview revealed significant information in respect of the incidence and effectiveness of these programmes.

Respondent A (Director of Rehabilitation Centres Department) stated:

There are certain training programmes that are in high demand in the Saudi market, such as bookbinding, agriculture, communications and greengrocery. Hence, intellectually disabled students who successfully complete their vocational rehabilitation in such professions usually find immediate employment. Such professions

currently provide an exceptional employment opportunity for disabled people since the government has decreed it exclusively Saudi-ized.

He further revealed: “We have training programmes in book-binding, computing, agriculture, carpentry, electricity and telephone exchange operation”.

Respondent G (specialist) further highlighted the prevailing programmes and stated:

At another vocational rehabilitation programme in Al-Kharj, where I used to work before I came to the city of Riyadh, there was close cooperation between the centre and the water factory which provided training and eventual employment to our students. This should serve as an example to be followed by all companies that conduct training and recruitment programmes. This means that rehabilitation programmes are the key factor in securing employment for intellectually disabled persons.

In this regard, the findings of the literature reveal that the education programmes in KSA have intended to offer special education to the students with learning disabilities and these programmes include teacher-consultant programmes, itinerant teacher programmes, follow-up programmes, self-contained classroom programmes and resource room programmes (Muthumbi, 2008). However, it can be argued that these programmes are apparently still underdeveloped to offer adequate benefits to the persons concerned. The findings of the interview have revealed some acute shortcomings in the implementation of these programmes. These shortcomings were highlighted by the parents of the individuals with learning disabilities.

In this respect, Respondent J (parent) stated: “All those programmes were weak, with the exception of the social partnership programme for the training of an intellectually disabled student, offered by Panda Foods Company in the second term of the rehabilitation programme.”

The parent also highlighted the shortcomings and failure of the primary and

secondary schools in the Kingdom in offering adequate education. The respondent further stated: “They were very poor. During those stages, I depended largely on private teachers who taught my son at home. Abdel-Rahman's [pseudonym] mother and I contributed considerably to the education and training of our intellectually disabled son.”

Nevertheless, the government officers also supported these findings. Respondent B (supervisor) further supported these findings and stated:

No, they aren't useful. I know this better than anyone else, being a supervisor of a vocational rehabilitation centre. We moved into this centre five years ago and I can tell you that it is only suitable for administrative purposes, but it is definitely not suited for training in many professions, such as carpentry, computing and agriculture. I submitted many requests to senior ministry officials to change the location of the centre but received no response. However, as for the trainers and the training plans, they are very good in my opinion.

These findings are supported by the findings of the literature that revealed that presently there are limited programmes that offer vocational rehabilitation for students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia and these are operated under the direction of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which restricts the potential of the education system in the country to facilitate positive and successful transition (McDonnell and Hardman, 2009; Ainscow, 2013; Aldabas, 2015).

In this context, Respondent A (director) highlighted pertinent reasons for the failure of these programmes and stated: “The routine is boringly lengthy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We submitted a request to the minister who asked for a detailed study of these programmes. We did prepare a plan, but it will take long time to get it approved.”

He further revealed:

We submitted a request for the incorporation of a number of training programmes, involving the sectors of communications, retail, safety and security. We also requested that trainers in those professions should be specialized and experienced. We also requested that both interdepartmental cooperation and trainers' salaries should be increased.

Nevertheless, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs asserted that considerable measures and efforts were being made on a regular basis for the improvement of these programmes. In this respect, Respondent B (supervisor) stated:

I agree with you that some professions are obsolete but not all. There are professions that are still in high demand in the job market, such as bookbinding, computing, telephone exchange operation and carpentry. We have also submitted a request to the vice-minister for the addition of some professions that the job market currently needs, namely communications, security, reception and foodstuff handling among others. I would like, however, to express my concern that senior officials had the time to meet with you and complain about the weakness of our programming content yet had no time for us nor did they communicate such complaints to us in order to change and modernize our programme.

In addition to this, the programme supervisor of the vocational training,

Respondent E (specialist) revealed:

This is easier said than done. First of all, the red tape in Saudi Arabia is boring and complicated. I mean that to change the professions that are currently available at the centre, I need many approvals from many ministries and the paperwork will be long and time consuming and there is no guarantee that at the end such change will be approved. Furthermore, replacing the professions already on offer with other modern, more in demand professions means that rehabilitation centres will have to be re-equipped and re-staffed, which requires considerable financial outlay which I do not think the ministry will be willing to provide, especially considering the current economic circumstances.

These findings thus indicate a lack of adequate communication and coordination

Within the departments, which creates a major drawback to the successful

implementation of these programmes. The interview findings also reveal the measures that continue to be taken by the programme supervisors for their improvement. In this respect, Respondent E (specialist) explained: “I suggest that the Ministry of Labour actively cooperates with the private sector to modernize vocational rehabilitation centres and provide the required financial and technical support”.

He further clarified:

Coordination is already underway with four companies to re-equip vocational rehabilitation centres and help provide specialists in training of the intellectually disabled students in professions that are in high demand. Let's hope that the minister approves the plan. The paperwork is on his desk as we speak.

On the other hand, the programme specialist also offers pertinent suggestions for the improvement of these programmes. In this respect, Respondent F (specialist) stated:

In my opinion, it is better to focus on the professions most in demand in the Saudi job market, such as communications, libraries, shopping centres/malls and horticulture. It is equally important to divide the training programme into two terms, one to be conducted at the vocational rehabilitation centre and the other to take place in the real work environment. The trainee is then evaluated upon completion of the training programme to determine whether or not he is capable of work.

In addition, the employment firms opine that presence of adequate training and necessary skills in the individuals with disabilities will enable these firms to employ such individuals. Respondent M (official), stated:

Of course, I do. If those programmes involve training in handling foodstuffs, we will be totally ready and willing to provide qualified trainers to these centres and will also be willing to employ many more of the intellectually disabled trainees. If the government starts to seriously coordinate with companies, involved in various sectors, it would certainly be much easier to provide a large number of

experienced trainers specialized in many professions and the graduates of these centres would certainly be employed.

On the basis of these findings, it can be suggested that the programme supervisors are aware of the weaknesses in the prevailing programmes and their solutions; nevertheless, there is a gap between the programme's design and its implementation, which would require a more adequate coordination and communication between the various government departments involved. There is a lack of relevant literature to support these findings.

The findings of the literature reveal that the vocational rehabilitation centres are one of the key initiatives undertaken by the government of Saudi Arabia to facilitate and support the employment of the individuals with learning disability (Crawford, 2012). In this respect, Respondent N (official) argued: "I did not say they are not important, because they are extremely important, but here in Saudi Arabia vocational training centres are very poor in every respect. That is why they will have to be completely overhauled in order to be effective and recognized by companies in Saudi Arabia." He further asserted the drawbacks of the prevailing vocational training centres in the Kingdom:

First of all, they lack well qualified specialists in the various professions and even those professions have to be in high demand in the job market. Secondly, they lack new buildings and well-equipped workshops for training. Thirdly, they have to be under the supervision of the Ministry of Education or a given university in order to be accredited and recognized here in Saudi Arabia.

In this respect, Respondent M (official) highlighted the absence of adequate awareness among the people regarding the vocational centres: "I asked many intellectually disabled individuals about what they do after finishing secondary school and the answer were always the same, we sit around the house and do nothing as there is no university, institution or training centre to accept us".

Respondent K (parent) further highlighted the drawbacks of the training facilities:

I think that vocational training centres in Saudi Arabia need a lot of work. For example, the buildings are too old, the specialists or trainers are unqualified, as most of them do not hold any specialized degrees or even have adequate experience to train the students. Also, Riyadh vocational training centres are unaccredited and many companies in both private and public centres do not even recognize its diploma.

These opinions were supported by Respondent J (parent), who highlighted that:

“However, I remember that the previous vocational rehabilitation centre, where my son used to be trained, was very primitive, with ancient buildings, zero equipment and obsolete professions, even the specialists were not well-trained”.

This respondent further elaborated:

Before my son Yasser joined the vocational rehabilitation centre I hoped for the best and thought that he would find a job immediately upon his graduation, particularly since some of the officials at the centre asserted that to me. Unfortunately, however, two years have passed since Yasser's graduation and we are still looking.

These findings can be supported with the help of the relevant literature that reveals that the limited number of such vocational programmes for the students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia and the limited capacity of each programme creates difficulties for a majority of students with multiple disabilities to gain optimum benefit from such programmes (Alnahdi, 2012). It has also been assessed that presently there are limited programmes that offer vocational rehabilitation for the students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia and are operated under the direction of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which restricts the potential of the education system in the country to facilitate positive and successful transition (McDonnell and Hardman, 2009; Aldabas, 2015).

On the basis of these findings, it can be identified that the facilitates offered by the vocational training centres in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are highly inefficient and fail to support the individuals with learning disabilities in undertaking an effective transition from school or training to work.

Rq3: What are the factors ease or complicate this transition?

The findings of the interviews also revealed a number of key factors that influence the employment of the individuals with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The research found that media and information technology can serve to be crucial in facilitating the employment of the individuals with learning disability. In this respect, the Respondent A (director) stated:

The media could play a key role in solving this problem, since many senior government officials are not aware of the magnitude of this problem and the number of intellectually disabled individuals who are looking for work. Technology is a secondary rather than a primary factor in assisting the subject in their job search.

Respondent B (supervisor) supported these findings: “Technology can always be a positive factor in all fields, always provided that is properly used.”

The respondent further revealed:

I know a lot of electronic websites that provide considerable assistance to the disabled people in finding proper employment, such as Wasata network and the Saudi network. So, such sites are a valuable asset in the employment of disabled people, enabling them to apply for work online, thus saving them considerable effort and money.

Respondent D (specialist) stated: “Sure, we can incorporate various technologies into our training programmes. There have already been individual efforts to set up electronic websites to help the intellectually disabled people find work.”

However, the findings also highlight the shortcomings in the application of the technology. In this context, Respondent D argued that:

There have already been individual efforts to set up electronic websites to help the intellectually disabled person find work, but they are just limited individual efforts, while the government, which uses such technology for the employment of non-disabled individuals, as in the case of the human resource fund and the huge e-employment projects, unfortunately does not see the disabled persons as worthy of such effort!

These findings were further elaborated by Respondent E (specialist), who stated:

Dependence on the scientific research in this field is considered an important factor involved in this matter. The problem is that we in Saudi Arabia do not really put much stock by scientific research nor

do we believe in its importance for the development of special education programmes as in the more advanced countries.

Moreover, the attitudes of people in relation to religious and cultural beliefs and

their influence on the employment opportunities of individuals with learning

disabilities play a role in this aspect. In this regard, Respondent A (director) stated:

There is another factor, namely the general attitude of people in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia towards intellectually disabled people. I can tell you through first-hand experience that most people look upon the intellectually disabled people as objects of pity and compassion, thinking that they are incapable of work.

Respondent D (specialist) stated:

Yes, there is the attitude of some people towards intellectually disabled people. I speak out of my experience in this programme and in other schools as well. I remember that my intellectually disabled students were extremely happy with their interaction with the non-disabled students. With time, they even became good friends. That contributed in no small measure to changing the attitude of non-disabled students towards the intellectually disabled students in a positive way. I think that if the intellectually disabled people are given a similar opportunity at work, they will change and improve any negative attitude towards them.

The respondent further highlighted that:

Saudis are mostly good and religious people, who usually look positively upon employment of the intellectually disabled. Rarely, however, you may find people who are against such employment. Naturally, this attitude runs counter to the precepts of true Islam, which urge Muslims to care for disabled individuals and help them fit into society. Also, while the media in the more developed countries of the world played a positive and effective role in pleading the cause of the disabled person, Saudi media have not served the interests of the intellectually disabled people as effectively.

Respondent D (specialist) further extended the role of society as a crucial factor:

“There is also the trust/belief factor. I mean, society at large has to trust and

believe in the capabilities of the disabled people and that they can

work effectively in many sectors if given half a chance. There is, as well, the

school/instructor factor.”

In addition, the findings highlight the ways in which the personal skills of the individuals with disabilities can play a significant role in enabling them to seek

employment. Respondent B (supervisor), in this regard, stated:

Enhancing the self-confidence of intellectually disabled people to better interact with their community; I see some parents already adopting an effective approach to enhance their children's self-confidence by depending on them in the performance of a lot of household chores, while treating them as human beings and showing respect for their wishes.

In this respect, Respondent A (director) highlighted that:

The instructor plays a key, yet largely unsung, role in caring for the student, and coordinating with the family, while at the same time focusing on the development of such values as personal hygiene, respect, self-confidence, independence and free choice. These are perhaps the most important factors in building an individual capable of getting and holding a job.

The literature in this respect states that, in order to give students agency and commitment in their post-school trajectory, it is important that they are given a more central role in decision-making about further education, employment-based training or employment (Beyer and Kaehne, 2008). However, the findings also highlight the role of the government in implementing and executing the laws to facilitate the employment of the individuals with learning disabilities. In related to this, Respondent A highlighted: “The state has not been remiss in enacting laws that assist the intellectually disabled people in the various phases of rehabilitation and through the phases of employment and subsequent career. However, the problem lies in the lack of activation of existing laws.”

These findings are supported by the literature that states that the social model of disability also includes political factors that may affect the sufferer markedly. The political factors may include civil rights or movements related to people (Anastasiou and Kauffman, 2013).

Rq4: What are the benefits of work for these individuals and for wider society?

In response to the questions asked concerning the potential advantages of the employment of people with learning disability, Respondent I, the parent of a disabled person residing in Eastern Riyadh, stated that: “Young people at that age are full of energy and they are fully capable of helping both society and the government in more ways than one and I want society to see those skills and capabilities.”

In support of this, Respondent N, Director of Wasata electronic website for assisting disabled people finding work, quoted that:

The main benefits are the ability to earn money through self-reliance. Employment also provides the intellectually disabled people with a good opportunity to mingle with other members of society, making up for the long periods of isolation from society, whether at home or in special schools, also a chance to make decisions in favour of fellow disabled.

This respondent further supported the fact that the benefits are not limited to the respondents, but they further extend to the family, company, and society at large.

In this respect, Respondent N (official) further stated that:

Certainly, companies do benefit as well. I work at a company, and if that company did not benefit from me, it would not have promoted me and increased my salary. Indeed, it would not have hired me in the first place. My family also benefited from my employment, and lastly, the state also benefits, as once the intellectually disabled person gets hired, it stops paying his family disability allowance, thus, increasing savings and decreasing unemployment.

The views of both the respondents are reinforced by the data and information presented in the literature review chapter. The involvement of people with learning disability other members of the society helps in enhancing the communication skill of other individuals who can offer them multiple benefits in the workplace. In consideration of this, it is evident that the involvement of intellectually disabled people with other children is beneficial for society as it makes communication effective, which is often considered the major challenge for disabled people in the workplace (Pandey and Agarwal, 2013).

In relation to the responses received for the potential advantages of the employment of individuals with learning disability, Respondent A (rehabilitation centre's director) stated that: "The main advantage is relieving the pressure on the families and training programmes for the disabled individuals and changing the negative attitude of society at large towards the disabled person."

Respondent B (supervisor) also supported the perceptions of Respondent A by quoting that:

The most important advantage, which I have come to observe first hand at the centre, is that the intellectually disabled person, once employed, becomes more self-confident and more receptive to new social interaction experiences. They develop a stronger sense of responsibility and more self-satisfaction, not to mention the financial advantages. I know of certain underprivileged families, currently being supported by their gainfully employed intellectually disabled son or daughter.

These views triangulate positively with findings in the literature review, where it was noted that Cooney et al., (2006) found that the negative attitudes commonly held by people towards the employment of disabled individuals are embedded and that new approaches need to be adopted in order to provide a positive work environment for individuals with learning disability.

In relation to advantages of the employment of disabled people,

Respondent L, the Ministry of Labour's disability employment officer stated that:

I think there are a large number of advantages in the employment of intellectually disabled people. I think that the employment of these people will be beneficial for the economy of the country because it will lower the unemployment rates and help in increasing Saudiization in many professional areas. This will help in alleviating the financial burden of the state because the authorities will not have to pay the unemployment allowance to intellectually disabled individuals. The employment of intellectually disabled people will be beneficial for the state as companies will be liable for paying them salaries not the government.

In addition to this, Respondent M (company official) stated that:

Apart from the disabled themselves, I think that their employment will be advantageous for their families. This is because some families of disabled people have more than one disabled individual and their financial condition is very weak because of which they need money and more resources for living a comfortable life. After this, I think society will also benefit from the employment of intellectually disabled people because this will decrease the unemployment rate in the state, as well as decrease dependency non-Saudis.

Moreover, Respondent O (supervisor in Wasata e-website) stated that:

I think, from the employment of intellectually disabled people, society will benefit from it to a great extent. I think that their employment is beneficial for the companies as they feel blessed to have such hard-working employees and their tireless activities. Indeed, their employment is not only beneficial for the society and for the companies but also advantageous for themselves. They will become more independent and more capable of providing financial support and protection to their families by fulfilling their desires. The working of the intellectually disabled individuals will prohibit negative personal and social repercussions resulting in improving the society of the state.

After presenting the analysis of all the participants, the table below shows the crucial themes that have been elicited and the research questions related to these themes.

Table.4.3: research questions and the crucial themes

Main Themes	RQ addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lack of coordination between various entities</i> • <i>Lack of awareness among parents of the rights of their intellectually disabled children</i> • <i>Lack of awareness and poor education of families</i> • <i>Absence of tools and equipment to provide effective training</i> 	<p><i>What are the difficulties faced by individuals with learning disabilities in the transition from school/ training programme to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lack of instructors and trainers and their need for development</i> • <i>Neglect by society</i> • <i>Lack of support from society and community</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vocational training centres are very poor in every respect</i> • <i>Lack of well qualified specialists in the various professions</i> • <i>Unqualified trainers and specialists</i> • <i>Lack of control by the Ministry of Education or a given university</i> • <i>Lack of recognition by private and public companies</i> • <i>Absence of adequate infrastructure</i> • <i>Certain training programmes for the students with intellectual disabilities</i> • <i>Training and eventual employment to our students</i> • <i>Considerable measures and efforts are being made on a regular basis for the improvement of these programmes</i> • <i>Change and modernize our programmes</i> • <i>Trainers in those professions need to be specialized and experienced</i> 	<p><i>What kind of programmes support them in this transition?</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Media in the more developed countries of the world played a positive and effective role in arguing the cause of the disabled</i> • <i>Incorporation of technology in training programmes</i> • <i>Electronic websites that provide considerable assistance to the disabled in finding proper employment</i> • <i>Attitude of people in the KSA towards intellectually disabled people</i> • <i>Most people look upon the intellectually disabled person as an object of pity and compassion</i> • <i>Lack of faith in the abilities of intellectually disabled persons</i> • <i>Self-confidence of intellectually disabled persons to work</i> • <i>Independence and free choice</i> • <i>Execution of the laws and programmes</i> • <i>Commitment from the government</i> 	<p><i>What are the factors that ease or complicate their transition?</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Young people are full of energy</i> • <i>Young people are fully capable of helping society</i> • <i>Increase the ability to earn money through self-reliance</i> • <i>Enables intellectually disabled people with a good opportunity to mingle with other members of society</i> 	<p><i>What are the benefits of work for these individuals and for wider society?</i></p>

- *Prevents the isolation of intellectually disabled persons*
- *Increase in per capita income*
- *Higher savings and decrease in unemployment*
- *No need to pay disability allowance*
- *Alleviate the financial burden of the state*
- *Helps in changing the negative attitude of society at large towards intellectually disabled people*
- *Stronger sense of responsibility*
- *Generates higher self-satisfaction*

Discussion

My interviews revealed that lack of proper planning, the absence of care among family members for the careers of their disabled children, and the desire for the monthly allowance exacerbate difficulties for individuals with learning disabilities in transition from school/vocational rehabilitation centre to work in Saudi Arabia. These findings corroborate those from the literature, such as those from Ware (2014). Concerning the difficulties encountered by individuals with learning disabilities in this transition, as per the postulates of the educational model, there are chances that an intellectually disabled person can overcome their learning disabilities as soon as there is effective coordination among the major agencies and parents; society at large should also support these individuals, as argued by Deiner (2009).

In this respect, the findings suggest that individuals in society generally should be able to communicate effectively with individuals with learning difficulties, accepting their

participation in community programmes and activities. On the basis of these findings, it can be asserted that parents should be able confidently to send their intellectually disabled children to schools/ training programme and discuss the issues faced by them and/or their children with the trainers at rehabilitation centres or individuals running employment agencies on regular basis. Further, forming groups and associations to seek help and guidance from the community welfare workers and the government can also be helpful (Deiner, 2009).

As a contrast, the UK government has designed a programme for integrating assistive technologies for helping intellectually impaired individuals to increase their communication and connectivity with society at large (Gov.UK., 2017). The education system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also offers middle and high school programmes for students with learning disabilities and considers them to be highly significant in implementing and providing transition services (Crawford, 2012). But concerning the initiation of programmes helpful for individuals with learning disability in preparing for the transition, there continues to be an acute absence of services in Saudi Arabia of programmes for transitioning from school to work, while vocational rehabilitation programmes are the only initiatives that offer these facilities (Aldabas, 2015). The findings from the literature review highlight that there are a number of acute shortcomings, such as shortage of skilled trainers and unawareness among parents and at the vocational training centres. These shortcomings act as a barrier to effective delivery of the desired facilities to those with learning disabilities in seeking employment (Alnahdi, 2012).

A holistic analysis

Using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) eco-systems model, one can see that resistances to successful school/employment transition occur at a number of levels, representing the articulation of entrenched attitudes at a number of strata within society. From the

microsystem level with the individuals in the family and the school, to the schools and employers themselves with attitudes of staff (ie in the mesosystem), to the systems implemented by local administrators and national government and lawmakers (macrosystem), the thinking, expectations and beliefs that are historically embedded have served to inhibit the introduction of fruitful practice. The attitudes that are held raise doubts about the capabilities of persons with disabilities.

At the meso- and macro-systems levels, employing persons with disabilities requires special attention to their additional needs, in the form of assistive technology and medical facilities. Political factors, such as civil rights or government policies related to intellectually disabled people also influence their employment because these factors could help in creating supporting policies that would encourage organisations to recruit people with learning disabilities (Beyer and Kaehne, 2008). At the macrosystem level, overlooking the potential contribution of people with disability to the economy generally carries its own costs. There are many potential advantages of the employment of intellectually disabled individuals for the country, society and families as well as for the individuals themselves. For instance, Cooney et al. (2006) have argued that the employment of individuals with learning disability in the UK has helped the nation in reducing its expenditure on welfare and enabling individuals to become economically active and to contribute to economic success.

CHAPTER 5: CASE STUDY

Introduction

A case study is used in research to describe an actual situation, which helps in evaluating a problem or in decision-making. Case studies are used in research to provide answers to the research problem (Stake, 2013). The main advantage of including case studies is that it helps in identifying specific issues with respect to a specific situation. Furthermore, case studies also help in capturing the complexities of the situations that occur in real life, which provide in-depth information regarding the research problem (Swanborn, 2010; Thomas, 2017).

In this research study, two cases of the experiences of individuals with learning disabilities were analysed. In order to gather the information from the two participants, interviews, documentation and observation were employed as research methods. The aim was to gather in-depth information regarding the actuality of the process of getting a job and to identify the programmes that might smooth transition to work.

In order to select two participants for the study, help from the Ministry of Labour, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, was requested. In response, the Ministry of Labour conducted introductory phone calls to the parents and explained the background of the study. The Ministry suggested 12 families, all of whom I contacted. From these I selected two families, on the basis of their willingness to participate and the potential access thereby afforded. The two participants are referred to as A and B, in order to maintain confidentiality throughout the study. In this regard, comparison between the two cases was addressed to enrich the study with the particular experiences of the two individuals. The first case study is based on the life of A, who is 20 years old and suffers from a learning disability. He lives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and has three brothers and four sisters. Football and video games his major

interests, along with drawing pictures, visiting the supermarket and talking to his relatives and his brother's friend. His father works in the Saudi military, while his mother is a housekeeper. He was educated at Al-Nidam primary school, which was an inclusive school where he learnt basic maths, science and Arabic language. He attended middle school in East Riyadh and studied there for three years. A later graduated from the vocational rehabilitation centre after 1 year (see Appendix 4, page 361).

The second case study is focused on B, aged 23 years, who suffers from a learning disability. B comes from the area in Riyadh called Al-hamra. He is the eldest in the family and has two daughters. His father is a graduate in Arabic language but could not find a suitable job and hence has opened a place to repair cars and is doing well. His mother holds a certificate in high school and is a home maker. B does not have a job and assists his father at work. B has studied in a model inclusive school and completed six grades and could improve his speech skills with the help of a pronunciation specialist. This was followed by 3 grades in middle school and a course in language from Jordan that he completed in 3 months. He later registered for a professional skill programme in Al-Sharjah for 8 months (Appendix 4, page 371).

In this chapter, case study analysis is performed on the basis of the three semi-structured interviews conducted individually with the two participants of the study. Based on the interview findings, thematic analysis is conducted in this chapter, and their respective findings are presented. A summary of the case study analysis is also included in this chapter.

Comparative perspective

The comparison between the two cases revealed the attitudes of non-disabled employees and people in public toward disabled employees; the second case of this study quit his work because of the negative attitudes he encountered. In particular, the case study assisted me to picture the trajectories and processes that led my participants to work at several places in the Saudi environment. It helped to clarify the main factors that helped them to secure their jobs (rehabilitation centre, assistance from ministries or his family), or to be unsuccessful.

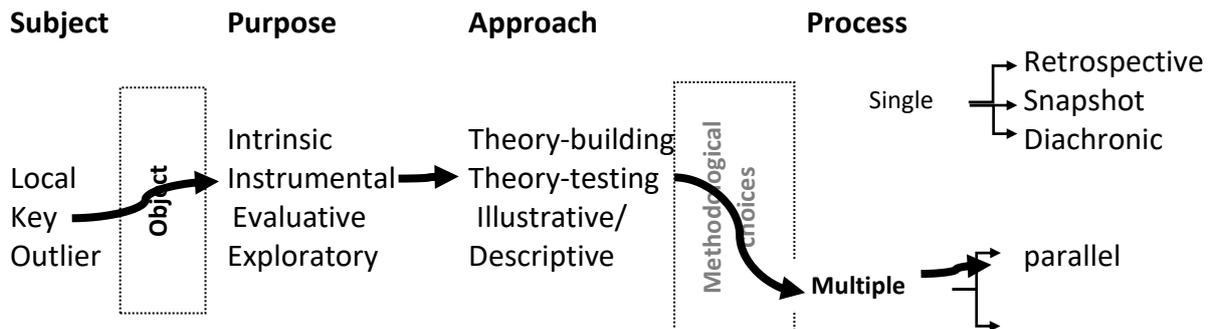
Thus, after investigating these two cases (the first, who never found a job, and the second who had had a job previously), I had a chance to look deeply into the common difficulties that faced both cases while searching for a job and to compare their preparations and programmes in transitioning to work. I mentioned earlier that one of the cases had been trained earlier in a United Emirates rehabilitation centre, while the other was trained in a Saudi centre. Consequently, this comparison added more value to my study as it helped me to distinguish between the roles of both centres in preparing these individuals for work, as well as to look for the positive and negative aspects of the Saudi rehabilitation centres.

Thematic analysis for case study A

To work on the study, I employed Thomas's (2015) typology of case study construction, which separates the case study subject (namely, the individuals involved) from the object (namely, understanding the process of transition), and proceeds to describe how a case study is constructed through attention to Purpose, Approach and Process, as shown in Figure.3.2. Thus, in this case study, the Purpose was instrumental (to contribute to understanding school/work transition), the Approach was theory-testing (since key ideas were formulated from the literature review and the interviews, and the Process was of multiple (ie two) case studies

conducted in parallel (ie not connected with each other). The heavy arrowed line in Figure.5.1. shows this trajectory, showing also at which stage methodological choices were made.

Figure.5.1: The study of two individuals transitioning to work from school



Themes were drawn on the basis of the ideas developed from the literature review and the interviews. All themes were tested on the basis of the following codes: personality, training programme, factors affecting the transition, and challenges with employment. These themes represent the key questions as shown in Table 5.2. The rest of this section discusses the themes in the light of the findings derived from the three interviews, observations and documentation for case study A (see Appendix 4).

Table 5.1: Interview Questions

Case Study A	
<u>First Interview</u>	
The Personality Status	
Social Status	
Medical Status	
Education Status	
Points of Strength	
Weakness	
His Interests and Desires	
<u>Second Interview</u>	
What do you like/dislike to do?	

In which activities are you good?
How did you know to do that?
What are your future goals and dreams?
Why do you want to drive a car?
What are the difficulties that you faced while you are looking for a job?
So, in this centre, did you have any training program related to work in vocational rehabilitation centre?
Did these training programs in vocational centre assist you to prepare to your next level after school?
What type of training/classes did you have to make you choose what do you want?
Do you think time that you spent on training programs was sufficient?
What do you think about the good training programs in these centres?
What do you suggest making your transition to work easier?
Who is responsible about your unemployment?
Do you think your high school/ vocational centre teachers trained you some effective skills related to work experience?
Where do you like to work in government or private sector? Why?
Did you apply for any work?
Why did you refuse?
When do you find a work, do you think you will be useful for the community, How?
Do you agree to see me after three months so that I can know your updates?
<u>Third Interview</u>
Did you find work during the three months?
Why you did not agree with them?
What about other companies?
So, what do you do now?
Do you think that you can work there for a long time?
Do you like to work there?
What about internet Website, did you try to apply for jobs on these Websites?

Case Study B

<u>First Interview</u>
The Personality Status
Social Status
Medical Status
Education Status
Points of Strength
Weakness
His Interests and Desires
<u>Second Interview</u>
What do you like/dislike to do?
In which activities are you good?
How did you know to do that?
What are your future goals and dreams?
Why do you want to open a coffee/ restaurant?

What are the difficulties that you faced while you are looking for a job?
So, what you suggest for this coordination?
Did these training programs in high schools /vocational centre assist you to prepare to your next level after school?
What about your friends in the rehabilitation centre in United Emirates, do you think that they found work? Why?
So, they can choose what kind of training programs and after that they work in the same position?
So, you chose to make the wood stuff?
Do you like it, I mean it was your decision?
Why did not you apply for this work in Saudi Arabia?
What do you think about the good training programs in Saudi centres?
What do you suggest making your transition to work easier?
Who is responsible for your unemployment?
Do you think your high school/ vocational centre teachers trained you soeffective skills related to working experience?
Where do you like to work in the government or the private sector? Why?
Did you apply for any work?
Did you make the interviews for these jobs?
What you think about these interviews?
How did you know about these jobs?
When was that?
Why do not you like to work as a receptionist?
When you find work, do you think you will be useful for the community, How?
Do you agree to see me after three months so that I can know your updates?
Third Interview
Are you working now?
So, what is your plan now?
You told me before that you do not like to deal with people in the mall or supermarket, what about this truck you have to contact with people?
Do like to work in other activities because you trained before to do other stuff
So, if you had trained properly on other activities you might like to do another thing
Do you think that there is a relationship between the training programs in rehabilitation centres and work?
Do you think assistive technology such as searching on the Website helped you?
So, I hope after four months you will open your coffee truck, did you choose the place?
Can you compare from your experience between difficulties faced by you in both after finishing your vocational rehabilitation centre and your own business when you open the food truck

1-Themes relating to the participant's personality

- *Strengths*
- *Weaknesses*
- *Interests*

In the interview, several of the strengths, weaknesses and interests of the first participant were identified with the help of the participant and his father. The respondent's father stated that:

A is good at dealing with money, for example, buying things from supermarkets, shopping in stores or paying in a restaurant. A is efficient in reading and writing basic words, and he can also communicate with other people when given a chance. Some other strengths of A are moving from one place to another, accomplishing tasks that involve physical activity and deciding on his own about his likes and dislikes.

He also added that: "A can work at places like coffee shops, restaurants, public parks, the library, and shopping stores."

Respondent's father also stated that:

A cannot use public transport, cannot start a conversation, cannot work at places that require high technological skills, cannot drive, and he is lazy. Some of the desires of my son are to play football, swim, read stories, play video games, draw, organise things at home, and buy things for his mother.

Participant A stated:

I like to play with my friends, watch TV, read and listen to stories, buy things for my home and I also like to stay at home. I am good at organising stuff, guarding and carrying stuff. I developed these skills by the training and helping at home.

Furthermore, A stated that:

My future goals and dreams include finding work near to my home, working with people who respect my disability and ability and driving a car. I want to drive a car because my district is very small and far away from the city and I do not think I will find work near to my home, so I just want to drive a car to my work when I find it.

2-Themes relating to training programme

- *Inappropriate training*
- *Unqualified specialists*
- *Lack of equipment*
- *Transportation*

According to participant A: “Training in my rehabilitation centre was not good because there were some businesses...that I believed I can do them...whereas if I had good training to do them...”

Further, participant A stated that:

We went to Banda supermarket (rehabilitation centre) just one time to train there and I learned about organising stuff. It was easy and nice work, but in the rehabilitation centre we just draw and learn about computer skills, which were very hard. The training programme did not assist in preparing us for the next level after school. These training programmes did not help me in choosing what I wanted to do, but my father said that you do not have to work in any place that you do not like.

Participant A explained that: “Training programmes were not sufficient and should have trained about how we work in the coffee, the restaurant, or stores; they should have taken us at least once a week to train in these places.”

Regarding specialist qualifications in these rehabilitation centres, participant A further commented:

They were not qualified. Our rehabilitation centre was old, and it was like an old school, there was no equipment or facilities to train us in any skills that would meet the standard of real work. In addition, transportation was very poor, so it was difficult to me to attend the class every day.

Regarding the importance of vocational rehabilitation centres, participant A observed:

These centres are very important to prepare us for our future work, but the government should develop them by forcing the private sector

to take control of these centres and requiring them to provide special trainers for each skill as well as offering places where trainees can learn effectively and use new equipment.

3-Themes relating to factors affecting the transition

- *People's attitudes*
- *E-websites for assisting disabled people*
- *Lack of awareness of rights*

With regard to factors that play a role in the transition of disabled people from rehabilitation centres to workplace, participant A suggested that:

For making the transition easier, it is important to change people's attitude towards people with special needs, People in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia still do not believe that we have the ability to undertake some kinds of work. Indeed, some people look at us sarcastically, while others display pity and sadness.

Participant A explained that: "Even chief executives in some companies underestimate our abilities and do not respect us in the pre-employment interview; for example, some of them when I did my interviews just asked my father and they do not respect my feelings and wishes."

When participant A asked about the factors that smooth the transition to work, he stated that:

They should create internet programmes that ease our search for a job; this is a good idea as it helps us to choose the employment and apply for it from our home, but the problem is that in a huge city like Riyadh there are just one or two E-websites that assist disabled people to find work, and that is not enough compared to the large number of people who are looking for jobs.

Participant A further complained:

Both my father and brother did not know what they have to do after my graduation date. We did everything, and we followed the instructors as supervisors who work in the Ministry of Labour said. I think the problem is in this ministry as they cost our government a lot of money and they do not cooperate with companies that offer jobs. Also, my family needs help with our rights as we do not know where we should go after two years of unemployment.

In addition, this participant reported:

Maybe transportation and the lack of job opportunities are responsible for unemployment. I would like to work in the government if there is an opportunity, but the private sector offers more jobs and helps disabled people more than the government. As you see now there are people who are qualified, and they do not have any disabilities without jobs, how about us? It is really difficult for disabled people to find suitable work.

4-Themes relating to challenges in transition to work

- *Few job opportunities*
- *Staying at home with a salary*
- *Low salary*
- *Economic crisis*

With regard to addressing the challenges faced by individuals transitioning to work, participant A stated that:

The work for disabled people is inequitable; even if there are some companies that offer us jobs, it is difficult to know about them or their offers. However, the available jobs offer a low salary and the workplace is far away. My father and brother are very busy therefore they cannot take me every day to my work.

When the participant was asked about the job opportunities, he added

I applied for work, and I went with my father to a couple of companies, and they usually asked for the file and phone number, so that they can call in future. Indeed, two companies have contacted us, and they said you could stay at home, and we will give you a salary, but I refused. I refused as I want to secure my life and I do not want to depend on anyone, and if I stay at home with the salary, I will never have experience of any work and also, I will never make any new friends.

Participant A explained further:

I received a call from the Ministry of Labour, which gave me an address of the company. They asked me to go there, so I went to them, and they did an interview. Then they said we would give you 800\$ and it is up to you...they added... you can receive the salary, and you do not have to attend, just stay at home, and give us your bank details, and we will send the money monthly. I disagreed because first the salary is not enough, and second, I want to attend the work as a non-disabled person. I also went to Panda Supermarket, but they said that they have an economic crisis and if there is any chance in future, they would call me.

More contextual information was provided by participant A:

I work with my cousin; he has a fruit and vegetable store that is close to my home, so every day I go there and help him from 9am to 6 pm and he gives me around \$1500 monthly. I do not know if I can work there for a long time or not. It is good, but this is not what I want because I think it is not an official work ... My brother helped me to apply for work with several companies, and they replied, asking me for further information. I know two of my friends who have intellectual disabilities and they applied through this Website they call (Wasatah); after two months this network helped them to find jobs in Tamimi's supermarket, with a good salary and they are very happy with their jobs; I hope I can work in the same place.

The themes as elaborated by 'A' are summarised in Table .5.2.

Table.5.2: Case Study A

Themes	Addressing RQ
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengths ▪ Weaknesses ▪ Interests 	Factors affecting the transition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation ▪ Inappropriate training ▪ Unqualified specialists ▪ Lack of equipment 	The role of training programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People's attitudes ▪ E-websites for assisting disabled people ▪ Lack of awareness of the rights 	Factors affecting the transition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Few job opportunities ▪ Staying at home with a salary ▪ Low salary ▪ Economic crisis 	Difficulties in transition to work

Discussion

Participant A has a mild intellectual disability due to which he faces difficulty in using public transportation, starting a conversation, driving a car and working in companies that require high technological skills. However, he can deal with money effectively and can read and write basic words. He can easily move from one place to another with the help of the training programme, and he is a confident person who can work easily at coffee shops, the library, the post office or restaurants. Among his desires and interests, it was identified that the participant likes to play football and swim. He likes to read stories and organise things at home. He is also interested in buying things to help his mother and enjoys drawing pictures. With the help of training, he came to know that he is good at organising and carrying. His dream is to drive a car and thinks that people should respect him for his abilities and disabilities.

There are certain difficulties that he faced while looking for a job, such as the fact that work for disabled people is limited, and it is difficult to hear about the employment offers from companies. Furthermore, some companies offer a low salary, and the workplaces are far away, which makes it difficult for him to travel. Lastly, the training programme was not felt to be satisfactory, so he was not able to work in some businesses. The findings of the interviews also show that the training programme did not facilitate a choice of employment and did not provide effective training for work. The training programme should help disabled people by training them how to work at coffee shops, restaurants, and stores. Moreover, they should also help regarding use of the internet to browse for options.

The findings show that transport facilities, people's attitude toward a disabled person and fewer job opportunities can be the reasons behind their unemployment. The participant showed his interest in the government sector, but the private sector helps disabled people more than the government. After applying for several jobs, the participant identified that

the companies usually ask for the file and phone number, in order to call the candidate later. Further, some of the companies offer a job and ask the candidate to stay at home and take a monthly salary. The participant wants to work in the company's environment in order to make new friends and secure his life.

Analysis of the interview data revealed that the participant browsed for two jobs, for which he was offered \$800 for staying at home and in the second job he was rejected due to the economic crisis of the company. The interview data also revealed that he is working with his cousin and earning \$1500 monthly, but the job is not official work. After searching the internet with his brother, he wants to work at a supermarket with a good salary as do his friends with learning disabilities.

It was observed that this participant has self-confidence and a desire for freedom of choice. It was clear during the interviews that this person was eager to work and to make new friends; also, he was a believer in the electronic sites and that technology plays a vital role in getting jobs, but he needs help to use these tools.

Thematic analysis for case study B

As with 'A', all themes were developed on the basis of the following codes:

personality, training programme, factors affecting the transition and challenges

with the employment. These themes represent the key questions as shown in

Table.5.3; while the rest of this section discusses the themes in light of the findings

derived from three interviews, observations and documentation for case study B (see Appendix 4).

1-Themes relating to the participant's personality

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Interests

Some of the strengths and weaknesses of participant B were identified in the interviews with the help of the participant's father. The respondent's father stated that:

B can read and write easily with some help and can also use simple computer programmes. He can communicate with people in a suitable manner, repair small issues in cars, cook food and make hot drinks. He can also make toys, tables and chairs from the wood with some help, and he can easily do official work that includes organising and printing papers. He can make his own decisions; he has the ability to use taxis and walk from a distant area and can build a tent.

In the opinion of the respondent's father:

Weaknesses of B include, he loses control when he is in crowded places, eats too much and does not like sport. He cannot stay in the same position for a long time; for instance, he previously worked three times and this work was pleasant, but he likes to change from time to time. He gets angry very fast and does not like to listen to advice. Also, he spends money very fast and buys lots of toys, computer stuff, phones and clothes.

In the opinion of participant B:

I like to contact friends by using social media programmes, such as WhatsApp and Twitter, play video games, cook food, use simple computer programmes, such as PowerPoint and read books. Further, I do not like to repair cars and work at supermarkets or in a bookstore. I am good at cooking and making hot drinks, which I learned from my mother and sisters. I have seen a person with the same disability from United States who became the owner of a new restaurant, and that was my dream: to open a coffee shop or a restaurant in Riyadh, and I hope it will be near to my home. This is because I enjoy being in these places and I want to make money like my father.

2-Themes relating to training programme

- The important role of training programmes in making a transition to work
- The weakness of the government's role in recruiting graduates from these centres
- The shortage of equipment and qualified trainers
- Lack of development of vocational rehabilitation centres

Participant B stated that:

High schools in Riyadh were not beneficial in preparing for next level after school, except some sessions about using computers. However, when I was in the vocational rehabilitation centres in the United Emirates there were effective programmes that helped me after school such as how I can kindly deal with people and can make small talk... They trained me in some office work and work in stores. My friends found work after rehabilitation centre in the United Emirates, because the government of United Emirates forces the companies to hire them, especially after they finish their training successfully. There are four kinds of programme at training, making stuff from the wood, office work, monitoring and inspection, and computer programmes.

Participant B also commented:

I did not apply for my chosen work in Saudi Arabia because in Saudi Arabia it is different as people here do not believe that people with disabilities can do this work. There is a requirement for equipment, qualified trainers and proper training programme in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to that he added: “A proper training in professions is required in the Saudi labour market; it is considered as a main step in getting job”.

Further, the participant B stated that: “There is a strong relationship between the training programmes and rehabilitation centres, as in the private sector...if we want to work we have to be trained”.

In respect to the link between training programme and employment, respondent B observed:

I am sure that if training centres were developed in Saudi Arabia, they would help us to find work more easily as these centres are the bridge that leads disabled people to work. Unfortunately, in our country we suffer from these centres as they do not meet the standard of an effective rehabilitation centre compared to other countries such as the United Emirates.

3-Themes relating to factors affecting the transition

- Confidence and freedom of choice
- Lack of faith in the ability of disabled people
- Excessive protection from the family

- Lack of salaries and poor transportation
- The role of E-websites in searching for jobs

Regarding the factors that ease the transition to work Participant B stressed that:

“We need more confidence to socialize with people in public places so that we can prove to them our ability and achievement. However, most people in Saudi Arabia still look at us as a burden and we need our families to take care of us all the time.”

Regarding freedom of choice for disabled people, participant B said that:

Officials and parents must make us decide and determine our fate as I have friends with intellectual disabilities who cannot move one step without taking permission from their parents and they usually force them to do lots of things that those parents want without respecting their son’s feelings. My situation is different as my family respect and believe in my abilities, and my father usually asks me to do what I like to do especially about my future career.

Other factors that may affect job opportunities was explained by participant B:

“Lack of salaries and poor transportation might be the biggest obstacles due to overcrowding and lack of respect for traffic regulations as I faced these problems during my research for work and I still face them”.

When asked about E-websites that assist disabled people in applying and finding work, participant B responded:

Websites helped me to contact workers with disabilities and they gave me some advice. Also, I can apply for some jobs in a short time and with little effort. I worked before in companies and my brother used this E-website to get me into those jobs. It was helpful and easier than going to the ministry and applying for jobs.

Furthermore, in the view of the participant B,

Government or the companies may be responsible for unemployment, as they do not trust us. Another problem is finding jobs, but they are far away from my city. I do not think I can work in the government sector because I tried before, and it was very hard, and I need a strong intercession. I applied for Starbucks, Dunkin donut coffee stores in Riyadh and McDonald's restaurant, so I am waiting for them. My father has also applied for me to work in hospitals, telecom

companies and hotels as a receptionist. I would not like to work as a receptionist because a lot of people come to these places and most of them are upset about the services, and they will not respect me.

4-Themes relating to employment and challenges faced during the transition

- No opportunities
- Lack of government assistance
- Poor co-ordination between the entities
- Bad treatment from employers
- People's attitudes to disabled individuals

Participant B outlined his views:

There are certain difficulties that I faced while looking for a job. First, there are no opportunities because most companies do not apply the rights for disabled people and the government sector does not provide employment for disabled people so that they can encourage the private sector to employ these people. Secondly, the negative attitudes to disabled people and the shortage of the coordinating between institutions that provide training programmes and companies that provide the employments are considered as other obstacles. As a suggestion, I want that Ministry of Labour to coordinate with the companies that are willing to hire disabled people.

From the perspective of participant B, the challenges facing disabled people in finding jobs are summarised in these points as he indicated:

In order to make the transition easier to work, we have to improve our vocational rehabilitation centres and make them useful...the government should educate all people in Saudi Arabia about our disabilities so that they understand what we can and cannot do. The Ministry of Education and labour have to work with each other to create a project that includes all companies that could hire people with disabilities. Ministries should monitor and follow up disabled people after finishing training and figure out the reasons why they could not find work.

In respect to the reasons that made the respondent leave his previous work, participant B explained:

As my previous jobs were in public places, I had to face people every day; unfortunately, most people who came to these places did not respect me and they were trying to make fun of me. Furthermore, some of my co-workers were unkind by asking me, for example, to cover their duties as well as frequently asking for money.

About the future career of the participant, he stated:

Currently, I go with my father to his business, and one month ago I was contacted by the owner of the local coffee shop, and he asked me to meet him for an interview. The owner asked me to clean inside and not to interact with the people. My father said to me that I would help you to make your own business by buying a truck for drinks and sandwiches. However, we need at least four months for preparation and getting a licence.

Participant B also reflected and commented on issues such as representing other

challenges to transition to work:

People's attitude towards disabled people, my father's protection, the connection between training programme and the real world, the difficulty of reaching the jobs and lack of respect for our freedom of choice. Regarding my own business, the difficulty of convincing my parents, getting a licence, choosing the place, buying stuff and attracting people to my own business are my current issues.

These themes elaborated on by 'B' are summarised in Table.5.3.

Table.5.3: Case study B

Themes	RQ addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengths ▪ Weaknesses ▪ Interests 	Factors affecting the transition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The importance of rehabilitation centres ▪ The weakness of the government role ▪ The shortage of equipment and qualified trainers ▪ Lack of development of vocational rehabilitation centres 	Training programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confidence and freedom of choice. 	Factors affecting the transition

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of faith in the ability of disabled people ▪ Excess protection from the family ▪ Lack of salaries and poor transportation ▪ The role of E-websites in searching for jobs 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No opportunities ▪ Lack of government assistance 	<p>Difficulties faced by ID individuals in transition to work</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor co-ordination between the entities ▪ Bad treatment from employers ▪ People's attitudes to disabled individuals 	

Discussion

'B' can read, write and use simple computer programmes. Further, he can communicate easily, repair cars, cook food, make hot drinks, make wooden items, make decisions and work in an office printing and organising papers. He can easily travel and also erect tents. However, he loses control in crowded places, eats too much, gets angry easily, does not listen to advice and cannot stay long in one place.

The interview results show that the participant is good at cooking and making drinks, and his future goal is to open a restaurant in Riyadh. With regard to finding work, he found that companies do not apply the law regarding disabled people and the government sector does not provide employment for those people. Furthermore, the negative attitude of people and lack of coordination between the institutions also created obstacles.

I noted in Chapter 2 that commentators had commented unfavourably on the quality of provision in high schools in Riyadh with regard to training for disabled people (though computer training provision is better). This contrasts with training provided in the United Emirates' vocational rehabilitation centres. Saudi Arabia needs to develop effective training programmes for disabled people and should hire qualified specialists to improve the training sessions.

In order to make transition easier, the participant suggested that the government should educate people about disability; the government should coordinate with institutions, and the government should identify whether disabled people are unable to complete their training. The interview data showed that the participant's father was helping him open a truck of drinks and sandwiches, which will be achieved in the next four months.

Through my observations during my interviews with him and his father, this person has the energy and desire to work, especially making hot drinks and food. One of the difficulties that this person is facing is the complexity of obtaining a licence in order to open his business. Furthermore, one thing that I have to mention here is the support and encouragement provided by his parents, which helped this person to express his wishes without fear and hesitation and I believe that this was the important reason for developing his character whereby he insisted on working in the job that he likes at all costs.

Conclusion

Both participants had strengths and weaknesses that helped or restricted them respectively in their employability. Some of the difficulties that the first participant faced while looking for a job was that there was a limited number of opportunities and some of the companies offered less, while some were far from home. Furthermore, the training programmes that he experienced were not helpful enough for him to work in all kinds of businesses. On the

other hand, the second participant also faced issues while looking for jobs, such as the point that companies had not applied the law regarding disabled people and the government did not provide enough employment options. Additionally, the training at high school was not effective. In the first case study, the training programme did not facilitate the participant with a choice of employment, while in the second case study, the training programme conducted in the United Emirates helped him in choosing an employment option and getting effective training.

In the first case, it was identified that, due to inadequate training sessions and ineffective training at high school, the participant was unable to search for jobs or to apply for enough jobs. Some of the jobs offered to him asked the participant to stay at home and the salary would be transferred to the account. Therefore, the participant wishes to search for a good job with the help of the internet and work, as his friends do, in a supermarket. However, in the second case study, the effective training and the support of the family helped the participant in choosing the right path for his future. The participant's father helped him in buying a truck for drinks and sandwiches, in which the participant was interested. Therefore, it can be stated that from the study that the value of effective training sessions for people with learning disabilities is paramount, given its role in facilitating transition from school to work while respecting their choices.

CHAPTER 6: CRITICAL INCIDENT ANALYSIS

Introduction

Interpretative analysis is at the heart of my research for this thesis, and in this chapter, I reflect on and interpret my own position as an experienced teacher in Saudi Arabia. I do this through the analysis of different situations, or incidents, from my experiences which exemplify or highlight the issues which lie at the core of the issues on which I am focusing.

Goffman (1959) was the first and perhaps the most able exponent of the position that is at the basis of critical incident analysis, pioneering a form of sociology that focused on and analysed in detail particular incidents or scenarios from his own experience. He states: "During the period in which the individual is in the immediate presence of the others, few events may occur which directly provide the others with the conclusive information they will need if they are to direct wisely their activity" (Goffman, 1959, p.1). These words highlight that the interactions between people in the social world are a manifestation of their impressions and the meanings they construct about that social world. It is these impressions and meanings that I shall draw upon.

In the perspective of Farrell (2013), teachers can reflect upon their pedagogy and related practices by exploring and articulating the incidents they believe to be critical to themselves or others. Discussion and contemplation of these critical incidents allow teachers to make a clearer sense of the seemingly random experiences that occur in their pedagogy because they hold real knowledge in the form of personal expertise, experience and intuitive knowledge sourced in the accumulated years of teaching in schools and classrooms (Farrell, 2013). It emphasises that teachers can reflect on their teaching practice and abilities by articulating their experiences to themselves or others because they

have the potential to shape the knowledge, perspectives, ideas, experiences and understandings and facilitate them by guiding their work. This practice of contemplation over personal and professional experiences as a teacher can also serve to be a rich source of teacher-generated information that enables teachers to reflect on their career paths, conduct practice, their underlying assumptions and problem-solving abilities along with the beliefs and values that have ruled the practices of the past and the present (Farrell, 2013).

In the perspective of Harrison and Lee (2011), stories and discussion regarding teaching can help in exploring relevant strategies to deal with the problems that many novice teachers encounter. They emphasise that such teacher-specific experiences can be captured most effectively in critical incident analysis. The critical incident in this respect can be any unplanned or planned event that might arise during or outside the class but is remembered in detail. In this context, the literature states, “incidents only really become critical when they are subject to this conscious reflection” (Harrison and Lee, 2011, p. 212). It highlights that such incidents can help in uncovering a new understanding of their teaching practices. Gremler (2004) suggests a rather different take on critical incident analysis, namely, that a critical incident can be envisaged as any observable activity or experience that manifests itself as a significant personal incident and provides a key basis for analysis. It is both open-ended and constrained because of its freedom to choose critical events and agendas and requirements for training, respectively (Gremler, 2004). Therefore, a critical incident analysis provides an extended review and evaluation of the experiences thereby providing an effective opportunity to contemplate and plan teaching activities and pedagogy more successfully.

Description of the incidents and reflections upon them

Table. 6.1. Description of the incidents

Incident number	Type of incident	Dates	Contextual information	Reason for selection
1	Isolating students with learning disabilities	2006-2008	The isolation of those students in the public school in Saudi Arabia can be attributed to the inability of this group to communicate with the community properly	One of the reasons behind the difficulties faced by the individuals in transition to work is the lack of social skills (Deiner, 2009; Kirby, 2014 and Michna, 2017)
2	The lack of awareness of parents toward the rights of their children with disabilities	2008-2010	The government of Saudi Arabia has implemented several initiatives and rights regarding people with disabilities, which could help them in their educational, medical and professional needs	This incident has a direct relationship to the factors that complicate the transition to work because those individuals did not benefit from these rights (Pavan, 2013; Schiemer, 2017; Bidwell, 2017 and Agovino et al., 2018)
3	Training programmes in rehabilitation centres	2011	These centres play an essential role in preparing those individuals in their transition to work and the Saudi government established these centres to ensure a smooth transition to them	It is examined by various scholars that the insufficient of the training centres could cause difficulties in transition to work and my incident in this matter could offer some facts (Work and employment, 2011; O'Brien et al., 2011; Crawford, 2012)
4	Attitudes toward disabled people	2012-2014	Individuals with such disabilities suffer in Saudi Arabia from how people deal with them specially in the workplace, as well as the unfairness of the workers or employers in terms of their work rights	Changing the negative attitudes of the society towards the disabled persons and their abilities in the workplace might motivate them in finding a suitable job and this incident serves as useful evidence for this purpose (Grames and Leverentz, 2010; Bolt, 2014; Salsgiver, 2015).

In the context of the benefits of critical incident analysis as reviewed in the literature, I have sought to reflect upon my experiences regarding the incidents I have encountered with individuals with learning disabilities at schools, vocational centres and workplaces to explore the difficulties and challenges they encountered in the transition to work after graduation from schools or rehabilitation centres. I next present the four incidents

independently, and, following this, discuss their significance in a discussion of them together.

First incident

In this respect, I would highlight one of the most significant incidents I experienced during my career as a teacher in primary school as well as my master's study in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The school in which I worked was required to be inclusive, and the students with learning disabilities were not taught in separate classes. As a consequence, I experienced some difficulties with social behaviour while teaching my students. Moreover, the absence of an obvious plan to increase the social skills further made it difficult for the students to develop social communication skills.

In respect of this issue with the students, I implemented some initiatives that were designed for teachers of students with disabilities. It was identified that the students were quite upset because they were not allowed to communicate with the other students who were non-disabled and that made them feel isolated and lonely in the school. To address this problem, the teachers went to the head-teacher and explained the issue and how it could be addressed by allowing the students with the disability to spend the lunch time with the students without the disability. On its implementation, it was identified as an initiative with positive outcomes as the students with the disability felt happier and were able to make new friends with other groups, which generated confidence to communicate and socialise. However, a serious setback arose when the supervisor asked me to stop the process because the parents of the non-disabled students complained about harassment from the students with learning disabilities. While receiving this information was highly disappointing, other plans to inculcate social skills among the students were also explored. I realised that there was an absence of any plan that could be helpful in inculcating

effective communication skills among the students with disability. I realised that this was a universal phenomenon across the schooling system.

Moreover, an acute lack of training and experience generated made me embarrassed and uncomfortable as the social behaviour and interaction of most of the students with disability became increasingly difficult to manage. One day, one of my students said to me, “Why didn’t you keep your promise? You told us that we could join all the other students during their lunch time and sports activities and still we could not”, which not only sounded like a challenge to me but also made me realise and ponder over my own abilities and potential as a teacher and mentor for these students.

Secluding the students with learning disability, keeping them confined to the narrow spaces in the schools and forbidding them from being included with the other students in all the school activities was generating a strong feeling of dissatisfaction and frustration among them. With the course of time, this feeling deepened, and they started believing that nobody at the school respected their wishes and needs. I often heard the students complaining to me and saying, “even in our homes our families imprison us in our rooms; we feel that we are from another world”, which broke my enthusiasm for taking up the task of teaching such students with special needs. It made me feel very miserable for not being able to do anything worthwhile for these students.

This reflection also enabled me to discover alternatives to increase the satisfaction of the students and their social skills, so I contacted other teachers teaching students with such disabilities in different cities of Saudi Arabia. Although this served to be quite beneficial in enabling me to explore suitable strategies to develop social skills among my students, I knew the students were outraged with the school authorities for keeping them secluded from the other students. All the while I kept reflecting upon my pedagogy and my

understanding of the psychology and psyche of these students in an attempt to provide them exclusive rights and enable them to develop behavioural and social skills.

This experience thus served to be a highly significant learning experience for me which not only helped me in generating a broader understanding of the school administration and the role of the Ministry of Education in facilitating the schooling of the students with disabilities but also enabled me to reflect upon my own pedagogy and understanding of the psychology and needs of such students. In this respect, I realised that the key problem, which was the absence of behavioural and social skills among the students with learning disability, was primarily the result of their exclusion from their peers in school activities and a lack of representation in the school. This made me realise the importance of increasing their participation in school activities to help them overcome the feelings of isolation, inferiority and disappointment.

In addition, these students needed to be prepared adequately for a smoother and more effective learning process so that they could work and socialise well with the non-disabled students. Another major lesson for me, through reflection on my teaching experience with these students, was the impact it made on my consciousness. It enabled me to understand that the solution to this problem could be a combination of a range of factors, including the need for full inclusion, education of the community about disabled students, development of the curriculum, teaching strategies and social skills.

Delving deeper and reflecting more critically on this problem also made me realise that the absence of opportunities to interact and socialise at the primary school level is one of the fundamental causes preventing these students from finding suitable employment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The lack of attention and interest from the Ministry and the

schools has aggravated the problem and increased the suffering of the students, because of which these students suffer from communication problems when they look for opportunities to work. I also discovered that providing an opportunity at the primary level for social and behavioural development would only be possible with assistance and support from parents, community and the government.

Among these, while the Ministry can play the fundamental role by initiating policies to implement the comprehensive inclusion of students with learning disability in all school activities, the families and community members also play a major role in shaping the behaviour and abilities of these students. It is essential that the parents of such students encourage them to increase their social interaction, widen their abilities to develop social and behavioural skills, and adapt themselves to society so that they find themselves an integral part of society and the economy at large.

Second incident

One of the other incidents related to my experience at a Riyadh primary school while dealing with students with learning disabilities concerns the lack of awareness among their parents concerning the learning needs or rights of students with learning disability. The majority of parents in Riyadh were unaware of the problems and suffering faced by their children with learning disabilities while getting regular education at various schools, vocational centres and workplaces. For instance, when I was teaching at a primary school in Riyadh, a majority of parents of students with such disabilities were unaware of the educational, social and employment rights of their children. In relation to this, the parents of students with learning disabilities stated that “we did not get a clear answer for all our questions from the Ministry of Education or Ministry of Social Affairs”. I was highly disappointed by the lack of awareness and knowledge among the parents of these students. I firmly believe that parental support, encouragement and guidance are essential for the

students facing learning disabilities to get regular education at schools during the early stages of their development without any fear of societal neglect.

In this context, I recall an incident in 2008 when I met a new student at the primary school in Riyadh named Abdullah. The thing that I noticed during Abdullah's early days at school was his ability to excel in social science, maths and science whereas most of his peers without disability were struggling to obtain good grades in those subjects. However, Abdullah, during his early days at school also found it difficult to write words in Arabic language classes. When I discovered this particular issue, I informed the head teacher about Abdullah's problem, and as a result, the head teacher asked me to prepare a report about Abdullah addressing his multiple-disabilities problem. When the investigation was conducted, it was found that Abdullah did not have a mild intellectual disability, as was recorded in his file. When I found that Abdullah had just a physical disability, I decided to inform his father. However, during the conversation with Abdullah's father, the head teacher and I were surprised when we listened to his fathers' response, which was also an indication of his attitude towards his son. Abdullah's father said, "Please do not take any action in this matter as the government would stop paying Abdulla's allowances if they know about this."

In my experience, the responses of Abdullah's father reflect attitudes similar to the majority of parents in Riyadh. Abdullah's father wanted to obtain regular money from the Saudi government and did not worry much about his son's future. According to Abdullah's father, it is highly difficult for an individual to get proper education and respect when he or she has been stigmatized with intellectual disability. Listening to this, I was shocked, and requested Abdullah's father to have an informal conversation outside the school in order to understand the interventions that would be taken by the school in resolving his son's challenges.

When I informed Abdullah's father about the poor educational support provided to students with disabilities in Saudi, he was in extreme disbelief after hearing this information. The response from Abdullah's father was, "I did not know about this! Why they did not tell me about all this information when Abdullah was in the previous school?" It can be analysed from the response that parents of students with learning disabilities in Saudi lack proper information concerning the educational difficulties that are faced by children with disabilities due to poor support from government and educational policymakers.

Furthermore, a day after this, when I was securing the attendance of students at the front door of class, I heard one of my students, Yousef, crying and screaming loudly as his father was beating him. I stopped his father's action and informed him that it was completely wrong and illegal and asked him to meet me at the school hall. During the conversation with Yousef's father, I observed extreme anger and disbelief among parents of learning-disabled students due to the lack of government and educational support for their children. Yousef's father stated, "No one cares about us, neither the government nor your school cares. I cannot bear it. This is killing me, I have three kids with disabilities, and I am having a lot of problems with their education, financial demands and social stress. I was in the village before and while there, they did not offer any assistance to us."

After listening to the above statement, I asked him to go home and visit me in the afternoon to have a formal conversation. During the meeting with Yousef's father, I provided some valuable information concerning the Saudi Ministry of Education and Health's policies and programme that are designed to support and encourage students with learning disability to get regular education in school. I also informed him about the

financial support that is offered to each student in terms of monthly allowances and annual benefits. The users are only required to register for the programme to access the services.

It was also found that the government of Saudi Arabia offers extensive support and additional assistance to parents for the wellbeing and development of their children with disabilities. However, the major drawback with this assistance is the absence of any considerable measures taken by the government to educate or make the parents aware of the various and most appropriate ways through which they can gain these benefits or the process to make a request for assistance from the government. When I visited the department under the Ministry of Social Affairs to provide assistance to another parent in obtaining a financial allowance for his child, I met a man working in the same department who narrated to me various incidents and 'flaws' associated with the people working at the Ministry of Education and Social Affairs. He stated, "Can you imagine that some of those officials made the parents do authorizations for them to get this money and asked those parents for their fees." This was highly disappointing for me to hear.

However, this official whom I met, assured me about the management of the issues and said, "Do not worry, we did inform the minister about this issue and he will take a serious action regarding this matter". Within a period of three months, I came to know that a new process had been developed by the Ministry for the parents through which they could receive allowances for their children. This process includes a bank card for them and the allowance would be deposited in their respective accounts on a monthly basis without the need to visit the office. The parents would easily withdraw the allowance with the help of the bank cards.

When I was pursuing my master's study, I also made some observations about the extent to which the families suffer regarding the rights of their children with disabilities. In this context, one day while I was in the office along with some other teachers, a parent of a

child with disabilities had come and was highly agitated because of the inadequate preparation for the transition after school. He said, “I do not have any idea after my son finishes his study here, where he can go because it appears to me that their future is mysterious, and no one thinks about their rights after high school.” His agitation and arguments were justified because even teachers of these students have no plans for the students. Despite significant efforts being made to discuss this issue with the supervisors in the Ministry of Education and Social Affairs, unfortunately, no clear answer was provided by them. These incidents were encountered by me in Riyadh, so smaller cities and villages in the Kingdom cannot be expected to be offering any better services to the children with disabilities to undertake the transition from high school to post school in an adequate manner.

In 2009, I also did a research study with my colleague, Majed, in relation to the transition of high school students having learning disabilities to post-school life. This research was based on one school in Riyadh and focused on seven students who had finished high school in the same year. The findings of our research highlighted that none of these students had found a job or was satisfied with his transition process. The responses of the students revealed that they had only received blank promises from the government and no real assistance was offered. I also gathered some responses from the parents of the students with disabilities where one of mothers said, “I went to the official in the Ministry of affairs and he told me that the government did a good work for your son as it helped him with his education until high school. After that there is nothing else we can do because your son has an intellectual disability.” The findings of this research made me realise the misery and sufferings experienced by the families and parents regarding their sons and daughters with disabilities at school or at other places in the Kingdom and motivated me to volunteer as a member of the three-day programme titled, ‘Let us give

them a hand' in 2010. The aim of this programme, which was located in King Phasal Centre in Riyadh, was to provide education and guidance to the parents of children with disabilities to manage the difficulties that face them when their children complete high school education. This volunteer programme was conducted under the supervision of a Saudi Arabian doctor who also invested substantially in the organisation of the event. Officials from various departments and parents from various cities were invited. During the meetings, the various contributors clarified and guided the parents on all the rights of the children with disabilities in addition to the processes to be followed in achieving these rights.

This served to be a beneficial measure; however, the problem associated with these programmes was that they were not conducted on a regular basis but rarely within a period of five years by an initiative taken by an individual. It is essential that the government assumes this responsibility and conducts such educational and awareness-based programmes on a continuous basis. During this event, I got the opportunity to meet Alhazmi, who served as the general supervisor of the Saudi Arabian forum for special needs, which was the famous website in the Kingdom offering assistance to people with disabilities. I became a member of this forum and made good contacts with parents, specialists and other renowned persons working in this field. There was also a department in this forum, Department of Disabled People's Rights, through which we undertook various initiatives to offer assistance. Through this forum, we met a person named Fahed, whose son has learning disability and had become a member of this forum with the purpose of gaining information about disability. I realised that the father had undertaken a remarkable initiative, not only to assist and support his son, but also many other children with disabilities who suffer because of the lack of proper guidance and knowledge to access the facilities offered by the government. I also came to know that he has travelled

to various developed countries to explore the most appropriate strategy to assist individuals with learning disabilities in the transition from study to work. This also made me realise that the collective involvement of the parents in undertaking such initiatives towards their own children can persuade the government through the Ministry of Social Affairs to create special sections to offer assistance and facilities to the persons with disabilities in their transition to employment.

Third incident

The third incident took place in 2011, while I was pursuing post-graduate studies. I had decided to visit the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre in Riyadh, along with my colleague, Yasser, in order to explore the process through which individuals with learning disabilities are trained for employment. The supervisor at the rehabilitation centre told us that there were three workshops, sixteen trainees and six specialists at the centre. However, when we entered one of the training workshops to examine the delivery of these training programme for skills needed in the Saudi market, I was shocked when the trainer revealed that they did not follow any plan or programme for the training of the people with a learning disability. He further stated that the trainees visit in the morning and leave by the afternoon, during which time they play video games, eat, sleep and talk. Observing the shocking state of the training system further heightened my empathy towards these individuals and their frustration with the administrative system of the centre, as well as the Saudi Arabian system. This place had been established to prepare individuals for career development so that they could be employed and earn a decent living by being trained in employment-related skills. In reality, however, this place was merely operating as an entertainment centre, where the trainees could talk, play football and use computer systems.

Examining the plight of the rehabilitation centre, Yasser and I decided to investigate the matter and identify the reasons and remedies to improve the situation. For this purpose, we began with an interview with the trainers. One of them revealed that he was a specialist in electrical skills but had only undertaken one-year's training in furniture making. He was removed from training at the electrical section and positioned to train students in furniture making because of which he was unable to impart the specialised art of furniture making to the trainees. He also revealed that, despite numerous attempts to discuss the matter with the management regarding the inappropriateness of his training in furniture making, he did not receive a reasonable response. Yasser and I also visited another workshop at the centre with the hope of witnessing training there; however, we were left even more disappointed, as we only discovered an abandoned workshop with obsolete training equipment. Further conversations with the specialists and trainees revealed that the Ministry of Labour was not responsive towards their poor treatment and their complaints. One of the specialists at the centre revealed, "We asked them to improve our centre and bring new equipment, but they just refused as usual". This comment made us realise that this rehabilitation centre was as problematic as the other centres for rehabilitation for individuals with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The main problem was the absence of adequate services and training delivered at these centres; in fact, thousands of graduated disabled people remain unemployed.

There are just 11 vocational rehabilitation centres in Saudi Arabia, catering for about 8000 disabled people who need assistance. However, I would also highlight that the trainers at the vocational centre also revealed another highly shocking fact, which was that the parents of individuals with disabilities receive a monthly allowance, as a result of which they accepted the miserable and pathetic position of their disabled children. This factor de-

motivated them from seeking employment for their children with disabilities, or to put pressure on the government to improve the state of the vocational centre.

To add to my disappointment, my colleague, Yasser, revealed that he had visited a number of companies that had shown an interest in hiring people with learning disabilities. However, the trainees at the vocational centres were not equipped with even the basic technical skills needed to seek a decent job in the labour market. In this context, one of the supervisors appreciated our efforts in this respect and revealed that the fundamental problems were associated with the Office of the Ministry. He explained that the rehabilitation centre had made considerable efforts to demand the attention of the Ministry towards the development of the centre, yet the Ministry has been unresponsive and believed that tasks are completed by monthly allowance provided by them to parents.

On the basis of this information, Yasser and I discussed the matter further and visited the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, where we discussed the issue with one of the officers at the department. To our astonishment he stated that most people with learning disabilities could not work and these rehabilitation centres were used for entertainment and not for training or work. On receiving such an inappropriate reply, we tried to make him understand the gravity of the issue and the ways in which some centres in other Arabian countries have been successful in developing employment skills and capabilities for people with a disability, with the help of effective training and development programmes. The officer was evidently influenced by our passion and arguments and asked us to present an official plan for the development of the rehabilitation centres which can be applied in Saudi Arabia.

On that note, we began our professional journeys, which involved visits to a range of vocational rehabilitation centres in Kuwait, the United Emirates and Jordan, where we

gained invaluable knowledge regarding the best ways to train people with disabilities and guide them to seek the most suitable employment opportunities. On the basis of the information thus gathered, Yasser and I developed a comprehensive document that covered critical aspects of the rehabilitation centres, designed to improve the situation in Saudi Arabia. However, because of administrative obstacles, social complexities and institutional inertia our plan failed to have an impact.

Fourth incident

Within this section, I would like to mention multiple incidents which highlight one of the primary issues associated with people with a learning disability in the work place: the negative attitude of the community towards them, which is not only highly discouraging for their career growth but also generates negativity among people with a disability towards society and prevents them from participating in community life. In this context, I encountered one such incident at one of the biggest supermarkets in Riyadh, called Max, wherein I came across a salesperson, named Awad, who was suffering from Down's syndrome. I found him working very earnestly and enthusiastically; in the process of conversing with him I became acquainted with his experiences, which were quite unpleasant to hear. He revealed that though he was happy with his workplace and his salary, the reactions of the community towards him really disappointed and demotivated him from working. Despite the hard labour beyond the shift hours required, he did not receive appreciation or acknowledgement from the administration. During one incident at the supermarket, I came across a highly rude and critical reaction from Awad's supervisor towards him because he had mistakenly misunderstood Kamirah (*bread* in Arabic) as Kamar (*alcohol*, in Arabic) and so the customer claimed that he was retarded.

Another similar incident encountered by me in this context occurred at Starbucks' Coffee House, situated inside Jarrer Bookstore. I used to sit at this place and converse with the workers with learning disabilities, whose usual complaints would always be regarding the ways their capacities were underestimated by the customers and staff members and that they were just ignored by the customers most of the time, while others used rude language to communicate with them. Even the staff members who were non-disabled did not respect them or treated them without compassion. In yet another incident, I met a person with a learning disability, who was being castigated by another man. The man was accusing him of staring at his wife and asserting that he was uneducated. The person with the disability was very scared and was speechless. There were some five random people who were also hitting the disabled person because of which he had run away, and his supervisor was running after him. On witnessing the entire scene, I hurried to the supervisor's office and told him that I had seen everything and tried to explain to him that he had not done anything wrong deliberately, but it was the isolation from the society of people with disabilities that engenders ignorance about customs of Saudi society, such as staring at people. I explained to him that I was a teacher working with students with disabilities and I had a good understanding of their behaviour. The supervisor also had significant experience in working with and assisting people with disabilities because of which he could understand the issue and manage it appropriately.

In respect of these incidents, I realised that people with disabilities who have been working in various places in Riyadh and Saudi Arabia were unable to trust their capabilities, despite the hard labour and effort they made to survive the job and meet the expectations of their work and their supervisors. However, I strongly feel that most people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia were unable to find appropriate work in this socio-cultural setting and thus felt restricted in their capabilities. I realised that media could also

be a key channel, which failed to a considerable extent to help individuals to be more involved in the Saudi work environment. In this context, I would highlight the case of a friend, Mubark, who worked as a programmer on a Saudi channel, who once revealed that the senior officials on the Saudi channel did not believe disabled people were a priority and avoided focusing on programme that support these people. This situation also signifies the fact that there could be numerous working opportunities for the people with disabilities, if only the Saudi community were able to accept them and improve their attitudes toward them. The supervisor of the mall in the previous incident also revealed that while working with disabled people he had realised that they have immense potential, especially in manual work.

One of my friends, Mashary, narrated an incident about a person with a disability, which made him realise his own stereotypes about disability. He narrated that while he worked at the Ministry of Education, he was assigned a colleague, named Khaled, to help him with the paperwork, but he realised that Khaled had a problem and resisted working with him, believing that he could be of no assistance to him. However, as time passed, he realised that he had judged him too quickly and that he was indeed hardworking. His experience further made him realise that a mere change of attitude of the social and work community towards people with disabilities can be highly effective in increasing work opportunities. On a deeper level, I realised that spreading awareness regarding the abilities of people with disabilities could be crucial in giving them a more inclusive treatment in the society.

In this respect, I would like to highlight the initiatives taken by a friend of mine, Adnan, who worked on a programme, which involved establishing a forum to discuss the attitudes of the community toward people with a disability, with the aim of spreading awareness and making disability more accepted by society. Later, he also published a book entitled,

Including Disabled People in Saudi Culture to promote his message. The initiatives taken by him were significant in making a number of people more aware about the needs, abilities and challenges of persons with a disability in Saudi Arabia. Indeed, there is a need for many such initiatives to help them resist social stereotypes and prejudices.

Discussion

The examination of these incidents has played a highly significant role in developing my understanding regarding the problems, issues and challenges experienced by people with a learning disability because of the social, political and cultural environment in Saudi Arabia, which also plays a key role in hindering transition from study to work.

The examination of the findings in the light of Kolb's Reflection Cycle helped me in evaluating and observing the findings. In this context, the concrete experiences relating these incidents that I encountered during my experience as a teacher for the students with learning disabilities made me realise the grave issues experienced by them since the very beginning of their lives (Kolb, 2014). As the second stage of the Kolb's Cycle identifies observation and reflection, I was motivated to think over my experience and understanding the everyday experiences with friends, family members, peer groups, teachers, school environment, as well as the environment at home, neighbourhood and society at large, which shape the overall behaviour and attitude of people with learning disabilities. The observations gained by me through this analysis helped me in shaping analysis and generalisations. These observations were supported by ideas gathered from literature and case study interviews, which enabled me to evaluate factors that influence the development of people with learning disabilities and the ways in which these factors influence their transition from school to work. The findings developed in this discussion thus form the part of the third stage of the reflection cycle wherein analysis, generalisations and hypothesis testing are undertaken (Kolb, 2014).

These incidents highlight that such obstacles come into play in childhood lives, as my first incident highlighted the ways in which children with a disability are kept secluded from children without a disability in the school premises and are excluded from every opportunity to develop social skills for effective communication and interaction. They begin to face social rejection and non-acceptance from the society at every level from an early age, as manifested in schools and even homes, where they are locked up in rooms. In this context, Krishnan (2010) further highlights that according to the ecological theory, if the relationships in the immediate microsystem break down, the child loses the tools that can be helpful for him in exploring the other parts of his environment and thus develops anti—social behaviour, absence of self-discipline and inability to gain self-direction.

In addition, the second incident highlights the issue of lack of awareness and knowledge among the parents regarding the rights, facilities and benefits offered by the government of Saudi Arabia for the support and development of children with disabilities. However, because of the lack of such awareness, these facilities are unable to reach the persons who need it. It was also noted that parents were unaware of the problems that their children with disabilities had to face at schools, vocational centres and workplaces. Sometimes parents were found to be negligent towards their children with disabilities, while at other times they were found holding to various social prejudices and stigmas and were unable to help and support their children with learning disabilities. The meso-system as given in the Bronfenbrenner model highlights the need for a healthy interaction between home and school and between peer groups and family. The development of a child's mind is largely shaped by the like-mindedness and harmony gained by spending time with friends. Criticism and conflicting emotions from family and from a child's peers can have a serious and negative impact on the child (Hayes, O'Toole and Halfpenny, 2017).

The fact that some children with disabilities were believed to be a sheer stigma on the parents and suffered inhuman behaviour from their parents, even in the form of beating and physical torture, was also examined. According to the Bronfenbrenner Model, the micro-system of the home, school, peer group and the community environment of the child facilitate the crucial interactions that are highly significant in shaping the personal relationships of a child. The absence of these groups in the life of a child creates a lack of more supportive relationships and interactions, which eventually hampers the development of a child (Hayes, O'Toole and Halpenny, 2017).

Others struggled to access some form of financial support or other basic amenities from the government through which they could help their children with disabilities in undertaking education and the transition from studies to work in a smooth and convenient manner. This also highlighted the need to extend support to the parents in gaining awareness of the available rights and facilities for such children from the government. However, the incident also indicates that, instead of depending on the government even for such awareness, some parents who were more aware could come forward, take the initiative, and help other parents and eventually all children with disabilities in their process of transition from studies to, work.

The third incident on an additional level highlights the wide range of personal stereotypes and prejudices which create highly significant barriers for people with disabilities in their career path and development. Despite their hard efforts in delivering their work and fulfilling their responsibilities in the best manner, they are judged by stereotypes and preconceived prejudices, which restricts them from working to their maximum potential and capability. Sometimes they are treated with rude language, gestures, discrimination

from the customers, supervisors and colleagues; while at other times their work is taken for granted without any relevant acknowledgment or gratitude.

Returning to the theoretical framework offered by Bronfenbrenner (1979) for using context in analysing and understanding social behaviour (see closing section of Chapter 4), it is possible to understand how deep-seated beliefs influence the various systems of home and society, from the microsystem to the macrosystem. Attitudes are at the root of resistance to progress and the stark lack of opportunities. From the poor understanding of the Ministry towards people with disabilities, to the attitude of school and rehabilitation centre staff, to attitudes and practices in workplaces or in the family and the community at large, there is failure to understand and ignorance. Such lack of understanding extends to ignorance about the need for the development of inclusive learning opportunities at the school level, and the need for well-developed training opportunities and facilities at the vocational rehabilitation centres, workplaces and communities. This means not only focusing on the trainers, training equipment and facilities, and mandating their employment at workplaces, but also making the managers and community aware of their own behaviour. Therefore, on the basis of the incidents examined in this chapter, the core issues hindering the transition process for people with disabilities from schools/rehabilitation centres to workplaces can be clearly examined, along with the identification of the measures that would be required as a solution to the problem.

CHAPTER 7: SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The previous chapters presented a detailed examination of my findings from my interviews, case studies and critical incident analysis. This chapter synthesises these and presents an in-depth discussion of the overall research findings in alignment with the objectives of the research. Accordingly, the findings gathered from the data collection methods are also discussed in the light of the prevailing literature. For this purpose, four key themes associated with the objectives of the research have been developed: the difficulties faced by individuals with learning disabilities in the transition from school to work in Saudi Arabian culture; the programme or the role of rehabilitation centres that help individuals with learning disability during this transition; the factors that ease the transition of individuals with this disability; potential advantages of the employment of those individuals. These themes have been examined and discussed in the light of Bronfenbrenner's Theory and Coleman's Focal Theory.

Rq1: What are the difficulties faced by individuals with learning disabilities in the transition from school/ training programme to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

The findings of the interviews revealed that individuals with learning disabilities suffer from numerous issues in the process of making the transition to work from rehabilitation programmes or school. In this respect, several factors were examined: the lack of awareness among their parents regarding the rights of their children who are intellectually disabled; the lack of adequate communication and coordination between various stakeholders; and concerns regarding their training and subsequent employment, which serve as key barriers for individuals with learning disability in seeking suitable employment. The focus of the recruitment and training programme on earning a monthly

allowance as the prime objective of seeking employment, and not as a means to focus on a reliable and long-term career, also acts as a barrier to the development of individuals with learning disabilities.

Examining these findings in the light of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System's Theory it can be proposed that the macro system plays a crucial and fundamental role in facilitating an individual to adjust to the changes of life and adapt to the major transitions relating to age and circumstances and develop. The absence of support and encouragement from these components that make up the macro system such as family, school, society, vocational training centres and government bodies hinder the personal and social development of the children with disabilities and in their later stage of life it becomes the fundamental cause of the difficulties encountered by them during the transition from school to work.

The findings also revealed that the coordination between the senior officers at the Ministry of Labour and the officials at the vocational rehabilitation centres was so weak that the individuals with learning disabilities did not know whom they should approach after their professional training. The findings of the case studies revealed that the private sector was more cooperative and encouraging in respect of offering employment opportunities to the persons with such abilities in comparison to the government sector. The findings also showed that the government sector does not provide support or any employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

In a number of cases, the absence of awareness among the parents has also been identified as a major area of concern. Such lack of awareness among the parents prevents them from allowing their children with disabilities to apply for training or pre-employment interviews or seeking employment opportunities. They are also unaware of the rights authorised by

the Ministry for the development and employment of such people. Nevertheless, with the rising awareness in the community and amongst families, parents have started taking an interest in rehabilitation programmes and seeking the benefits of learning and professional development. The findings are aligned with the findings of the literature, which also highlighted that an inadequate awareness among the parents and children was a key factor causing difficulties in the effective development of the individuals with learning disabilities who were seeking suitable employment opportunities (Pandey and Agarwal, 2013).

Overprotection from parents for their disabled sons could be an obstacle to adjustment in society and then for their employability, which explains why the majority of families in KSA benefit from the recruitment of their sons in the Saudiization process (staying at home and receiving the salaries), because they do not want their sons to engage in the community and daily work. In the perception of parents, an observation that has been evident through multiple sources is that the Saudi environment is not qualified to deal with disabled people. It is possible that the non-enforcement of legislation to protect disabled people from social harassment contributed to an increase in parents' fears and cares (Al-Mousa, 2010; Alsaqabi, 2011; Alkhateeb et al., 2014). The findings of the critical incident chapter also support these ideas in that it highlights the grossly inadequate state of rehabilitation and vocational training in Saudi Arabia. It was seen that there are just 11 vocational rehabilitation centres in the Kingdom among 8000 persons with disabilities requiring training. These vocational centres are being used as mere entertainment centres for people with disabilities, whereby they come for entertainment, eating, playing games and sleeping, with no plan or programme for training or skill development. While one of the workshops at the vocational centres visited involved the training for furniture making being imparted by a trainer specialising in electrical work, there was an absence of

adequate training equipment or facilities, the other workshops were abandoned with obsolete training equipment.

These findings suggest a lack of coordination between the government agencies, vocational rehabilitation centres and parents. It is the responsibility of the government to make parents aware of the existence of such programmes and the right to learning and employment for individuals with learning disabilities and to facilitate their access. Similarly, the vocational rehabilitation centres are also required to communicate the benefits of such programmes with the parents and also communicate the problems in the programmes and their implementation with the government so that they can be improved. It was observed that some officials in the Ministry of Labour and some companies ignored the characteristics and abilities of the disabled person, because of the lack of relevant education in the community. From the findings, it was discovered that even though supervisors who work in this ministry had direct access to the programme and recruitment of disabled people, some of them did not know basic information about these programmes, such as how many rehabilitation centres there are; what skills disabled people are trained in; or how many disabled people found work with the assistance of the Ministry.

These findings are further supported by the literature, which highlights the absence of coordination among government departments and vocational training centres. The literature asserts that adequate coordination among these entities is essential to support the development and employment of individuals with learning disabilities (Al-zarea, 2009; Davies and Beamish, 2009).

The interview findings also revealed numerous difficulties that individuals with learning disabilities faced at the vocational rehabilitation centres. This problem exists because of an acute shortage of adequate tools and equipment to provide effective training, lack of required training among the instructors and trainers at the rehabilitation centres, the absence of desired support from the private sector for professional training or support from the Ministry of Labour. In this respect, the case study findings also revealed that the training programmes offered by the rehabilitation centres were not sufficiently effective for their graduates to be able to work in any business. They did not facilitate them in selection for employment. The findings of the critical incident chapter reinforce this in highlighting the ways in which the students with disabilities were kept isolated and away from the children without disabilities, thereby restricting them from opportunities for learning social and communication skills. The findings correspond to the literature, which further highlights that individuals with learning disabilities were unable to compete effectively in the social and professional arena because, at the time of schooling and training, they had not been taught the skills required for this purpose (Certo et al., 2008).

Individuals thus fail to perform in multiple tasking and other specific tasks assigned at the workplace, which creates a key challenge for them. There is an absence of formative training and reassuring feedback, which highlights a key omission in provision in the transition from school to work (Certo et al., 2008). An examination of the literature also showed that teachers and trainers at the schools and rehabilitation centres were not adequately qualified to provide effective training to individuals with learning disabilities from the primary level of learning. This situation eventually leads to a lack of self-determination and poor foundations for skills development and prevents them from being able to set clear and realistic goals or to learn the process of decision-making, which are key skills demanded by employers (AlMuaqel, 2008; Barnett and Crippen, 2014; Janicki

and Dalton, 2014). According to the Coleman's Focal Theory, focusing on one single problem at a time allows adolescents to develop the ability to pass through their stage without undergoing or experiencing any kind of stress. Based on this assertion, it can be highlighted that children with learning disabilities have to experience numerous challenging and conflicting situations at home, in schools and even in society because of the prejudices and stereotypes of the people surrounding them, which eventually makes it very difficult for them to cope with the circumstances; despite having the right potential to deliver and perform they have to struggle and face the stress of the transition from school to work. However, in this respect, the literature also highlighted the reasons for the inability of the schools to impart adequate knowledge and training to students with learning disabilities. In this regard, it was revealed that there was an absence of necessary funding for the schools to provide adequate vocational training or rehabilitation to students with learning disabilities (Grigal et al, 2003; AlMuaqel, 2008; Moon, Simonsen and Neubert, 2011).

Furthermore, the interview findings also revealed that the attitude of people, namely members of the community and employers, in the form of prejudices and stereotypes, also served as a crucial barrier because it prevented them from understanding the potential and abilities of people with learning disabilities. Such an attitude is one of the fundamental reasons for the neglect of those with learning disabilities by the community and in the workplace. The findings of the critical incident chapter highlight the wider manifestations of this problem in an in-depth manner, wherein an encounter with the salespersons and workers at the supermarkets and coffee shops revealed the ways in which the supervisors, colleagues and customers use rude language, gestures and discrimination when dealing with them. They were largely found to be treated through the lenses of social and personal prejudices and stereotypes associated with the disability, and their capabilities and

potential are highly undermined. Despite the hard efforts they make in delivering and fulfilling their responsibilities towards their work in the best manner, they are judged with preconceived prejudices and restricted from working at the maximum potential and capability. Sometimes they are treated with rude gestures and language by customers and colleagues, while at other times their work is taken for granted without any gratitude or acknowledgement. The literature supports these findings and highlights that the prejudices and negative attitudes of employers and colleagues lead to discrimination in the labour market. Such negative attitudes are demonstrated because of their perception that disabled persons are less skilled, less knowledgeable, less capable and less trained for being assigned a responsible task. The literature recommends a value-oriented training for the persons with learning disabilities to facilitate them with easy transition to work (Shier, Graham and Jones, 2009). The findings of the case studies also revealed that the attitudes of people towards those with disabilities was a key demotivating factor in their development and formed a major difficulty for them (Emerson et al., 2012).

In addition, issues such as negative attitudes from society and employers, along with the problems that arise because of the lack of adequate coordination between the government and vocational centres and even the private sector, were also highlighted as key difficulties from the findings of the case studies. The problem of transportation and the inability to use technology in the workplace were also identified as key issues faced by these persons during the transition to work. In this respect, the literature also explains that other factors create key issues for individuals with learning disabilities at the time of transition, such as difficulties in transportation, the negative attitude of colleagues and employers, and inadequate skills to use new machinery and technology because of the loopholes in training (Atkinson et al., 2014).

Another key challenge discovered in this investigation was transport. For example, this issue was communicated by several companies which agreed to recruit disabled people; however, the problem was that parents refused the work because the head offices of companies were far away from their homes and no suitable transport was available. Through the meetings with some parents and the specialists in the vocational rehabilitation programme, they agreed with the findings that the transportation problem was deemed among the main problems which contribute directly in the unemployment of the disabled, and these findings were compatible with the findings in the literature (Al-Saqabi, 2011; Arabian Business Achievement Awards, 2017).

Rq 2: What kind of programmes support them in this transition?

The findings of the interviews revealed that there were a number of programmes that had been developed by the government of Saudi Arabia to support the development of individuals with learning disabilities in preparing and coping with the process of transition. In this respect, the findings of the interviews revealed that the most popular training programmes were agriculture, bookbinding, communications and greengrocery. The other training programmes included computing, carpentry, electricity and telephone exchange operations. Special education programmes also included itinerant teacher programmes, teacher-consultant programmes, resource room programmes and self-contained classroom programmes.

In this regard, the findings of the literature reveal that there are education programmes in KSA designed to offer special education to students with learning disabilities and these include teacher-consultant programmes, itinerant teacher programmes, follow-up programmes, self-contained classroom programmes and resource room programmes (Muthumbi, 2008). The education system in the Kingdom also offers middle and high

school programmes for students with learning disabilities and considers them to be highly significant in implementing and providing transition services (Muthumbi, 2008).

However, despite the number and diversity of such programmes for the development and employment of individuals with learning disabilities, it was revealed in the interview findings that these programmes are inadequate and underdeveloped, so they fail to offer the desired benefits to the concerned persons. In addition, the implementation of these programmes is also identified to be weak and inadequate. The interview findings also revealed acute shortcomings in the implementation of these programmes. With the exception of the social partnership programme for training, the interview findings also show that these programmes are very weak.

The primary and secondary schools in the Kingdom are also weak in offering adequate quality education at the fundamental level. The training offered by the vocational rehabilitation centres was not useful for the individuals with learning disabilities. Such training was deemed to be inadequate for administrative or professional purposes, or specifically for computing, carpentry and agriculture. These findings are in alignment with the findings of the case study, which revealed that the training in the rehabilitation centres was not good and not considered sufficient. The findings of the critical incident chapter revealed the inadequate state of the vocational rehabilitation centres in Saudi Arabia which are completely deprived of adequate training facilities and are employing with unskilled trainers, using obsolete training equipment and lack of appropriate plans and programmes for training and development of the students with disabilities. The interview with the subject of the case study revealed that the training must focus on training the individuals to work in restaurants and coffee shops.

The other issues in training were that they lacked the facility to train and impart essential skills that would meet the standards of the real work environment. The case further highlighted the need for the centres to be able to prepare people with learning disabilities to compete and work in the private and public sectors. The findings of the critical incident chapter also reveal that the training imparted by these rehabilitation centres is highly inadequate as it was examined that a person specialising in electricity and having little experience of furniture making was training students in furniture making, which was neither skilful nor effective enough to get decent employment. These findings are supported by the literature which also asserts that the programmes offered by the vocational and rehabilitation centres were inadequate and ineffective, so they did not facilitate positive and successful transition (McDonnell and Hardman, 2009; Aldabas, 2015). It was found that presently there are limited programmes that offer vocational rehabilitation for students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia and these operate under the direction of the Ministry of Social Affairs, which restricts the potential of the education system in the country to facilitate positive and successful transition (McDonnell and Hardman, 2009; Aldabas, 2015).

These findings can be further supported with the help of the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System's Theory, according to which the family, school and groups of friends form the microenvironment of a child and involve direct interactions with them. According to the theory, people are not mere recipients of the experiences but during the process of socialisation, we tend to contribute to the environment. Along with the microenvironment, the meso environment also plays an important role in shaping the relationships in the life of an individual. It asserts that, if the elements forming the microenvironment of the children such a family and school create a negative impact on the children, the children tend to develop negative social behaviour. In this context, the neglect by members of the

society, over-protection and excessive attention from parents and conflicting behaviour and attitudes from peers and schoolteachers inculcate a feeling of awkwardness and the desire to withdraw or become aggressive in uncongenial circumstances. Exclusion in school from studies and breaks and lunch can thus be identified as the cause of aggressive behaviour developed among these children with disabilities in school, which has also motivated them to shout and use ill language against their peers.

In addition to the weaknesses in the programmes, the interviews also highlighted other issues, such as bureaucracy in Saudi Arabia, which is extensive. The interview highlighted that vocational training centres were very poor in all major aspects, so it is essential to improve their operation. They are largely identified with an acute lack of qualified specialists in different professions, especially the ones which are in higher demand. The training is often delivered within a primitive infrastructure with ancient buildings and a focus on obsolete professions, zero equipment and untrained specialists.

The vocational centres are inefficient and fail to support the individuals with learning disabilities in undertaking an effective transition from school to training to work. There is also a lack of advanced infrastructure and well-equipped workshops for training and there is also a lack of accreditation and recognition of the courses and training programmes, by the Ministry of Education or a university. The interview findings also revealed the absence of adequate awareness regarding the vocational centres. The parents also highlight the absence of accreditation of the universities and the vocational training centres in the private, as well as public, centres; consequently, the diplomas and training offered are often unrecognised and unauthenticated.

Nevertheless, the interviews also revealed that some considerable efforts have been made by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs that suggest an improvement in the design of

some programmes. The literature supports these findings and states that some of these programmes (such as computing, bookbinding, carpentry and telephone exchange operations) are still in high demand (Carter, Austin and Trainor, 2012). It was concluded from the literature review that one of the most important factors that plays a critical role in preparing the disabled person for the job environment was the programme and processes of the rehabilitation centres (Al-zarea, 2009), where the responsibility for these programme lies within the Ministry of Labour and Social Development.

Moreover, the findings of the case studies enabled comparison of Saudi rehabilitation centres with those in other Arabic countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, or Jordan, which, from the accounts given, appeared to be more helpful than the Saudi centres regarding the quality of their programmes, qualified specialists, facilities and effective preparation for work. In these centres it was revealed that people with disabilities who were trained there found employment after graduation because they had been trained in skills that were required in their job market. Therefore, the development of these programmes should be through appropriate buildings for training that contain workshops for each job, and qualified trainers, as well as students in these centres, who should be trained in skills that are compatible with the requirements of Saudi labour market (Alkawai and Alwayyed, 2017).

The interviews also revealed that it was essential for the professionals to enhance the training in respect of horticulture, libraries and shopping centres and malls. It is also essential that the training programmes are divided into two terms, wherein the first can be conducted at the vocational rehabilitation centre, while the other can take place in the real-time workplace. Adequate training and necessary skills development among individuals with disabilities will facilitate the firms in employing them. The interview findings also assert that if the government starts undertaking a deeper coordination with the companies

involved in different sectors, it would be useful for a large number of experienced trainers and specialised professionals and graduates to be employed.

On the other hand, it could be agreed with some employment managers in some companies that the majority of disabled people were not qualified for the work on account of the unproductive rehabilitation centre, which was supposed to provide the skills necessary for work. The weakness of vocational rehabilitation programme and the existence of unqualified specialists in KSA point to the difficulties in transitioning those individuals to work. Furthermore, these centres had many problems, such as the age of these centres and outdated skills and programmes, so disabled people were trained unproductively and had no job future (Algahtani, 2017). Also, not all specialists in these centres were well-qualified, or they did not have the capabilities to develop disabled persons' skills. Indeed, some of the specialists trained disabled individuals in skills that they did not have experience of or a certificate for (Abo-shoera, 2014), which they justified that by saying "the ministry does not provide any training courses to develop our skills". Furthermore, the parents of disabled people lacked knowledge and awareness about special education programmes or the rights of their disabled sons, especially in training and recruitment stages (Al-Mousa, 2010).

On the basis of these findings, it can be suggested that the programme supervisors were aware of the weaknesses in the prevailing programme; nevertheless, there was a gap between the programme design and its implementation, which would require a more adequate coordination and communication between the various government departments involved. These findings are aligned with the literature, which revealed that the vocational rehabilitation centres were one of the key initiatives undertaken by the government of Saudi Arabia to facilitate and support the employment of the individuals with learning disability (Crawford, 2012).

Rq3: What are the factors ease or complicate this transition?

The findings of the interviews revealed that a number of factors influence the employment of individuals with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia. In this respect, media and information technology have also been identified to be crucial to facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities. The interview findings highlighted that the media can play a key role in solving the problems and issues associated with the transition of persons with learning disabilities. The media can be significant not only in facilitating the coordination and cooperation between the government entities and vocational centres but also parents of individuals with learning disabilities.

Technology is a secondary factor, yet it is identified as central to support job searches and for managing other problems associated with transition. In this respect, the interview also highlighted the significant role and benefits that information technology can play in assisting individuals with learning disabilities in finding adequate and suitable employment opportunities. Sites such as the Saudi Network and Wasata network have the potential to offer valuable assistance to the persons with disabilities, helping them in online application for suitable jobs, thereby saving their time, effort and money. The incorporation of different technologies can be helpful for people with learning disabilities in developing their skills and capabilities. However, there will be a need for funds for access to human resources and to finance these employment projects.

The case studies addressed the lack of awareness and use of e-websites for assisting disabled people. It was highlighted from the case study that these factors played a key role in the transition from rehabilitation to workplace. In addition, the findings of the case studies also revealed that confidence and freedom of choice, excessive protection from the family, lack of salaries and poor transportation, lack of faith in the ability of the persons with disability and the role of e-websites in searching for jobs were considered as other

important factors in this transition. The lack of salaries and poor transportation were major obstacles because of overcrowding and lack of respect for transport regulations.

In respect of the use of technology, the findings of the interviews highlighted the use of assistive technology as a significant means of enhancing the capabilities and potential of people with learning disabilities, thereby enhancing their employment opportunities. The literature outlined the uses of assistive technology in protecting, supporting, training or substituting the impairments of the persons with learning disabilities and improving their participation, reducing restrictions and activity limitations (Vaziri, 2014). This might also be helpful in facilitating vision, mobility, hearing, communication and cognition. The use of assistive technology helps in improving the working capabilities of the persons with disabilities and makes them more employable. These technologies also help them in utilising their skills and capabilities in an effective manner, thereby becoming more productive (Vaziri, 2014).

In addition, the findings of the case studies reported that, among other factors, was the use of assistive technology that could develop the skills of disabled people in both their training on some e-website programmes and using them for applying or looking for work. It makes them less dependent on others' support and enables them to do their work by themselves. It also allows for the use of e-websites and related digital-mediated technologies to facilitate effective communication, share ideas and interact with other professional domains. It also helps the organisation to use and interact with other professionals. The literature further indicated that the use of technology enabled the organisations to nurture and employ the personal abilities and skills to assist them (Heymann, Stein and Moreno, 2013).

In respect of the use of e-websites, the literature also highlighted that they could play a crucial role in recruiting persons with learning disabilities, thereby saving their time and money. The findings of the case studies are also in alignment with the findings of the literature, wherein it was outlined that use of e-websites helped people with disabilities in seeking employment. These activities were helpful for applying for jobs and are likely to be increasingly important in this regard (Alsaqabi, 2011). Electronic sites and the use of technology have become supportive tools for people with learning disabilities globally and they use them not only for exploring employment opportunities but also for training and communicating (Alghahtani, 2017). However, some barriers to the use of assistive technologies were also examined in the literature. These included lack of governance, including policies, national programmes, lack of services, products, financial barriers, an inaccessible environment, lack of human resources and legislative and national programmes (World Health Organisation, 2016).

Attitudes have been identified as a key factor in enabling or inhibiting transition. In this respect, the findings of the interviews revealed that attitudes resting in cultural beliefs seriously restrict disabled people from taking advantage of employment opportunities. Most people in most Saudi communities identify people with learning disabilities as objects of pity and compassion, believing them to be incapable of work. The findings of the case studies also reveal that the lack of trust towards people with learning disabilities is a key factor that influences the transition of such persons. Such attitudes and lack of considerable success, despite making rigorous endeavours, serve as a major demotivation for people with such disabilities.

The findings of the critical incident chapter also revealed that the persons with disabilities encounter serious issues of inappropriate behaviour, lack of opportunities for growth, discriminatory treatment despite the contribution of effective manual work by them, and

demonstration of sincere attitudes towards work and assigned responsibilities. By trusting and believing in the potential of the persons with learning disabilities, they can be motivated to seek suitable employment opportunities. These findings are supported by the literature that reveals that the social model of disability includes political factors that may affect the sufferer markedly. These political factors may include civil rights or movements related to people (Anastasiou and Kauffman, 2013).

The literature also showed that engagement in society and the development of communication skills, especially for persons with learning disabilities, is considered a crucial factor that affects transition to work (Aldakhil, 2017). The Saudi environment is still closed for those individuals and the excessive protection from the families increased their isolation (Akdar, 2017). Also, the shame of having disabled children experienced by some families contributed to this isolation, and that led disabled children to withdraw from society when they grew up. In this respect, the critical incident chapter revealed that children with disabilities were kept in restriction and isolation even within their own families, just as they were kept isolated in the schools and restricted from learning social interaction and communication skills. Despite numerous efforts made, no successful initiatives appear to have been taken to promote social inclusion of these students. This was in the context of Al-Mousa's (2010) recommendation that some disabled people could have proper jobs in public places, but their communication skills were very limited, which made them hesitate to try this kind of work. In this respect, the analysis of the case studies revealed that the Ministry of Education must take responsibility for the weakness of their social skills, given the non-availability of an official curriculum that focuses on improving these types of skills for students with learning disabilities.

For example, Dr. Zahrani, the director of the Special Education Programme in the Ministry of Education in Riyadh, during the interview revealed that "the programme and

plans of the Special Education Department in KSA lack the concentration upon the development of communication skills and the social aspect, especially for students who have learning disabilities.” He also asserted that there were written objectives for the development of this aspect, but they faced a lot of challenges to achieve these goals in the real environment. However, despite the great efforts that were made to include disabled students with other non-disabled students in the public schools, this plan has failed because they did not apply a genuinely inclusive plan with classes for disabled students inside these schools (Altamimi et al., 2015).

Rq4: What are the benefits of work for these individuals and for wider society?

According to the findings of the interviews, the potential advantages of providing employment for individuals with learning disabilities are primarily the ways in which they can serve the society with the help of their skills and capabilities. The interview findings, in this respect, revealed that the main benefits were the ability to earn money and the development of self-reliance. In this respect, the findings of the literature were found to be in alignment with these findings and revealed that employment is likely to promote a sense of self-sufficiency and self-reliance (Alajmi and Albatal, 2016). Employees with learning disabilities were more adaptive and positive towards society in comparison with unemployed individuals with such disabilities in Saudi Arabia (Abo-shoera, 2014; Aldakhil, 2017). The literature further highlights that the employment of people with learning disabilities could be a motive for these persons to overcome the feelings of discrimination and feel a part of their community because employment opportunities facilitate them to interact and communicate with other people and discover real feelings towards them (Hartnett et al., 2011; Abo-shoera, 2014; Aldakhil, 2017).

Access to employment can help individuals to interact with other members of the community, to overcome long periods of isolation, to widen their skills, and to make a considerable contribution to the economy of the country by offering diversity in skills. The interviews also revealed that the participation of people with intellectual disabilities in employment can also be beneficial for companies as it enhances their diversity and makes them more effective in their corporate social responsibility. Furthermore, it helps in relieving the pressure on the families and training centres. Another benefit is for the Ministry of Labour as it will reduce the pressure on officials who work to help the subject to find jobs.

Access to employment can also help in changing society's negative attitudes to disability. The interview findings revealed that employment of such persons can be beneficial for the economy to a significant extent because it will help in minimising the level of unemployment and help in increasing Saudiization in a number of professional areas. This will also help in reducing the financial burden on the state because the authorities will not be required to pay unemployment allowance to their intellectually disabled citizens. Their employment will be beneficial for the state because the companies will be liable to pay the salaries to the people and not the government. The literature supported this result by assuring that the advantage of hiring disabled people in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is that it limits the allowances that are provided to this category monthly (Al-Mousa, 2010). As stated earlier, in 2002 the Saudi government has legislated an article of a monthly payment for an adult with disabilities who has graduated from school and is looking for work (Akdar, 2017).

The findings of interviews addressed the point that the employment of people with intellectual disabilities makes them more self-confident and more receptive to new

social experiences. It helps them in developing a stronger sense of self-satisfaction and responsibility. These results corresponded to the literature which indicated that the achievement of self-satisfaction and enhancement of the behavioural aspect of intellectually disabled individuals was a likely outcome of their work experience (Alnahdi, 2014). Also, self-confidence and a balanced personality composition were the outcomes noticed in a group of intellectually disabled employees. Algahtani (2017) stated that the main benefits of recruiting disabled people were getting married, saving money, assisting their families, making new friends and increasing the sense of responsibility.

The interviews further revealed that employment would be beneficial and advantageous for the families because it would help in improving the financial condition of the families by providing access to money for them and more resources to live a comfortable life. Thus, the families might benefit from their employment; for instance, in Riyadh some parents revealed that their disabled sons spend money on their houses and provide all the food and implement all the repairs. Also, some parents suggested that, before their son's employment, he would be a burden on them, and they were monitoring and responsible for his protection, but now it is the opposite: he is the source of their joy. These findings link with Algahtani (2017), who reported that families of the disabled unemployed, who are of working age, suffer from demands which are difficult to meet, compared to the families of the employed disabled, who expressed their happiness after their sons took the jobs and became able to adapt with the community. The ambitions of these families increased as soon as they realised that their disabled son's status had changed from dependence to independence and he had become more productive. In this context, one of the comments by a parent can be highlighted: "after joining the workforce my son usually visits the poor families in our area and he usually insists on assisting them".

In fact, based on observations and interviews with a group of intellectually disabled employees, it was revealed that these people tend to develop a sense of community after they have found work. This example indicates that the benefits of their employment could extend to other disabled people who are still looking for a job. However, the findings ensure that the jobs have brought several positive aspects for the disabled people's personal, social, economic and practical lives. Society will also benefit from the employment of intellectually disabled people because it will reduce the rate of unemployment in the state and decrease dependency on non-Saudis – as I noted in Chapter 1, Saudi Arabia has a very high proportion of migrant labour, with 32% of the population being expatriates, this accounting for 57% of the labour force and 89% of the private sector workforce.

Moreover, when disabled people work that might protect society by shifting perceptions and attitudes about these people from the negative to the positive: from being harmful to being useful, which is now happening in several places in Saudi Arabia (Alsaqabi, 2011). The work of intellectually disabled persons will also hopefully counter the kind of negative personal and social repercussions noted in my empirical work. The findings of the interviews also addressed the point that employment helps organisations in promoting diversity and thus minimises certain negative perceptions and beliefs. It also provides supports in creating coordination between social tasks and economic interests and enables organisations to obtain economic advantages by exploring new opportunities. These findings are in alignment with the findings of the literature that highlighted that the employment of the persons with intellectual disabilities is highly beneficial for employers and organisations because it leads to diversity (Crawford, 2011; Muller, 2013; Murillo, 2016; Australian Network on Disability, 2017).

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The aim of this research was to explore the difficulties encountered by young people with learning difficulties in making the transition from school to work and to examine the attitudes of those individuals, their families and concerned professionals towards transition readiness, facilities and programmes in Saudi Arabia. In order to address this aim, I have explored the complexities faced by these individuals in Saudi Arabia while transitioning from school to work. A range of training programmes that support transition have been studied; factors that influence the job opportunities and identify the benefits of employment for people with learning disabilities and the society in which they live have also been explored.

To address the central issues of the research, my design incorporated three main elements: semi-structured interviews, case studies and critical incident analysis. The main purpose of this final chapter is to draw conclusions following a synthesis and analysis of these different elements in order to fully answer the research questions. In addition, this chapter also discusses recommendations for existing and future research, stating the contributions to knowledge and practice, and noting the limitations of the research.

The overall examination and analysis of this research concludes that there are highly pertinent issues encountered by people with learning disabilities which create serious challenges for them while transitioning from school to work. This study outlines each of those challenges and attempts to generate awareness, as well as highlighting these young people's needs and the ways to help them in their growth and development.

Background of the study

It has been examined that several laws and guidelines have been established over the years to provide for and to protect the rights of people with special needs. For example, people with learning disabilities are required to be moved from segregated settings into more inclusive settings for learning; a range of special education programmes has been developed for them; funds for schools and rehabilitation centres have been increased by the government; guidelines have been established to offer incentives and benefits to the organisations that offer employment to such people. Yet the state of affairs regarding their transition from school to work continues to be challenging.

There appears to be a neglect of the rights of young people with learning difficulties, as those rights have been expressed in legislation. Rehabilitation centres, for example, could be highly beneficial for people with learning disabilities by helping them develop key skills such as problem solving, interpersonal communication and discipline skills, thereby supporting them in transitioning to the labour market, but despite the presence of training such as this, people with learning disabilities continue to suffer major challenges. Against this background, this research has examined the role of parents, society, schools and vocational rehabilitation centres along with other relevant authorities who might contribute to easing and enabling the transition from school to work.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings

Research Question 1: What are the difficulties faced by individuals with learning disabilities in the transition from school/ training programme to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

In the transition from a school or a rehabilitation centre to work in Saudi Arabian culture, individuals with learning disabilities faced various difficulties: the lack of training programmes or ineffective training programmes, lack of social skills, negative attitudes of people towards individuals with learning disabilities, and lack of awareness of parents towards the rights of their children. These difficulties are presented below based on the key findings from the study.

Training Programmes

All elements of the research revealed that people with learning disabilities are often segregated from their communities and are also not provided with required opportunities. They are often found to be deprived of effective training programmes and suitable employment opportunities, as they have always been in excluded institutions. One of the major reasons identified regarding the unsuccessful transition of people with disabilities from high school to work is lack of effective training programmes available for those people. There has been an increased need for schools and rehabilitation centres to focus on the lives of people with disabilities. This development would help disabled people to improve specific skills, such as self-determination or problem-solving and to develop a sense of freedom of choice. It could also help the subject in transitioning more easily to the labour market. In the current scenario, high schools lack effective training for such students; therefore, those students face difficulty in transitioning from their high schools.

It can be concluded that directors of institutions and authorities of educational settings should develop effective training programmes for people with disabilities so that they could improve their skills and easily transition from their school to the labour market and live as independent adults. Vocational training is important for people with any kind of disability so that they can be assisted in choosing an appropriate occupation and live independently in the future by being productive. This training is also essential for people

with disabilities to interact within the community. It can be concluded that vocational training is usually conducted in programme centres, which do not provide an effective training to those individuals; therefore, it is essential that training is also provided to the subject outside the training centres. It can also be concluded that specialised training is required for people with disabilities, such as engraving and sewing, typing, electricity, carpentry, secretarial work, painting and office work. This helps people with disabilities in choosing their career in future.

It can be stated that a training programme is considered one of the challenges for people with disabilities because even after a period of training at vocational and rehabilitation centres, they find difficulty in gaining employment. Some of the problems that people with disabilities face regarding their jobs include transportation issues, low salary as compared to other people in the organisation, and new machines as compared to the machines involved in the training process. In Saudi Arabia, children with disabilities are often ignored, which also restricts them from getting an effective training. In the UK, there is no specified model for providing vocational training to people with disabilities, which also creates issues in transitioning from school to work.

The Department of Health has developed rehabilitative training programmes in the UK, which assist people with disabilities in developing professional skills, social skills and personal skills so that they can better integrate within society and can live their life independently. As compared to Saudi Arabia, the vocational and rehabilitation training programmes developed in the UK and USA for people with disabilities are more effective, notwithstanding the longstanding challenges in both countries confronting those transitioning from school to work. Some of the challenges include ill-treatment by colleagues, lack of specialised training in the workplace and difficulty in competing with other employees (Groce, 2004). The current practices adopted in the USA are not effective

for people with disabilities, as compared to the UK; however, it has been identified that there is a deficit found in the approach of the UK regarding training of a subject group (Carr *et al.*, 2016).

The research in this thesis has reinforced the validity of other research (reviewed in the literature review) in reaching these conclusions. On the basis of the literature presented by Carr *et al.* (2016) and Schiemer (2017), it can be concluded that there is a significant need for the schools everywhere, but notably in Saudi Arabia, to develop effective training programmes for people with disabilities so that they do not face any difficulty while transitioning from school to work.

Furthermore, on the basis of the interview findings, it can be concluded that schools can develop internal training programmes, in order to address the issue of difficulty in transition. This conclusion has been derived on the basis of a detailed, formative suggestion from one of the interview respondents, Respondent F, who stated that *“It is equally important to divide the training program into two terms, one to be conducted at the vocational rehabilitation centre and the other to take place in the real work environment.”* In addition to this, Respondent A stated that *“There are certain training programs that are in high demand in the Saudi market, such as book binding, agriculture, communications and green groceries. Hence, intellectually disabled students who successfully complete their vocational rehabilitation in such professions usually find immediate employment. Such professions currently provide an exceptional employment opportunity for people with learning disabilities since the government has decreed it exclusively Saudi-ized.”*

Social Skills

People with disabilities often face issues regarding transition from school to work. In order to resolve this issue, it is important that a close coordination is maintained between social, educational and practical skills. Major issues faced by people with disabilities include social acceptance; therefore, it becomes necessary that social skills are developed (Antony, 2013). These findings are also supported by the literature findings of the research, which have identified that, for people with disabilities, only locational provision of services has been achieved; however, in the UK, provision of services involves integration of locational, functional and social provisions (Beveridge, 1999). These types of provisions are endorsed in schools so that students with disabilities can learn about social skills and accomplish their day-to-day tasks easily.

In the UK, government analysis shows that, for people with disabilities, it is important that their educational, health and social needs are accomplished, as it helps in the transition from school to work (Gov.uk, 2017²). Skills developed in people with disabilities can also help them gain social acceptance, which is a major issue in the current scenario.

It is important that people with any disability are socially accepted, as the social factor is the major factor that affects people in accomplishing their day-to-day tasks successfully. There is an informative international contrast here: in the Arabian countries, it has been found in my own empirical work, and in the published research, that social and cultural factors are the major issue that affects the development of communication skills in people with disabilities (El-Hady, 2011). By contrast, cultural attitudes in Western countries have enabled an effort to be made to improve the social skills of people with disabilities. The major difference that has been found regarding the development of social skills in Arabian and Western countries is that Arabian countries are continuously focusing on gathering

funds and building institutes that can help in providing training to people with disabilities – efforts that can sometimes seem to be tokenistic and aimed principally at gaining the approval of international bodies. However, Western countries are focusing on bringing changes to their policies and rights for people with disabilities so that they are not segregated from society and can develop the social skills that benefit them in transitioning from school to work.

The major inhibiting factor in Arabian countries regarding the development of social skills is that people think that disabled people are a problem for society and it is a curse for a person if he or she has any disability (Schiemer, 2017), and this was borne out in my own empirical work. These beliefs restrict the social integration and development of social skills in a person with a disability. The Ministry of Social Affairs in Saudi Arabia is focused on the development of skills in people with disabilities, for which training is provided regarding electrical work, sewing, and carpentry, which also help them in the process of social integration.

However, this training is provided in institutes for disabled people which segregate them from society and also lack programmes for social skill development. Regarding people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia, it can be concluded that it should be required for the country to focus more on the social skills development of people with disabilities. This approach could also help such individuals in living their lives independently, as they would more easily be able to accomplish their social tasks.

In the UK, it can be observed that social policies are changing, with more focus on the development of social communication skills in people with disabilities (Yates and Roulstone, 2013; Williams and Evans, 2013). It can be concluded that schools and parents

play an increasingly important role in the development of social skills in children with disabilities, and that this is necessary in order to develop the children's confidence and sense of independence. However, this is not necessarily the case in Saudi Arabia. At the initial level, children are excluded from the opportunity to develop social skills so that they cannot communicate and interact effectively in society. People with disabilities face rejection within their society at an early age, which also restricts them from developing social skills, and this issue extends right through the course of education, with ensuing problems in transitioning to work. These conclusions have been derived on the basis of the incident analysis section of the study, which found that parents and school are crucial in the training and development of individuals with a learning disability. Further, parents can also help these individuals in facing their social issues.

People's Attitudes

As I have noted throughout, attitudes towards individuals with disabilities are one of the main factors which affects and restricts individuals in developing life-skills and independence. In Saudi Arabia, people believe that it is accursed to be born with any kind of disability and they are therefore ignored (Rotatori *et al.*, 2014). This situation restricts disabled people from developing social skills, which later affects them in transitioning from school to work. From the home to the family to the workplace to the local administration system to national government it is believed that people with disabilities represent dependence and need. Every country and culture have different beliefs that may affect people with disabilities differently but such beliefs about dependence appear from my empirical work to be endemic in Saudi culture – from the microsystem to the macrosystem. It is important that people with disabilities are accepted socially, so that they can develop social skills and other skills that are required to enable the transition from school to work.

As compared to Saudi Arabia, it can be concluded that people living in the UK do not to any significant extent segregate people with a disability. However, neglecting the behaviour of Saudi Arabian people towards individuals with a disability is questionable. In Western countries, it has been observed that the attitude of people towards a disability has been transformed, which has minimised the level of segregation of disabled people from society and also transformed the former negative attitudes towards such people.

In the current scenario, structural and technological tools have been developed in Western countries, which are beneficial in assisting people with disabilities in becoming independent and supporting them to accomplish their daily tasks like other people in society more broadly (El-Hady, 2011). Therefore, certain policy changes have also been made which are beneficial in giving rights to people with disabilities to enjoy active participation in social life. While social exclusion of people with disabilities still exists in Western countries, it is being gradually countered over time as reforms are introduced by governments and also changes in the attitudes of people are apparent. Certain common beliefs regarding people with disabilities exist in Western as well as in Arabian countries. These beliefs are even presented by the media, and this becomes discouraging for people with disabilities and restricts them from social interaction. Accordingly, there is a significant need to bring about changes in the attitudes of people so that social skills can be developed in people with disabilities and to enable them to have improved transition from school to work.

In Arabian countries no evidence was found, either in my own empirical work or in my review of the literature, regarding the development of policies for the social inclusion of people with disabilities, despite the overt political commitment to building institutions to help in their training. However, it is required that the existing attitudes of people are

changed in Arabian countries so that people with disabilities can enhance their social interaction and have ease in transitioning from school to work.

In modern-day Arabian culture, it has been found that the segregation of people with disabilities still exists, despite the teaching found in the Prophet that people with disabilities must not be segregated from society. The main explanation for the lack of social interaction found among people with disabilities is that they feel people are judgemental and their disabilities are being judged by society. Furthermore, in Arabian countries it has been observed that people are not assisted by others. In Arabian countries, a difference was found regarding the treatment of children with disabilities. This analysis showed that some of the children with disabilities were treated with sensitivity, while other children were treated as normal people, which improved their social interaction and allowed them to grow up as independent adults. Other than in the community and schools, in the workplace different attitudes can be observed, where colleagues treat people with disabilities differently and do not include them in all activities.

Organisations do not hire people with disabilities as they believe that such people will be a burden for the organisation (Abo-shoera, 2014; Nui, 2013). However, in the current scenario, it can be observed that various policies have been developed by the government that provide benefits to organisations that hire people with disabilities. In the workplace, it can be stated that people with disabilities are discriminated against to a great extent, which creates difficulty for them in finding employment opportunities and succeeding in life. It is also a major concern, given the social inclusion of people with disabilities and the increasingly negative attitude of people towards them, that parents do not take any action so that their children's skills can be developed.

Lack of Awareness of Parents towards the Rights of their Children

It has been identified in my research that parents can help the teachers significantly in improving the skills and capabilities of children with disabilities. However, it was found that parents did not help the teachers specifically to develop the social skills of disabled children in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, these children lacked social interaction and they were unable to transition from school to work. At the same time, parents believe that teachers are not able to provide the required training sessions for students with disabilities, which creates difficulty for students in transitioning from school to work (Grigal *et al.*, 2003). In some cases, examined in the literature, it was also found that teachers providing training sessions to students with disabilities were not adequately qualified. Therefore, it is necessary for the parents themselves to focus on training their children to help them in learning social skills, which will be beneficial in transitioning from school to work. This information was gathered from the semi-structured interview findings, which involved the director of the rehabilitation centre, specialists and supervisors. Further, I have also included my personal perspective in deriving these conclusions.

It can be concluded that often parents feel unprepared and overwhelmed due to the responsibilities and extra care needed for their children with disabilities. Due to the negative beliefs and attitudes of the people in society regarding their disabled children, parents also need to cope with the social impacts. Parents who are able to face the discrimination issues regarding their children are able to seek out internal and external means of support so that they can help their children regarding special needs. As a consequence of the negative perceptions from society, parents

sometimes have feelings of shame, guilt and rejection, which prevent them from investigating means of support for their children. The majority of parents who have a disabled child lack awareness regarding the rights and benefits available for their child. I concluded this from the case study section, which is also supported by the literature of Grigal *et al.* (2003) and Egan and Drew (2016).

The lack of awareness of parents regarding the rights of their disabled child often overburdens them with the extra responsibilities for their child's care, which could easily be shared with the wider society, if parents had a proper knowledge regarding the rights of the disabled child. This was derived from the interview findings and case incident analysis chapter. This can be stated as an important finding because it was repeated in the chapter and thus can be stated as a critical finding. Article 23 of UNCRC states that disabled children ought to have access to all the conditions and the support which are required for the child's growth and development (Fina *et al.*, 2017). Despite the rights provided for disabled children, they continue to face challenges in the current scenario regarding social inclusion and the transition from school to work. However, the major factor is the lack of awareness of parents regarding the rights of their children. If parents had sufficient knowledge regarding the rights of their disabled children, then they could easily help them to transition from school to work and conduct their daily life activities.

In specific cases, it was found that parents with a disabled child become overprotective in order to protect them from people's negative beliefs and attitudes. This restricts the overall growth and development of the child, as they get confined in a particular space for protection and care, which excludes them from the social interaction which is required for their overall growth and development. This also restricts the children from becoming independent. Furthermore, a major impact can be seen in their future employability. It is important that children with disabilities have an appropriate confidence level and social

skills, so that they are at ease in transitioning from school to work. Excessive protectiveness of parents may lead to a lack of self-confidence in the child, and poor personal and social skills, which restricts the child in making the transition from school to work.

It can be concluded that lack of awareness of parents regarding the rights of a disabled child leads to overprotection of the child. This hampers the child's personal freedom and restricts the development of their social skills. It has also been identified that the parents' lack of awareness regarding the rights and their over-protection of their disabled child restricts the child from applying for effective training sessions, pre-employment interviews and also from seeking employment opportunities. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that some parents are becoming aware of the vocational training and rehabilitation centres available for their disabled child, which is beneficial for the child in getting overall training and in facilitating their transition from school to work. The lack of awareness can be considered a major issue that children with disabilities face.

Research Question 2: What kind of programmes support them in this transition?

In respect of this research question, several programmes were examined that have been developed by the government of Saudi Arabia to support the development of individuals with learning disabilities in preparing and coping with the process of transition. I found that the implementation of such programmes in the schools and rehabilitation vocational centres examined was ineffective. The training offered to people with learning disabilities is not good enough to enable them to seek adequate employment. Most of the rehabilitation centres and vocational centres examined had unskilled trainers, obsolete training equipment and a lack of appropriate plans and programmes for the training and development of students with disabilities. In addition, issues like bureaucracy and negligence in the implementation also hindered their effective delivery of the subject.

Therefore, there is a need for highly coordinated communication and planning by government departments and in schools and rehabilitation centres to ensure that the benefits of the programmes reach people with learning disabilities in the desired manner.

In respect of these programmes, the findings of the primary data also highlight a significant programme. This is a vocational rehabilitation programme in Al-Kharj, which operates as a rehabilitation centre in cooperation with the centre and the water factory, which offers training and future employment opportunities to students with learning disabilities. This rehabilitation programme has been beneficial in securing employment for persons with learning disability in the Kingdom. It was also found that some training and rehabilitation programmes are quite popular in the Kingdom among students with learning disability. These programmes include book-binding, agriculture, communications and greengrocery; others include training in retail work, computing, carpentry, electricity and telephone exchange operations. Students successfully completing their vocational rehabilitation in the Kingdom receive help in obtaining adequate and appropriate employment. Such professions have been effective in offering pertinent employment opportunities and have served to be successful in the Saudisation of the Kingdom. These specific findings of my study came from the views of the specialised respondents in the rehabilitation centre.

The findings of this study in regard to this research question related to programmes which might smooth the transition to work, and they highlight the need for additional special educational programmes for persons with learning disabilities. These programmes include teacher-consultant programmes, itinerant teacher programmes, follow-up programmes, self-contained classroom programmes and resource room programmes. These programmes are comprehensive in nature and focus on their aim of facilitating the transition of persons

with learning disabilities. However, despite their potential benefits, they are underdeveloped and thus fail to contribute the desired benefits to the people concerned (Muthumbi, 2008).

It is emphasised that these programmes, despite their effective funding and authenticity, are weak in their implementation. These programmes are identified to be poor and either make the students too dependent on the trainers or the trainers are not able to produce the desired results. It was also found that the absence of adequate communication and coordination between the government departments and the vocational rehabilitation centres further creates limitations on the successful implementation and delivery of these programmes. From the findings, it has also been concluded that focusing on some specific professions that are mostly in demand, such as libraries, horticulture and shopping centres, can serve to be useful. It can also be beneficial to divide the overall training programmes into two terms wherein the first can be conducted at the vocational rehabilitation centre while the other can be undertaken on a real time basis at the workplace itself. The trainee can be evaluated based on the training programme and his/her determination for the job position. Effective coordination between the government and the companies in various sectors can enable companies to offer employment to a large number of experienced trainers who specialise in various useful professions and offer relevant employment opportunities to the people with disabilities.

It is also suggested that this supervision or coordination between entities will help in increasing awareness regarding the weaknesses in the existing programmes and in developing more appropriate solutions to the effective implementation of these programmes. This will also help in addressing the gap between the design and the subsequent implementation of the programmes and will help in enhancing the coordination and communication between the various government departments. The systematic and

well-organised planning and management of the training centres in Saudi Arabia would help in enabling people with disabilities to find work more easily, as these centres are the bridge that leads disabled people to work. This would be beneficial in the effective implementation of the vocational rehabilitation programmes for persons with learning disabilities.

Research Question 3: What are the factors that facilitate or complicate this transition?

In light of this research question, I found that there are two major factors that facilitate the transition of individuals with learning disabilities from a school or rehabilitation centre into work. These two major factors are assistive technology and coordination between stakeholders. With the help of these two factors, individuals could also be provided with effective preparation for transition to the world of work. These two factors are discussed below on the basis of the key findings of the study.

Assistive Technology

It has been observed that, in the UK, policies regarding people with a disability have been moving forward, which has increased the focus on the enhancement of both social communication and employability skills. These strategies can be effectively applied in the context of Saudi Arabia and serve to be beneficial in the improvement of the status of individuals with a learning disability.

In the UK, it has been identified that the technological advancement and social support provided by the government is beneficial for people with a disability who are transitioning from school to work (Williams and Evans, 2013; Yates and Roulstone, 2013). In the UK, assistive technologies have been developed through technological advances, and have led to a shift in policies by the government and increasing social support. Assistive technologies have helped in the development of rehabilitation programmes in the UK

which help people with disabilities to gain necessary technological skills and also enhance their communication skills, which are important for the transition from school to work. In Saudi Arabia, however, due to lack of technological advancement as compared to the UK, assistive technologies are not yet supported. This restricts the development of effective rehabilitation programmes that can support the transition of students with disabilities from school to work. This finding is based on the views of the respondents as specified in Chapter 4.

In the past, people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia had to wait a long time to get a job interview. It was observed in my findings that, in Saudi Arabia, websites have been developed which act as a supportive tool for people with disabilities to apply for any job without waiting long. The analysis has shown that these assistive technologies are helpful for people with disabilities, but they also have some disadvantages which restrict their use for such people. There is a lack of awareness regarding assistive technologies, and parents are not aware of the rights of their disabled child, which restricts them from applying for jobs and getting training.

Coordinating between Entities

Relevant authorities and entities can help people with disabilities by providing them with a preparation concerning their employment offer. This helps the organisation to be more inclusive; however, it becomes important to ensure the working of the business operations in an effective manner. Therefore, it can be stated that coordination between the entities is required to help people with disabilities to get accommodation and also to help an organisation to retain their talent. Coordination between the entities is also beneficial in creating a policy regarding discrimination, development of disability networks and the online environment. I concluded these points from my findings chapter, which has focused on the lack of coordination between various entities.

Research Question 4: What are the benefits of work for these individuals and for wider society?

Productive work confers benefits on almost everyone who does it, and this includes those with learning difficulties. Firstly, individuals can serve their society with the help of their specific skills and capabilities. With the help of work, they promote their sense of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Self-reliance and self-sufficiency motivate individuals to undertake various tasks and accomplish them independently. It can also be stated that, from work, individuals with learning disabilities can benefit from enhanced interaction in society and easier communication with people. This helps in their social inclusion, which is the major issue identified regarding the transition of individuals from school to work. One of the major benefits of work is that individuals can develop their social skills, which gives them a sense of belonging. Individuals can also benefit their community and the government by putting their energy into productive work and accomplishing various tasks. These results were drawn from the views of my research participants, namely the supervisors in rehabilitation programmes, recruitment officials, parents, and individuals with learning disabilities.

Recommendations

On the basis of the key findings of this study, some of the recommendations are listed below.

- People have negative attitudes towards individuals with learning disabilities in the KSA. Due to this negative attitude, these individuals face issues regarding their social inclusion and development of social skills. In this respect, it is recommended to the government of the KSA that it develop and create more specific and focused policies for the promotion of social inclusion in schools and workplaces. It must be noted that these policies motivate and facilitate the promotion of social skills, communication and

personal interaction of the people with disabilities. In addition, I also plan to create presentations for my local community to spread awareness among the community members regarding the benefits of employment for young people with learning disabilities and to improve their skills at the workplace. I also plan to visit supervisors, specialists, officials, under the Ministry of Education and Social Affairs to inform them about my research findings and discuss important recommendations with them, as I ensured them after I had completed my study.

- It has been identified that the training at rehabilitation centres provided to students with disabilities is not appropriate. This lack of effective training for these students does not help in easing their transition from school to work. In this respect, it is recommended that the government of the KSA should have formally planned goals and objectives to train and guide people with a learning disability. This plan must be target-oriented and cater to the specific needs of the students as per their need for skills, personality development, communication, vocational training and others and assist students in exploring suitable alternatives for employment and enable them to be in a position to meet the demands of industry. These plans must also be time oriented and focused to address all learning and training needs of the students such that the process of transition is eased. In addition, the findings of my research also highlight crucial information regarding training programmes for persons with learning disabilities as examined in the studies of other cultures. The information thus forming the findings of this research can serve to be useful in improving the training programmes at the vocational rehabilitation centres in the Kingdom.

- It has been identified that the Saudi government has developed various policies and legislation for individuals with disabilities which would help them in gaining employment; however, due to the inappropriate implementation strategy of the government, these individuals are not employed. However, these policies exist solely on paper. It is thus recommended that all rehabilitation vocational centres must be monitored individually to ensure that all measures regarding the instructors, teachers, trainers, study materials, skills training are easily accessible to all students.
- Parents are not aware of the rights for their children with disabilities, which restricts the children from making a smooth transition from school to work. It is thus recommended that regular awareness programmes are organised by the government. These programmes must be conducted to provide knowledge to deal with the children with learning disabilities and awareness regarding the benefits, facilities and rights provided by the government for such children and the ways in which they can be accessed.

The Contributions of this research

Contributions to theory

The research presented in this study has provided an in-depth examination of the challenges encountered by people with learning disabilities while transitioning from school to work in Saudi Arabia. The findings of this research make a significant contribution to the academic field regarding issues and problems experienced by disabled people in a developing country. The limited knowledge concerning the transition of people with a learning disability from school to work has been expanded and the factors and

challenges associated with this transition have been examined. In this respect, this research can be seen to be making a significant contribution to this field in Saudi Arabia (Abed and Alrawajfh, 2017; Doyle *et al.*, 2018; Sharm, 2015). The research has undertaken a critical examination of the existing conditions of people with learning disabilities and has presented a detailed study of the challenges encountered by them while transitioning from school to work. In this regard, it also offers a useful comparative perspective, highlighting some of the issues arising from the adoption of largely western policy in a culture in which such policy may challenge tradition, expectation and belief.

The contribution of this research involves two important factors concerning people with learning disabilities: firstly, regarding attitudes towards the outcome of transition training programmes; secondly, correlations between a range of factors such as Saudi society, schools, rights, social and personal skills, parents' lack of awareness, and ineffective implementation of policies and government initiatives. The findings of the research were developed through an in-depth study of the data gathered with the help of a combination of methods including semi-structured interviews, case study and critical incident analysis, which have provided significant information in respect to factors such as training programmes, social skills, people's attitudes, the lack of awareness of parents toward their children's rights, assistive technology and coordination between entities. There had previously been only limited in-depth studies and a lack of reliable information on the transition of people with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia. This study serves to create a useful foundation upon which further research can be conducted in respect of the development of people with learning disabilities.

Contribution to practice

The findings reveal several pertinent factors that create challenges for people with learning disabilities and highlight the roles of schools, parents, workplaces and employers, societies, rehabilitation vocational centres and government authorities in triggering those challenges. In this respect, by generating reliable and useful information on the ways these entities create challenges for people with learning

disabilities, the findings of the research provide a basis through which they can be made aware and guided to take appropriate measures to resolve those challenges and facilitate the development and growth of disabled people. The research thus makes a key contribution by informing parents about the wide range of rights allowed by the government of Saudi Arabia for the education and employment of children with learning disabilities.

The awareness of such rights will enable parents to argue for an inclusive workplace environment for their children and a respectable position in society. It will also help them in taking the right measures to ensure the dignity and self-respect of their children with learning disabilities and assist them to overcome the social prejudices associated with disabilities. The research findings also highlight a number of aspects where the social and cultural attitudes of people in Saudi society hamper the growth and well-being of people with learning disabilities. Cultural attitudes have been highlighted as a major challenge experienced by people with learning disabilities which prevent their skills development in school, at home, in the workplace, rehabilitation centres and in the wider society. These cultural attitudes form the basis of the preconceived prejudices and stereotypes held by people toward people with learning disabilities and thus prevent them from recognising the potential and abilities of people with disabilities of any kind, which eventually leaves

them deprived of opportunities for adequate growth and development. Therefore, the findings of this research highlight the ways in which such cultural attitudes hinder them and that people with learning disabilities have immense potential for working efficiently if they are provided with the right guidance and support.

These findings were confirmed by the CIT analysis and provide a key contribution in generating awareness among schools, parents, workplaces, employers, societies, rehabilitation vocational centres and government authorities of the need to take adequate measures to be able to deliver suitable opportunities for the growth and development of people with learning disabilities. The research findings make a significant contribution to raising the awareness of these institutions and authorities concerning their roles and their responsibilities towards people with learning disabilities, which should thus motivate them to take appropriate measures to promote their rights, skills development, inclusion, opportunities for work and growth, and their right to live a life of dignity and independence.

Limitations of this research

An issue I encountered throughout was the unwillingness of the respondents to reveal true and correct information regarding the questions asked. Some of the respondents also exhibited a lack of interest in participating in the interviews and providing any new information. The Critical Incident Method was subject to vulnerabilities such as potential recall bias.

Considerable measures were taken to offset the shortcomings of each qualitative method employed in this research, such as the use of critical analysis and a combination of methods to ensure consistency in research findings, which have also served to improve the credibility of the research findings. However, given the shortcomings of each qualitative

research method used in the research, their usage does restrict the validity and objectivity of the findings, though I have noted the validity of concepts such as ‘reliability’ with regard to qualitative research in Chapter 3.

In addition, as this topic has been under-researched within the setting of Saudi Arabia until now, there was a shortage of credible and reliable secondary sources of data that could be used to support the findings of the qualitative data. The time required for the collection of credible and useful sources of secondary data further led to a reduction in the time available for data analysis (Wang *et al.*, 2015). Time constraints thus served as a key limitation encountered while conducting the research. It was difficult to contact any research participants who were ready to participate and provide the desired information. The delay in searching for such participants left less time that could be allocated for conducting the interviews and, consequently, less information could be gathered from the interviews.

In addition to the above, other limitations could be highlighted. For example, interviewing people with learning disabilities was quite difficult in Saudi Arabia because of the limitations caused by Saudi culture. The over-protective attitude of the parents and family members towards their disabled children created issues in interviewing them. Interviewing females with a learning disability was also very difficult because of the Saudi culture. This is because the Saudi culture ensures gender segregation by which interaction between men and women in public places is restricted. Consequently, men cannot enter many places and, likewise, interviews cannot be conducted with women by male interviewers. These factors restricted the generalisability I could claim of my research, due to the gender-

specificity of my respondent group. In a similar context, interviewing families in Riyadh was also challenging because they would refuse to participate in the study. Such extreme levels of prejudice existed because the researcher was from different city, which prevented them from participating readily in this research. Rigorous efforts had to be made to make them understand the relevance of the study. However, most of the time they still refused, and I was compelled to look for other respondents, which also led to unnecessary delay, additional frustrations and limitations to the research findings.

Thirdly, there was also very limited availability of statistics and information on the training programmes and employment for people with a learning disability, which created a major challenge to determine the extent of such programmes and employment opportunities. Fourthly, the officials working in some government departments who were identified as respondents did not have experience of this sort of research. This created challenges for the researcher because the officials could not answer the questions in the desired manner and thus other officials had to be interviewed who had only a limited knowledge of the subject. These other officials who then participated in the interview required explanation about the entire subject and purpose of my research which not only involved a lot of time but also effort in gathering the desired data. Some of the officials interviewed made excuses, such as prayer timings, because of which only one interview could be completed in one visit.

Other factors, such as the bureaucracy associated with the Saudi ministries, along with other routine processes, also imposed a high cost on time and resources. Furthermore, the hot weather and long distances between the ministries, schools and rehabilitation centres and companies also added to time delays and cost implications, thereby creating personal limitations for this work.

Direction for further study

Although this research makes a significant contribution to the field of knowledge and practice by outlining the challenges encountered by people with learning disabilities, which will serve to be useful in generating awareness and attention among the parents, schools, vocational rehabilitation centres, government authorities and organisations, it has also to a considerable extent opened the scope for further research. As this study has provided an insight into the challenges suffered by people with learning disabilities, and it has highlighted the need for further research on the role and function of schools in meeting the challenges. It could be helpful in drawing up pertinent strategies and planning for schools to ensure inclusive learning for students with learning disabilities.

Future research could also be conducted on the ways organisations could promote their employment and the measures that could be taken by them to facilitate the career growth and development of people with learning disabilities. Further studies could also be undertaken on the measures and interventions used by the government and organisations in the developed countries, whose findings could be implemented in Saudi Arabia to enhance the well-being of people with learning disabilities. In addition, more research could be undertaken on how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) could be employed for the skills development and personal development of people with learning disabilities.

It is also identified that pertinent research in future should be conducted on gender specific issues, for instance, impact of the existing vocational training on females with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The other barriers to education and employment could also be discussed in the context of females. A comparative study could also be conducted in this regard, to examine if any difference exists in the treatment of the two genders at schools and

in workplaces and the various factors influencing this differential treatment. Future study could also focus on an examination of the prevailing laws and policies on education, employment and the treatment of people with learning disabilities. Such laws could be discussed at a national and international level and suitable changes can be recommended to Saudi Arabia.

This research has thus created a foundational study, highlighting the challenges experienced by people with learning disabilities and has opened up immense scope for further study on the ways in which each of the identified challenges could be mitigated so that disabled people could be given an opportunity to live a life of dignity, inclusion and independence in society. In addition, further research could also focus on the use of quantitative methods to support the findings of the qualitative data, such that more credible and valid data findings could be obtained that would further enhance current knowledge in this field of study.

Final thoughts

For me, this study has not only served to be a source of knowledge and information, but also as an eye-opening experience of conducting a research study. At the time when this study was undertaken, I had a limited understanding of how to conduct research of this scale and magnitude. However, this experience of conducting research under the guidance of learned and experienced supervisors and faculty members was highly beneficial in learning to explore a wide range of information available on the subject of the research and how to draw pertinent findings. The findings gathered from the research will be beneficial in adding to existing knowledge on the challenges experienced by people with learning disabilities in KSA and will provide a basis for the authorities to evaluate their initiatives and interventions, hopefully helping to facilitate and enable the growth and

independence of all disabled people in Saudi society. I hope this will be helpful for the families, schools, members of society, vocational rehabilitation centres and employers in identifying the potential and needs of people with learning disabilities and in motivating them to extend their care and support.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1. Research Ethics Approval Letter

[Research Ethics Approval Letter]

Dear Professor Thomas

Re: “Difficulties faced by individuals with mild intellectual disabilities in transition from school to work from their perspectives in Saudi Arabia”

Application for Ethical Review ERN_16-0420

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project, which was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee.

On behalf of the Committee, I confirm that this study now has full ethical approval.

I would like to remind you that any substantive changes to the nature of the study as described in the Application for Ethical Review, and/or any adverse events occurring during the study should be promptly brought to the Committee’s attention by the Principal Investigator and may necessitate further ethical review.

Please also ensure that the relevant requirements within the University’s Code of Practice for Research and the information and guidance provided on the University’s ethics webpages (available at

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research->

[Ethics/Links-and-Resources.aspx](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Links-and-Resources.aspx)) are adhered to and referred to in any future applications for ethical 339

review. It is now a requirement on the revised application form

(<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Ethical-Review-Forms.aspx>) to confirm that this guidance has been consulted and is understood, and that it has been taken into account when completing your application for ethical review.

Please be aware that whilst Health and Safety (H&S) issues may be considered during the ethical review process, you are still required to follow the University's guidance on H&S and to ensure that H&S risk assessments have been carried out as appropriate. For further information about this, please contact your School H&S representative or the University's H&S Unit athealthandsafety@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Kind regards

Susan Cottam

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Web: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/research-support-group/Research-Ethics>

Please remember to submit a new [Self-Assessment Form](#) for each new project.

Click [Ethical Review Process](#) for further details regarding the University's Ethical Review process, or email ethics-queries@contacts.bham.ac.uk with any queries.

Click [Research Governance](#) for further details regarding the University's Research Governance and Clinical Trials Insurance processes, or email researchgovernance@contacts.bham.ac.uk with any queries

Notice of Confidentiality:

The contents of this email may be privileged and are confidential. It may not be disclosed to or used by anyone other than the addressee, nor copied in any way. If received in error please notify the sender and then delete it from your system. Should you communicate with me by email, you consent to the University of Birmingham monitoring and reading any such correspondence.

Appendix 2. Participant Consent Forms

The difficulties faced by individuals with learning disabilities in transition from school to workplaces in Saudi Arabia

This research part of a PhD project looking at the difficulties that are faced by young people with learning disabilities in transition from school/vocational centres to the workplace. Your participation in this project will help me by providing a unique insight about the challenges that limit the ability of young people with learning disabilities in S.A. in finding an appropriate job.

Please look at the questions likely to be raised at the end of this letter, and if you are happy with them and with the following statements, sign at the foot of this page.

1. I have read and understood the above background information giving details of the project.
2. I have had the opportunity to ask the researcher any questions that I had about the project and understand my role in the project.
3. My decision to consent is entirely voluntary and I understand that we are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
4. I understand that no individual will be identifiable in any write-up and I understand that data gathered in this study will be anonymised and may be used in the researcher's PhD and also for further dissemination including at conferences and for journal publications.

5. I understand that my name will not be used in this project, and the researcher will use pseudonyms instead of actual names.
6. I realize that my responses will be recorded but that they will be erased subsequent to the completion of the study.
7. I know that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality.
8. I understand that I have the right to obtain the feedback of this project by providing my email address.

Participant's signature:

Participant's name/initial (in CAPITALS)

_____ Researcher's signature:

Researcher' name and contact:

Adel Alanazi, PhD student, School of Education, University of Birmingham

Email: Axa520student@bham.ac.uk

Phone: 00447944850210/

00966505446651

Appendix 3. Interview Transcripts

INTERVIEW 1: Director of the Vocational Rehabilitation Department at the Ministry of Labour

Q1: What are the difficulties encountered by the intellectually disabled in the transition from the vocational rehabilitation or school phase to work?

Based on my experience as a director of vocational rehabilitation centres, I believe there are numerous difficulties, such as lack of awareness of the parents of the rights of their intellectually disabled children and lack of coordination between various entities, concerned with their training and subsequent employment. For instance, I work at the ministry of labor's training and rehabilitation department, and there is another department at the same ministry, concerned with the employment of the disabled, yet, I'm sad to report, there is absolutely no coordination between the two departments in any shape or form towards assisting the intellectually disabled to get proper employment. It is no secret that the department responsible for the employment of the disabled at the ministry does have the power to bring pressure to bear on private sector companies to hire this category of the labour force. So, if there is coordination between the training and rehabilitation sector and the employment sector at the ministry of labour on the one hand and the private sector companies on the other, the disabled employment process will be much easier and faster.

Q2: Why is cooperation so obviously lacking between you at the rehabilitation department and the employment department at the ministry of labour?

The offices of the department of employment are just a 45minute drive from us. However, despite this physical proximity, no concerted coordination initiatives are being taken, telling you the sad truth. There were, of course, individual efforts towards achieving interdepartmental coordination yet such efforts, while commendable failed. The reason is that achieving full coordination requires regular meetings, culminating in official and legal guarantees to safeguard the rights of the person with a learning disability, such as incentivizing the private sector to offer job opportunities for the disabled people, while rehabilitation centres provide appropriate job-suited training. The employment department will then follow up their actual employment, penalizing companies that dodge its commitment to employ the person with a disability.

Q3: Are there any other problems?

There is a dearth of both rehabilitation centres and specialized trainers. Let's take the city of Riyadh as an example. Can you imagine that there are only two centres, one in the east and the other in downtown Riyadh?! I come under constant pressure brought to bear by the parents of intellectually disabled individuals, to respond to their need for centres in the south, north and west of Riyadh. There are also the problems of unavailable disabled-friendly transportation and non- recognition by some companies of the certificates issued by rehabilitation centres.

Q4: How come your certificates are not recognized?

Upon completion of the nine months training course, the trainee is awarded a certificate proving his/her successful completion of the course. However, most private sector companies, as is our habit in Saudi Arabia, demand that such vocational rehabilitation courses be sponsored by a governmental entity, such as the ministry of education, a public university or college.

Q5: What are the types of programs that will ensure an easier transition by the person with a learning disability into the work market?

There are certain training programs that are in high demand in the Saudi market, such as book binding, agriculture, communications and green groceries. So, students with a learning disability who complete their vocational rehabilitation in such professions usually find immediate employment. Such professions currently provide an exceptional employment opportunity for those individuals since the government has decreed it exclusively Saudi-ized .

Q6: Why then haven't these programs been activated as an essential component of vocational rehabilitation programs?

The routine is boringly lengthy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We submitted a request to the minister who asked for a detailed study of these programs. We did prepare a plan, but it will take a long time to get approved .

Q7: What are the components of this project?

We submitted a request for the incorporation of some training programs, involving the sectors of communications, retail, safety and security. We also requested that trainers in those professions be specialized and experienced. We also requested that inter-departmental cooperation is increased, and that trainers' salaries be increased as well.

Q8: I don't know what professional training programs for the intellectually disabled are already in place. So, what are those professions?

We do have training programs in book-binding, computing, agriculture, carpentry, electricity and telephone exchange operation.

Q9: What are the factors that facilitate employment of the intellectually disabled in the post-rehabilitation phase?

The media could play a key role in solving this problem since many senior government officials aren't aware of the magnitude of this problem and the number of individuals with a learning disability looking for work. They also don't know the extent of suffering, especially from a psychological standpoint, which results from continued unemployment of the person with a learning disability, even though many of them are qualified and capable of work.

There is another factor, namely the general attitude of people in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia towards the intellectually disabled. I can tell you through the first-hand experience that most people look upon the

intellectually disabled as objects of pity and compassion, thinking that they are incapable of work .

Q10: What about the use of computer and modern technology?

Technology is a secondary rather than a primary factor in assisting the individual with a disability in their job search.

Q11: Are there any other factors you would like to add?

The state has not been remiss in enacting laws that assist people with a disability in the various phases of rehabilitation and through the phases of employment and subsequent career. However, the problem lies in the lack of activation of existing laws.

Q12: Can the employment of the intellectually disabled be advantageous and how?

The main advantage is relieving the pressure on the families and training programs of the disabled person and changing the negative attitude of society at large towards those individuals, causing many company owners refuse to hire .

Q13: How can vocational rehabilitation programs be de-stressed?

A lot of vocational rehabilitation centre students fail to find employment after they graduate, causing their parents to bring pressure to bear on these centres to extend their vocational rehabilitation programs by an extra nine months until they find work.

Q14: What is the most popular profession at the vocational rehabilitation centres, guaranteeing immediate employment of trainees?

Book-binding professional skills are among the most in demand in the job market, and trainees are usually hired before they even officially complete the training course. Agricultural professional skills come a close second regarding job market demand.

Q15: Are there any new projects that emphasize those professional skills and guarantee employment of the intellectually disabled individuals trained on such skills?

We are currently working on a project in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and some companies to guarantee employment of trainees and also to develop a comprehensive plan to expand professional training program to accept a larger number of trainees. However, as we all know, to change existing plans, add new programs and accept more trainees we need cabinet approval.

Q15: Based on your experience at vocational rehabilitation centres, do you think that the intellectually disabled, once employed, can serve their various communities?

Certainly, I do believe that most of the individual with a learning disability disabled who was trained at our centres are more than capable of work and productivity. In fact, their work at the various vocational rehabilitation

centres testifies to their dedication and perseverance. They can certainly be a good and reliable alternative to foreign labour .

Not to mention that when the Saudi individuals with such disabilities are introduced to some profession which has for so long been exclusive to non-Saudis means that both the state and society will benefit as they will spend their earned money in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia while non-Saudis will transfer their money overseas

INTERVIEW 2: Supervisor of Rehabilitation Program -Eastern Riyadh

Q1: What are the difficulties encountered by the intellectually disabled when looking for work?

The family, I'm sad to say, constitutes a key obstacle to the recruitment and training program, as many families only care for the monthly allowance rather than the future careers of their disabled children.

Q2: How much is the allowance paid by the centre to the families?

SR2000/month

Q3: How can the family be an obstacle to the employment of their child with a learning disability?

Let me give an example. I usually coordinate with companies upon completion of the nine months training program, which asks me to contact the parent of the person with learning disability to decide for a personal

interview, but many parents refuse to allow their sons to go for that at the various companies for fear of losing the monthly allowance.

Q4: Does employing individuals with learning disability means automatic discontinuation of the allowance disbursed by the ministry of labour?

There are an SR900 grant and an SR900 allowance. However, only the SR900 grant is discontinued upon employment of the disabled individual

Q5: Do all families constitute an obstacle to the employment of their disabled children?

Not all to tell you the truth. There are some families that are greatly interested in the rehabilitation programs administered to their disabled children and the future careers. Those families readily get in touch with me and the recruiting companies upon request. Unfortunately, such families are in the minority. I think that such negative attitude is attributable to the lack of awareness and poor education of the families. These families need to be educated on the rights and needs of their disabled children. Society at large needs to be educated as well on the needs and capabilities of the disabled individuals .

Q6: Some parents and company owners complain of the weakness of the vocational rehabilitation program. Is that complaint justifiable?

Granted, there are some weaknesses in the vocational rehabilitation programs, but I don't believe that such weaknesses are directly related to the difficulties encountered in the employment of the intellectually

disabled. Indeed, there are many companies that are willing to hire and train the person with a disability, but, as I have just said, the unsupportive family, the unavailable disabled-friendly transportation and the lack of coordination among the various government bodies constitute the key problems .

Q7: There are many parents and officials who say that the lack of disabled-friendly transportation is one of the key difficulties encountered by the disabled individual when looking for work. Are there any solutions in sight?

There are solutions, God willing, through the planned cooperation with new transportation companies, such as Uber and Careem to transport the disabled person to the vocational rehabilitation centres and subsequent workplaces.

Q8: You mentioned the lack of coordination between the concerned entities.

What did you mean by that?

I meant, for example, the lack of coordination between us as a vocational rehabilitation centre and the employment sector. In fact, there are many cases that require close coordination after the completion of the training program to identify problems encountered by the disabled people when seeking for the work also at the initial phase of their employment

Q9: What about the training programs already in place at the vocational rehabilitation centres and how useful are they in your opinion?

No, they aren't useful. I know this better than anyone else, being a supervisor of a vocational rehabilitation centre. We moved into this centre five years ago, and I can tell you that it is only suitable for administrative purposes, but it is not suited for training on many professions, such as carpentry, computing and agriculture. I submitted many requests to senior ministry officials to change the location of the centre but received no response. However, as for the trainers and the training plans, they are very good in my opinion.

Q10: I met with some specialists and officials in the employment sector of the ministry of labour and all of them complain that the professions on which the persons with a learning disability are being trained on are obsolete and unsuited to the work market. Is there any truth to that?

I agree with you that some professions are obsolete but not all. There are professions that are still in high demand in the job market, such as book-binding, computing, telephone exchange operation and carpentry. We've also submitted a request to the vice-minister for the addition of some professions that the job market currently needs namely communications, security, reception and foodstuff handling among others. I'd like, however, to express my concern that senior officials had the time to meet with you and complain about the weakness of our programming content yet had no time for us nor did they communicate such complaints to us to change and modernize our programs.

Q11: Haven't any of the employment sector's senior officials contact you?

None even though we work under the same ministry

Q12: What about the other factors which facilitate the employment of the people with a learning disability?

I don't quite understand your question

Q13: I meant to ask about whether there are other factors that may contribute to the employment of the disabled people, such as the use of technology in training?

Technology can always be a positive factor in all fields, always provided that is properly used.

Q14: What are the potential advantages of employment of the intellectually disabled?

The most important advantage, which I have come to observe first hand at the centre, is that the disabled person once employed become more self-confident and more receptive to new social interaction experiences. They develop a stronger sense of responsibility and more self-satisfaction, not to mention the financial advantages. I know of certain underprivileged families, currently being supported by their gainfully employed disabled son/daughter.

Q15: So, society gets benefits when the disabled go to work?

Naturally! Here in Saudi Arabia, the unemployed individual with a learning disability is dependent on both family and state, which is quite a huge burden. However, when they are gainfully employed, they become positive contributing members of society. Also, the employment of the such individuals sends an important message to a great many segments of society who don't believe in the untapped capabilities of the disabled .

INTERVIEW 3: Specialist (1) of rehabilitation program-Eastern Riyadh

Q1: What are the difficulties encountered by the person with a learning disability in the transition from the vocational rehabilitation or school phase to work?

There are many problems, whether during the vocational rehabilitation phase, the post- vocational rehabilitation phase or the job-hunting phase. During the vocational rehabilitation phase, we need tools and equipment to provide effective training. That is why we need assistance from the private sector to the professional training program, as the ministry has so far failed to respond to the many letters that we sent in that connection. Also, instructors and trainers need training and development. In the post-vocational rehabilitation phase, there are many problems, but the key problem is related to the unavailability of disabled –friendly transportation,

which is so intense that a lot of students turn down jobs just because it is quite far from their own homes.

Q2: Parents of the disabled people often complain of the weak coordination between senior officials at the ministry of labour and the vocational rehabilitation centres to such an extent that the individuals with a learning disability don't know where to go after completion of professional training. What do you say to that?

Yes, there is indeed a coordination problem. Frankly, we have tried in vain to contact the people at the labour office, being the government authority responsible for the employment of the intellectually disabled in the private sector. Unfortunately, they rarely cooperate with us, and quite often their promises are mere lies. We have gotten in touch with them sometimes to tell them that we have a lot of intellectually disabled individuals who don't seem to find employment, so they said, "Just send them over, and we will help". They did go, but no help was forthcoming. All they did was make them fill out some paperwork, promising to call but the promised call never came.

Q3: Do you think that the negative attitude adopted by some towards the disabled people constitute an obstacle to their employment?

Unfortunately, such negative attitude goes beyond mere employment. As an example, society's negative attitude towards the disabled people is that just five years ago the ministry of education cancelled all educational programs for the intellectually disabled on the pretext that they are incapable of

learning at this stage. If that is the attitude of a minister, you can only imagine how ordinary people react. There is no doubt that society at large need to be educated to be better aware of the needs, capabilities and growing numbers of the persons with learning disability.

Q4: Being a consistent follower of Saudi media, I believe that it is quite interested in the issues of the person with learning disability. Don't you think so?

The Saudi media, where the disabled are concerned, especially the people with a learning disability, propagate unrealistic lies, only emphasising the positive aspects while disregarding the negative aspects. Even the employment programs they keep extolling are just a pipe dream from which the disabled get no benefit whatsoever.

Q5: do you think, then, of the role played by the vocational rehabilitation centres in the employment of the disabled people?

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the persons with a learning disability are deprived of higher, post-secondary education, and the only available recourse to them is the vocational rehabilitation centres .

Hence the need for developing the professional training programs which are currently in very bad shape. We have taken you on a tour of the centre, and you've seen for yourself that the building is decrepit, the equipment obsolete and the specialists are few and lack proper qualification. Any job applicant needs a period of training before being eligible for such a job. That is why I think that the key difficulty encountered by the persons with a

learning disability when seeking for employment is the lack of effective vocational rehabilitation programs in Saudi Arabia.

Q6: What are the factors that may contribute to a better chance of employment for the individuals with a learning disability after completion of the vocational rehabilitation program?

Enhancing the self-confidence of the disabled people to better interact with their community. I see some parents already adopting an effective approach to enhance their children's self-confidence by depending on them in the performance of a lot of house chores while treating them as human beings and showing respect for their wishes. On the opposite end of the spectrum, you will see many parents who don't trust in the capabilities of their children with a learning disability and even openly insult them at the centre!

Q7: What is the role played by modern technology, such as computers and websites in the employment of the disabled people?

I know a lot of electronic websites that provide considerable assistance to the disabled in finding proper employment, such as Wasata network and the Saudi network. So, such sites are an asset in the employment of the disabled, enabling them to apply for work online, thus saving them considerable effort and money.

Q8: Are you satisfied with the extent of use of this technology by the children with a learning disability in their search for work?

I am certainly not satisfied, as the individuals with a learning disability who use such technology in the various parts of the kingdom are quite a few and. The reason for that being that the majority of these sites represent an individual effort and are themselves run by disabled people, without state support, whether financial, legal or educational .

Q9: What about the laws enacted by the state to safeguard the right of the individuals with a learning disability to proper employment? Do you think that they are accurate?

The legal aspect is quite important in the organization of any work and the laws enacted by the state to safeguard the right of the intellectually disabled to proper employment are reasonably good, but they still lack in many aspects. For example, the ministry of labour is assigned by the state to perform this function, yet many of the disabled people currently complain that officials in the department for employment of the disabled aren't showing an iota of interest in the objective for which their department has been established. In fact, some employees at that department are colluding with some private sector companies to advertise fictitious employment of individuals with a learning disability, for those companies to get the financial reward offered by the state to the companies that employ the highest number of disabled individuals. I think, therefore, that the state should establish a regulatory entity that is independent of the ministry of labour, to monitor the effectiveness of professional training programs and

the eventual employment, or lack thereof, of the person with a learning disability.

Q10: What are the advantages of employment of the individuals with a learning disability?

The main advantages are ensuring enhanced self-confidence, achieving independence and securing the livelihood for that segment of society. It is the state's sacred duty to safeguard the right of the disabled people to education, training and employment, not to mention helping them to get married and start their own families.

Q11: What are the advantages of both society and family?

Unfortunately, I have seen individuals with a learning disability, who have found no employment after graduating from the vocational rehabilitation centres, are being exploited by unconscionable people and can be seen begging at traffic signals.

So, failing to provide those individuals, can and does harm society as they will turn against society which ignored them.

The key advantage for the family is the alleviation of the burden of having an unemployed disabled child with mounting demands and complaints. In fact, some of them blame their families for their plight and start making trouble at home. I know of such cases at first hand.

Appendix 4. Case Study Transcript

Case Study (1)

Name: Omar

Age: 21

Type of disability: learning disability

1.0 The First Interview

In the first visit to Omer house, I tried to focus on the information that related to Omar's personality. So, I sat down with Omar and his father after I got an invitation from his father and we enjoyed with drinks and speech. In this first interview, I intended to make it easy to Omer so that he can know me better and break the bridge between us. In addition, it was my decision to allow his father to attend this interview because I wanted him to help me with some information regarding Omer's case and give Omer confidence to talk freely without restrictions.

1.1 The Personality Status

Omer lives in the east of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He has three brothers and four sisters and Omer is the third big one. Omer likes to play football and video games with both his brothers and relatives. He usually goes to the nearest grocery to buy some stuff to his family as well as some restaurants that close to his house. It is difficult to him as his father said to drive a car or ride a taxi alone because he has never trained on that. In Saudi Arabia there is not an appropriate transportation and people depend only on taxies which is more expensive in Riyadh city. Omer's

father works in the Saudi's military and his mother is a housekeeper. Omer's desire is to find a job in MacDonald's restaurant as his biggest brother Saltan. He spends most of the time in his house except sometimes he goes to camping with his family.

1.2 Social Status

From the perspective of Omer's father, Omer does not have any problem with his social or communication skills because he likes to make conversation with his friends and relatives. Omer's father added that he has difficulty to make new friends due to his position which led him to stay most of the time at home, in addition Omer did not gain proper training on social skills in all his school stages. Another reason that makes Omer hardly socialize with the community is people attitudes toward the disabled person in Saudi Arabia.

1.3 Medical Status

Except speech disorder and vision problem, the medical status of Omer is well as he does not have any chronic disease. As his father confirmed, his speech disorder was worse in his childhood, but after the intervention from the speech therapist and his family the capability in the pronunciation of Omer has improved. Regarding the vision problem, he wears medical glasses and he can see well. The staff of medical specialists reported that Omer can work in some jobs that fit with his disability.

1.4 Education Status

After Omer was assessed with an intellectual disability, he studied in Al-Nadim primary school for six years. In Saudi Arabia, they call this school as an inclusive school, but in reality, it is not because they include intellectually disabled students in isolated classes, therefore disabled students participate with non-disabled students just in the morning queue and mealtimes. In this primary school, Omer learned simple skills in math, science and Arabic language. Then he went to the middle school which located in the east of Riyadh as well. In this stage, Omer has studied for three years and usually intellectually disabled students learn again what was gained in the primary school with some focus on the social and vocational rehabilitation skills. In the high school, Omer did not learn any important skills because as his father said in this school there was not any officially educational plans and the curriculum were written by teachers who were not qualified for teaching in the high schools as Omer believed. Omer's father said seven years ago the ministry of education has cancelled the high school programs overall Saudi cities and after three years they opened them again without any improvement. Finally, two years ago Omer graduated from the vocational rehabilitation centre and he spent there just one year. Omer was trained on some job skills; however, all the practices were inside the centre and not in a real environment which is useful for those students as Omer's father suggested.

1.5 Points of Strength

- The ability to deal with money, for example, buying from supermarkets, restaurants and shopping stores.

- Omar can read and write some basic words.
- He can communicate with other when he has a chance.
- The ability of moving from place to another when he had a training.
- The ability of doing some works that depend on a physical capability.
- Omar can work in the post office, library, shopping stores, work offices, coffee, restaurant and public parks.
- He has a confidence in himself and Omar is independent to do several activities, for example (he can decide what he likes and dislikes or what kinds of work he would like to involve).

1.6 Weakness:

- Inability to use the public transportation.
- Inability to start the conversation with non-disabled people.
- Inability to work in some jobs such as: taxi driver, computer, electric works and business that needs a high technology.
- Omar cannot drive a car in the city, however he can drive in the desert when he goes with his family to camping.
- He immediately withdraws from conversation with people who do not respect him or speak rudely.
- He spends a long time on video games and that makes him fat and lazy.

1.7 His Interests and Desires

- He likes to play football and swim
- Omar likes to read stories
- He likes to play video games and watch television.

- Omar likes to draw pictures
- He likes to work in his house and organize it.
- He likes to go to the supermarket and bring what his Mather needs
- He likes to talk to his relatives and his brother's friend

2.0 The Second Interview

1. *What do you like/dislike to do?*

- I like to play with my friends
- I like to watch a TV
- I like to read and listen to stories
- I like to go buying stuff for my home
- I do not like to stay home without doing any thing

2. *In which activities are you good?*

- Organizing stuff, guarding and carrying stuff

3. *How did you know to do that?*

- I trained in the schools and I usually do that at my home

4. *What are your future goals and dreams?*

- Find work near to my home
- Work with people who respect my disability and ability
- I hope that I can drive a car in the middle of the city

5. *why do you want to drive a car?*

Because my district is small and far away from the city centre and I do not think I will find a work near to my home, so I just want to drive a car to my work when I find it.

6. *What are the difficulties that you faced while you are looking for a job?*

The work for disabled people is very limited even if there are some companies that offer jobs for us, it is difficult to know about them or their offers. However, there were some jobs before, but the salary that they offer was low and the workplace was far and as you know there is not a good transpiration in Riyadh and my father and brothers are very busy therefore, they cannot take me every day to my work. Another thing about the training in my rehabilitation centre was not good because there are some businesses that I believe I can do them if I had a good training to do them.

7. *So, in this centre, did you have any training program related to work in vocational rehabilitation centre?*

We went to Banda supermarket just one time to train there. In general, we just trained to organize stuff, draw and sometimes we train in the computer which was very hard.

8. *Did these training programs in vocational centre assist you to prepare to your next level after school?*

No

9. *What type of training/classes did you have to make you choose what do you want?*

I do not remember any training programs that helped me in this thing, but my father usually says to me that you do not have to work in any job that you do not like.

10. *Do you think time that you spent on training programs was sufficient?*

I do not know, but I think this centre was just to spend time not training on work.

11. *What do you think about the good training programs in these centres?*

They should have trained us how we work in the coffee, restaurant, stores and they should have taken us at least once a week to train in these places. For example, with a good training we can work in chairs, tables, toys and clothes factories. In addition, we can do some work office, security and shops that selling telecommunication if we had a useful training programmes.

12. *What do you suggest making your transition to work easier?*

Changing people attitudes toward people with special needs

Create some internet programs that ease our researching for a job

13. *Who is responsible about your unemployment?*

I do not know maybe the transportation or few jobs opportunities or the weakness of the government's plans to train us and ensure the work.

14. Do you think your high school/ vocational centre teachers trained you some effective skills related to work experience?

I do not think so.

15. Where do you like to work in government or private sector? Why?

The work in the government sector is limited as I know, I like to work in the government if there is a chance, but private sector offers more jobs and help disabled people more than the government.

16. Did you apply for any work?

Yes, I went with my father to a couple of companies and they usually say at this time we do not have but give us your file and phone number, then we will call you. Indeed, two companies have contacted us, and they said you can stay home and we will give you a salary, but I refused.

17. Why did you refuse?

Because I get tired staying at home I want to work as people I want to secure my live, I do not want to depend on anyone and if I stay home with the salary I will never have experience on any work as well as I will never make new friends.

18. When do you find a work, do you think you will be useful for the community, How?

Yes, I would like to work so that I can prove to people that individuals like me can work productively. I do not want to bother my father when I ask him for money

because I know about his position I am keen to help him like my cousins and brothers when they help their families monthly.

19. Do you agree to see me after three months so that I can know your updates?

I agree,

3.0 The Third Interview

1. Did you find work during the three months?

Indeed, I got a call from the ministry of labour and they gave me an address of the company and they asked me to go there, so I went to them and they made an interview. Then they said we will give you 800\$ and it is up to you. However, they added that if you want this job you can receive the salary and you do not have to attend just stay home and give us your bank details and we will send the money monthly.

2. Why you did not agree with them?

Because of two reasons, first the salary is not enough and second, I want to attend the work as normal people.

3. What about other companies?

I went with my father to Panda Supermarket and they said in this moment we have an economic crisis due to the sharp descent in oil prices, however if there any chance we will call you.

4. *So, what do you do now?*

Actually, I work with my cousin, he has a fruit and vegetable store that is close to my home and every day I go there and help him from 9:00A to 6:00P and he gives me around 1500\$ monthly.

5. *Do you think that you can work there for a long time?*

I do not know

6. *Do you like to work there?*

It is good, but this is not what I want because I think it is not an official work.

7. *What about internet Website, did you try to apply for jobs on these Websites?*

Yes, my brother helped me to apply in some Websites and they replied to me asking me for further information. I know two of my friends who have intellectual disabilities and they applied in this Website (Wasatah) and after two months this Network helped them to find jobs in Altamimi supermarket with a good salary and they are very happy with their jobs, I hope I can work in the same place.

Case Study (2)

Name: Ahmed

Age: 23

Type of disability: mild intellectual disability

1.0 The First Interview

I have contacted Ahmed's father and he invited me to visit his place in the middle of Riyadh. Ahmed's father has a car repairing place and there was a room for the reception. He said I could offer you a good place to do your interviews and Ahmed will be here every day. So, in the first interview my objective was to take personal, medical, educational and social information. Also, I intended to make Ahmed more comfortable in the first interview, so encouraged him by saying "you are very helpful to your father and I am very happy to do the interview with you". Another reason for the first interview was to figure out about this place and does it proper to conduct the interview.

1.1 The Personality Status

Ahmed lives in the middle of Riyadh in the area that called Al-hamra. Ahmed has two daughters and he is the older in his family. Ahmed father has BA in teaching the Arabic language, but he did not find an opportunity to be a teacher, so he decided to open a place for repairing cars and his business goes very well. Ahmed mother has a high school certificate and she works in her house and likes to take care of her family. Ahmed has cousins and neighbours and he is very close to them. He likes to invite them to have a meal with him and watch T.V or talk about some matters. Because Ahmed does not have a work, he usually goes with his

father to his business which is a good chance for him to make friends. Ahmed likes to work in a coffee store or own one, but his father asks him always to work with him in the cars repairing which Ahmed does not like. When I asked the father why you want him to work in this place which he does not like it, his father said I want to protect him from people who do not know about his disability. The father added that young people in Saudi Arabia often make fun of people like Ahmed and do not respect him and I am very worried about him because he quickly gets angry.

1.2 Medical Status

Ahmed has a mild intellectual disability with some speech disorders. His father said that Ahmed had an operation for his ears when he was 9 years old and his ears are fine now. In addition, Ahmed does not have other medical problems.

1.3 Educational Status

Ahmed started his study in the primary school which is considered as a model inclusive school and he completed the six grades. Ahmed 's father said when he was in the primary school, I brought for him a pronunciation specialist who assisted Ahmed in improving his speech skills. The middle school was the next step for Ahmed, and he spent three years. In addition, as I reported before about the first case (Omer), the skills and curriculum are same for both cases (Ahmed and Omer). Then Ahmed joined to the high school program in the middle of Riyadh city and finished the third grades. However, Ahmed's father said that because of ineffective of Saudi inclusive school programs I had to take Ahmed to another country. So, I have looked into several programs in some countries that both speaking Arabic language and near to Saudi Arabia. Jordan was the best place

for him to improve his educational, social and professional skills. Thus, we went to Jordan two times, in the first, Ahmed studied there for four months and in the second he spent just three months. Actually, it was a good experience for him and he got a lot of benefits especially with his educational skills. Later, we heard from some friends that United Emirates provides effective programs for disabled people and these programs can improve his professional skills. Therefore, I registered Ahmed in this program that located in Al-Sharjah and he has enjoyed this training for eight months. In this journey Ahmed gained some skills regarding the wood works for example (toys, chairs, tables) as well as his social skills became better than when he was in Saudi Arabia. Ahmed made good friends when he was in the United Emirates for instance, Musab who was studying with Ahmed in United Emirates he is still in touch with Ahmed, they usually contact by phones and every year they visit each other.

1.4 Social Status

Ahmed can communicate with other in a proper way, in his previous study, teachers always say that he is different from other intellectually disabled people. Ahmed usually likes to smile to people and start the conversation, but he gets very disappointed when people neglected him. Ahmed likes to listen to music every day and he is using WhatsApp program to chat with his friends. He as well likes to cook and make coffee for himself. In Saudi Arabia, it is difficult for females to go to the public places by themselves, therefore Ahmed usually helps his sisters and go with them. After Ahmed finished his vocational rehabilitation program in United Emirates, he has worked at Jarir Bookstore for three months in Riyadh, but he could not commence because of the bad deal from the visitors. Ahmed's father

said Jarir Bookstore is an attractive place and many people come to this place every day and some of them were bothering Ahmed. The second try for Ahmed as employee was in Garnata Mall in Riyadh and that was the best place for Ahmed because it was nearby to our home. Actually, as his father added Ahmed does not have any problem with transportation because he has a private driver. In Garnataa Mall Ahmed faced several problems led him to quit his employment. One of these reasons was exploiting him by some co-workers, for example some employees asked him to cover for them many times. Another reason, was the negative attitudes toward Ahmed because of his disability. In addition, regarding the salary, Ahmed said I worked in the same position with non-disabled workers and their salary was more than me. What was nice from this experience as Ahmed said I made a lot of friends and I am very happy for that. He added my dream is to work at the coffee shop, therefore I have applied for multiple places and I am waiting for them hopefully I can work there so that I can make more friends.

1.5 Points of Strength

Ahmed can read and write with some help and he can use the simple computer programs.

He can communicate with people in a suitable way.

He can deal with cars like repair the small issues

Ahmed can cook food and make some hot drinks

Ahmed can make some toys, chairs and tables from the wood with some help

He can do some office work like print papers or organize them

Ahmed has the ability to decide what he wants

Ahmed has the ability to use taxis and walk from distance to a distance in his area

He has an ability to build a tent with his friends when they go to the desert for camping.

1.6 Points of Weakness:

He loses his control when he is in crowded places.

Ahmed eats too much, and he does not like to do sport which makes him fat.

He cannot stay in the same position for a long time, for instance, as his father said, he worked before three times and these works were nice, but he likes to change from time to time.

Ahmed get angry very fast

He does not like to listen to advice

He spends the money very fast and buys a lot of toys, computer stuff, phones and clothes

2.0 The Second Interview:

1-What do you like/dislike to do?

I like to contact with friends by social media programs (WhatsApp, Tweeter)

I like to play video games and read books I like to cook and make hot drinks

I like to use computer programs like PowerPoint I

do not like to work in car repairing

I do not like to work in any supermarket, mall or bookstore

2-In which activities are you good?

Cooking or making hot drinks

3-How did you know to do that?

In my house I learned that from my mother and sisters

4-What are your future goals and dreams?

I have seen a person with the same disability from United States who became the owner of a new restaurant and that was my dream to open a coffee or a restaurant in Riyadh and I hope it will be near to my home.

5-Why do you want to open a coffee/ restaurant?

First, I enjoy being in this place, and second, I want to gain money like my father, I do not want to ask my father or mother for money. Finally, I like my friends to come to my place and eat or drink and they can play some games as well.

6-What are the difficulties that you faced while you are looking for a job?

First there were not opportunities because most companies do not apply the rights for disabled people and the government sector does not provide employments for disabled people so that they can encourage the private sector to employ these people. The negative attitudes toward disabled people, the shortage of the coordinating between institutions that provide training programs and companies that provide the employments are considered as other obstacles.

7-So, what you suggest for this coordination?

I would like the ministry of labour that is responsible for the vocational rehabilitation centres to cooperate with those companies that are willing to hire

disabled people. For instance, the ministry can ask them about all the employments that are available and then train disabled people in these employments with a guarantee after finishing their programs that they can find work.

8-Did these training programs in high schools /vocational centre assist you to prepare to your next level after school?

Honestly, in the high school in Riyadh I do not remember any benefits except some sessions about using computers, on the other hand, when I was in the vocational rehabilitation centre in the United Emirates there were effective programs that helped me after school such as how I can kindly deal with people and can make small talk. In addition, they trained me how I can make some toys, chairs and tables from the wood and they trained us as well in some work office and work in stores.

9-What about your friends in the rehabilitation centre in United Emirates, do you think that they found work? Why?

Yes sure, because the government of United Emirates force the companies to hire them especially after they finish their training successfully

10-So, they can choose what kind of training programs and after that they work in the same position?

Yes, in this centre there are four kinds of programs, making stuff from the wood, work office, monitor and inspection and computer programs.

11-So, you chose to make the wood stuff?

Yes,

12-Do you like it, I mean it was your decision?

Yes

13-Why did not you apply for this work in Saudi Arabia?

Because in Saudi Arabia it is different as people here do not believe people with disabilities can do this work.

14-What do you think about the good training programs in Saudi centres?

In our centres we need plans for our training, we have to be trained for the available jobs that fit with our disability, also we need equipment to make the training as real as possible. In addition to that, we need qualified specialists, for example for work office there must be specialists who can train us in these programs with experience, but unfortunately now our specialists who do this work are without experiences.

15-What do you suggest making your transition to work easier?

First, we have to improve our vocational rehabilitation centres and make them useful, then, our government has to do a big program for the public in order to educate all people in Saudi Arabia about our disabilities what we can do and what we cannot. Furthermore, the ministry of education and labour have to work with each other to create a project that includes all companies that can hire people with disabilities. In this project the role of both ministries (education, labour) is to train

and prepare disable people to work, and the role of these companies is to hire them. What is more for these ministries is to monitor and follow up disable people after finishing training and figure out the reasons why they could not find work, if the companies are responsible the ministries have to punish them.

16-Who is responsible for your unemployment?

I am not sure, maybe the government or the companies do not trust us, but I worked before and some people helped me, and they were very nice. I think we need some specialists who can help us to find work that fit with our disabilities and needs. Another problem with cities in Saudi Arabia, I found some works that I enjoy it, but unfortunately in other cities (Jeddah and Al-Dammam) but my father said no, it is far away from our city.

17-Do you think your high school/ vocational centre teachers trained you some effective skills related to working experience?

No

18-Where do you like to work in the government or the private sector? Why?

I do not think I can work in the government sector because I tried before, and it was very hard, and I need a strong intercession.

19-Did you apply for any work?

Yes, I applied for Starbucks, Dunkin donut coffee stores in Riyadh and McDonalds restaurant, so I am waiting for them. My father has applied for me in some jobs that I do not like such as hospitals, telecom companies and hotels as a receptionist.

20-Did you make the interviews for these jobs?

Yes

21-What you think about these interviews?

I did well, they asked me what do you want to do, and I told them making food and drinks then they said maybe you could do that or instead of providing food and drinks for customers, do you agree? I said yes, then they said we would be in touch.

22-How did you know about these jobs?

From my friends, unfortunately this role has to be for the ministry of labour which took my file and asked me what kind of work do like, so I told them coffee or restaurant, then they said we would call you, but they have not called yet.

23-When was that?

Maybe more than one year. All my friends who have intellectual disabilities told me that do not depend on the ministry of labor they will not help you, therefore you have to depend on your family or friends.

24-Why do not you like to work as a receptionist?

A lot of people come to these places and most of them are upset about the services and they will not respect me, actually my friend worked there before and told me that.

25-When you find work, do you think you will be useful for the community,

How?

Of course, first I will help my government as they pay monthly for me if I did not find a job, but when I find the work I will be independent and earn my money. As well as when I work I will serve my community from my work for example when I work in the coffee, people will come and enjoy their times. Another benefit is to my family, they will be not worry about me anymore and I will not take money from them. Finally, people like me if they did not find work, maybe they will cause trouble to their community.

26-Do you agree to see me after three months so that I can know your updates?

Yes. I am happy to answer your questions.

Thanks

3.0 The Third interview

1-Are you working now?

I still go with my father to his business, indeed one month ago I was contacted by the owner of the local coffee shop, and he asked me to meet him for an interview. In the interview, he said if you want to work in my coffee you have just to clean inside the coffee and you cannot talk with customers or make anything, I told him why I could communicate with people respectively and I can make some food and drinks, but unfortunately, he refused, so my father told me to forget about it.

2-So, what is your plan now?

My father said to me that “I will help you to make your own business by buying a truck for drinks and sandwiches”. However, we need at least four months for preparation and getting a place license.

3-You told me before that you do not like to deal with people in the mall or supermarket, what about this truck you have to contact with people?

It is different because I will own this place and if I meet unkind people I will ask them to leave immediately or I will call the police, in addition, I will have someone to assist me.

4-Do like to work in other activities because you trained before to do other stuff?

Yes

5-So, if you had trained properly on other activities you might like to do another thing?

Yes, for example I trained in the United Emirates to make some stuff from the wood and I like to work on these activities as well. However, in Saudi Arabia there is not like this job for disabled people.

6-Do you think that there is a relationship between the training programs in rehabilitation centres and work?

Of course, yes especially for disabled people because jobs chances are just in a private sector and if we want to work there, we have to be trained.

7-Do you think assistive technology such as searching on the Website helped you?

Yes, I have found a lot of useful Websites that helped me to contact with workers with disabilities and they gave me some advice, also I can apply for some jobs in short time and a little of effort. In addition, some Websites offer steps to help disabled people finding jobs or staying in their jobs.

8-So, I hope after four months you will open your coffee truck, did you choose the place?

Yes, hopefully.

I chose it nearby my home as my father and mother requested

9-Can you compare from your experience between difficulties faced by you in both after finishing your vocational rehabilitation centre and your own business when you open the food truck?

First after finishing my training: -

People attitudes toward disabled people

My father protection

The connection between training programs and the real work

The difficulty of reaching the jobs

The lack of respect for our freedom of choice

Second in your own business: -

The difficulty of convincing my parents

Getting the licenses

Choosing the place and buying stuff

Attracting people for visiting my place

Appendix 5. Access Letters



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

No.: 38956205

Ministry of Social Affairs

Date: 01/7/1438 H.

280

General Directorate of vocational rehabilitation - Riyadh Region

Administration of Planning & Development

Facilitation of Researcher Task

Name		Civil registration	
Adel Sabr Z. Alanazi		1035366929	
Academic year	Scientific degree	Major	University name
2016/2017	PhD	Special Education	Birmingham / London
Title of Study: Difficulties which face mental disables in transferring from school to the work.			
Student	e: Mental disabled teacher, uardian.		

Dear Mr. School Chair man

Greetings,

Referring to the His Excellence, Minister of Social affairs decision No. 38717080 on 09/02/2017, regarding authorizing for the Education managers, according to the General Director in Riyadh Region No. 38920793, dated on 23/06/1438 regarding the authorizing of Planning and Development Administration for facilitating the task of male/female Researchers.

Whereas the researcher mentioned above has submitted a request of his study procedure, and according to completion of the required documents, we hope to facilitate his task.

Noting that the Researcher bears full responsibility related to various aspects of research, the allowing of General Directorate does not mean necessarily approving for the problem of research or methods used in the study and treatment.

Sincerely, ,

Manager of:

Planning & Development Directorate

Saud Rashid Al Abdullatif



Official Stamp

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حروف للترجمة المعتمدة

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Ministry of Education

Al Jouf University

Faculty of Education

Code # (1/9/51)

To Whom It May Concern

Greetings,

We would like to inform you that Scholarship Student Mr. Adel Sabr Z. AlAnazi, has completed his academic period in Riyadh city according to the letter No. 15532708 dated 17/11/2016, from date 24/03/2017 up to 29/06/2017.

And he was supervised during his academic period.

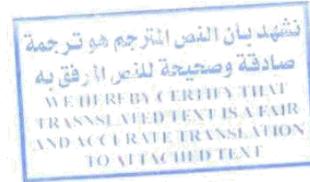
Sincerely,,

Special Education Section Supervisor

Proffe Nael Mohammed Akhrass

(Signed)

Official Stamp



الرياض - المنزل - شارع الأمير / فهد بن ابراهيم آل سعود - ترخيص رقم ٣٢١ عضوية ١٣٣٧٠٠ - هاتف : ٤٧٥٥٥٥٠

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حروف للترجمة المعتمدة

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Date: 30/05/2017

Ministry of Education

280

General Directorate of Education - Riyadh Region

Administration of Planning & Development

Affidavit

End of Researcher Task (Scientific journey)

Researcher name	Adel Sabr Z. AL-Anazi
Universit / Colle e	Birmin ham / London
Number & date of letter of Research mission facilitatin	38956205 dated 29/03/2017
Title of Study	Difficulties which face mental disables in transferring from school to the work

The researcher (mentioned above) submitted to us a request of studies procedures which staffed from the date of the task facilitating letter from the Directorate of Planning and Development until the date of 25/05/2017, according to the affidavit of supervisor of the educational rehabilitation program for the intellectual education (annex) and as per his request this certificate has been issued. Planning & development Administration



Signed & Stamped



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بريد إلكتروني

