

Omani Stakeholders' Preferences for Educational Placement of Students with Disabilities

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Abstract: The purpose of the current study was to survey the stakeholders' opinions of the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities in the Sultanate of Oman. Two thousand four hundred and thirty stakeholders participated in this study. The findings provided evidence that the majority of the Omani stakeholders prefer educating students with disabilities in regular schools over separate facilities. In addition, the stakeholders' preference on the continuum of placement options varied significantly. The results also suggested that the stakeholders' preference for educating students in the regular school setting versus a separate facility varied according to the type of disability. Moreover, a significant association between the stakeholders' role and their preference of educational placement setting for students with disabilities was found. However, the findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between the stakeholders' gender and their educational settings preference. Finally, educational services for children with disabilities in Oman were discussed and suggestions were provided to improve these services.

Keywords: Educational placement, inclusive classrooms, students with disabilities, Sultanate of Oman.

المكان التربوي المفضل لتعليم الطلبة ذوي الإعاقة من وجهة نظر

أصحاب العلاقة في سلطنة عمان

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مستخلص: هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى استطلاع آراء ذوي العلاقة حول المكان التربوي المفضل لديهم لتعليم الطلبة ذوي الإعاقة في سلطنة عمان، حيث اشتملت عينة الدراسة على ٢٤٣٠ مشاركاً ومشاركة من ذوي العلاقة. وقد أشارت النتائج إلى أن معظم المشاركين في الدراسة من ذوي العلاقة يعتقدون أن مدارس التعليم العام هي المكان الأفضل لتعليم الطلبة ذوي الإعاقة مقارنة في البيئات التربوية. وأسفرت النتائج عن وجود فروق جوهريّة بين آراء المشاركين فيما يتعلق بالبيئات التربوية التي يفضلونها. وتبين أيضاً أن تفضيل المشاركين لمدارس التعليم العام مقابل البيئات التربوية لتعليم الطلبة ذوي الإعاقة يختلف باختلاف نوع الإعاقة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تبين وجود علاقة بين متغير دور المشاركين وآرائهم في المكان التربوي المفضل لتعليم الطلبة ذوي الإعاقة، بينما لم تسفر النتائج عن وجود علاقة بين متغير جنس المشاركين وآرائهم في المكان التربوي المفضل لتعليم الطلبة ذوي الإعاقة. وانتهت الدراسة بمناقشة الخدمات التربوية المقدّمة للطلبة ذوي الإعاقة مع عدد من التوصيات المتعلقة بتحسين هذه الخدمات في سلطنة عمان.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المكان التربوي، الصفوف الشاملة، الطلبة ذوي الإعاقة، سلطنة عمان.

Special education services are relatively new in the Sultanate of Oman. In 2008, the Sultanate signed the International Agreement on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for Education in an Inclusive Educational Setting (Ministry of Education, 2008). Inclusive education refers to teaching students with disabilities in their neighborhood school within the regular classroom with their peers without disabilities (Rafferty, Boettcher, & Griffin, 2001). The Ministry of Education provides educational services for students with disabilities in special education classes in many public schools as well as in special education schools (Al-Balushi, Al-Badi, & Ali, 2011; Weber, 2012).

Oman has been in the process of reforming its educational system and significant efforts have been made towards achieving this goal (Haj Hussien & Al-Qaryouti, 2014). The Ministry of Education in Oman aims to create inclusive schools (Ministry of Education, 2008). The previous literature consistently showed that the attitudes of the **principals** (Balboni & Pedrabissi, 2000; Dyson, Howes, & Roberts, 2004; Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004; Semmel, 1986; Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Navin, 1996), **teachers** (Ahsan, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012; Avramidis, Balylliss, & Burden, 2000; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Emam & Hassan, 2011; Haj Hussien & Al-Qaryouti, 2014; Sari, Celikoz, & Secer, 2009), **parents** (Gilmore, Campbell, & Cuskelly, 2003; Grove & Fisher, 1999; Tafa & Manolitsis, 2003), and **students** (Gannon & McGilloway, 2009; Georgiadi, Kalyva, Kourkoutas, & Tsakiris, 2012; Haj Hussien & Al-Qaryouti, 2015; Miller, Garriott, & Mershon, 2005; Morin, Crocker, Beaulieu-Bergeron, & Caron, 2013; Panagiotou et al., 2008; Papaioannou, Evaggelinou, & Block, 2014; Patel & Rose, 2014) play a major role in developing and implementing inclusive education successfully.

Teachers, parents, students, and administrators are the critical stakeholders and play a vital role in creating inclusive schools; considering their opinions is critical to the success of systematic school reform (Hunt & McDonnell, 2007; Wang, 2009). The purpose of the current study was to survey the Omani stakeholders' opinions of the best educational placement for students with disabilities. More

specifically the current study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. Is the stakeholders' gender associated with their preference of educational placement setting for students with disabilities?
2. Is the stakeholders' role associated with their preference of educational placement setting for students with disabilities?
3. What is the pattern of the stakeholders' preference of educational placement settings for students with disabilities?
4. Do the differences between percentages of each category of stakeholders' responses on each pair of educational placement for students with disabilities differ significantly?
5. What is the stakeholders' educational placement preference (separate facilities vs. regular school) for students with disabilities?
6. What is the stakeholders' educational placement preference (separate facilities vs. regular school) for each type of disability?
7. Does the stakeholders' educational placement preference for students with disabilities differ significantly according to the student's type of disability?

Context of the study

The Ministry of Education in Oman aims to create inclusive schools (Ministry of Education, 2008). Currently a total of 5,325 individuals with disabilities are receiving services in Oman. These services are provided by the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Social Development. The Ministry of Education provides educational services in special education classes in 155 public schools for a total of 1,565 students; 1,262 students with intellectual disabilities and 303 students with hearing impairments (Ministry of Education, 2015). The number of students with disabilities enrolled in special education classes in public school has increased steadily over the last ten school years.

students in the three special education schools; 192 students enrolled in the Hope School for Students with Hearing Disability, 213 students enrolled in the School of Intellectual Disability, and 137 students enrolled in Omar Ben Alkatab for Students with Visual Impairments (Ministry of Education, 2015).

The Ministry of Social Development provides services for a total of 3,218 individuals with disabilities; among them 2,180 individuals are enrolled in 25 governmental centers, 605 individuals with disabilities are enrolled in 13 private centers, and 433 individuals with disabilities are enrolled in 10 nonprofit associations' centers (Ministry of Social Development, 2015).

Method

Participants

A total of 3,000 questionnaires were sent to the administrators of the public schools in Sultanate Oman in various provinces; 2,430 stakeholders (1,211 males & 1,219 females), representing all grade levels, volunteered to complete the questionnaires. The sample involved 703 regular teachers (359 males & 344 females), 225 special education teachers (36 males & 189 females), 160 social workers (64 males & 96 females), 318 principals (169 males & 149 females), 234 parents of students with disabilities (143 males & 91 females), 386 parents of students without disabilities (244 males & 142 females), and 404 students (196 males & 208 females). Table 1 shows the distribution of the participants according to province by stakeholders.

Variables

Stakeholders: This variable involved regular teachers, special education teachers, social workers, principals, parents of students with disabilities, parents of students without disabilities, and students.

Gender: This variable involved males and females.

Educational placement: This variable involved separate facilities, self-contained class, resource room, and general education classroom.

Types of disabilities: This variable involved intellectual disability, autism, emotional and behavioral disability, hearing impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, vision impairment, speech and language disability, & physical disability.

Stakeholder's Opinion of the Best Placement for Students with Disabilities Questionnaire:

The authors developed this questionnaire to identify the stakeholders' opinions of the best educational placement for students with disabilities. This questionnaire developed by the authors was based on the special education services continuum from the most segregated environment to the most inclusive. A continuum of placement options available for students with disabilities is necessary to meet the needs of all special education students (Kauffman, Bantz, & McCullough, 2002). The placements from the most segregated to the most inclusive are the following: a) separate facilities, b) self-contained class, c) resource room, and d) general education.

Table 1
Participants' distribution according to province by stakeholders

Province	Stakeholders							Total
	Regular teacher	Special education teacher	Social worker	Principal	Parents of students with disabilities	Parents of students without disabilities	Student	
Muscat	404	179	33	48	168	76	93	1001
Al Batinah Janoob	56	12	7	30	15	36	46	202
Al Batinah Shamal	78	8	8	48	18	78	85	323
Al Dakhiliyah	21	4	3	15	17	31	31	122
Ash Sharqiyah Janoob	5	9	1	10	5	6	5	41
Ash Sharqiyah Shamal	26	4	7	28	2	28	25	120
Al Burimi	16	1	8	16	3	14	12	70
Al Dhirah	12	3	7	12	4	23	15	76
Dhofar	59	4	61	83	0	60	60	327
Al Wusta	11	1	10	8	2	13	14	59
Musandam	15	0	15	20	0	21	18	89
Total	703	225	160	318	234	386	404	2430

The questionnaire included the following ten questions:

1. In your opinion what is the best educational placement for students with intellectual disabilities?
2. In your opinion what is the best educational placement for students with autism?
3. In your opinion what is the best educational placement for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities?
4. In your opinion what is the best educational placement for students with a hearing impairment?
5. In your opinion what is the best educational placement for students with other health impairments?
6. In your opinion what is the best educational placement for students with specific learning disabilities?
7. In your opinion what is the best educational placement for students with a visual impairment?
8. In your opinion what is the best educational placement for students with speech and language disabilities?
9. In your opinion what is the best educational placement for students with physical disabilities?
10. In your opinion what is the best educational placement for students with disabilities?

Each question was followed by the four educational placements:

- () Full-time outside the regular school
- () Full-time in special education classrooms in the regular school
- () Part-time in the regular classroom with part-time in a resource room
- () Full-time in the regular classroom with other support services provided there

The questionnaire was examined by 4 experts, comprising of two experts in measurement and psychometric theory and two experts in special education. The four experts agreed that the questionnaire was written in clear and precise language as well as measuring what it intended to measure.

Procedure: The purpose of the study was explained to the participants with the emphasis on the importance of them expressing their personal opinion while considering that there are no right or wrong responses. Finally, the participants were asked to select the best educational placement among the four placements options by marking their selection with a tick (✓).

Results

The purpose of the current study was to survey the stakeholders' opinions of the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities in the Sultanate of Oman. Two thousand four hundred and thirty stakeholders participated in the study. Frequencies and percentages, a chi-square test of independence and a chi-square test of goodness of fit were performed to answer the questions of the study. Each research question and its findings are presented below.

Question 1: What is the pattern of the stakeholders' preference of educational placement settings for students with disabilities?

The frequencies and percentages of stakeholders' responses on educational placement preference were calculated and are presented in Table 3. In addition, a chi-square test of goodness of fit was performed to determine whether the four educational settings (separate facilities, self-contained class, resource room, and general education) for students with disabilities were equally selected by the stakeholders. The findings showed that the stakeholders' selection of the four educational placement settings for students with disabilities were not equally distributed in the population, $\chi^2 (3, 2240) = 541.95, p < 0.000$. The results shown in Table 2 indicate that 43.3%, 29%, 12%, and 15.8% of the stakeholders selected separate setting, self-contained, resource room, and general education, respectively, as the best educational settings for educating students with disabilities.

Table 2
Educational placement preference by the role of the stakeholder and gender

Gender	Stakeholder	Descriptive measure	Educational Setting Preference				Total
			Separate facilities	Self-contained class	Resource room	General education	
Male	Regular Teacher	Count	149	108	34	30	321
		% within Source	46.4%	33.6%	10.6%	9.3%	100.0%
	Special Education Teacher	Count	18	7	9	2	36
		% within Source	50.0%	19.4%	25.0%	5.6%	100.0%
	Social Worker	Count	17	22	3	15	57
		% within Source	29.8%	38.6%	5.3%	26.3%	100.0%
	Principal	Count	63	40	24	23	150
		% within Source	42.0%	26.7%	16.0%	15.3%	100.0%
	Parents of students with disabilities	Count	45	28	19	37	129
		% within Source	34.9%	21.7%	14.7%	28.7%	100.0%
	Parents of students without disabilities	Count	98	53	40	40	231
		% within Source	42.4%	22.9%	17.3%	17.3%	100.0%
	Student	Count	99	41	17	37	194
		% within Source	51.0%	21.1%	8.8%	19.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	489	299	146	184	1118	
	% within Source	43.7%	26.7%	13.1%	16.5%	100.0%	
Female	Regular Teacher	Count	154	102	28	25	309
		% within Source	49.8%	33.0%	9.1%	8.1%	100.0%
	Special Education Teacher	Count	76	45	25	42	188
		% within Source	40.4%	23.9%	13.3%	22.3%	100.0%
	Social Worker	Count	30	52	5	3	90
		% within Source	33.3%	57.8%	5.6%	3.3%	100.0%
	Principal	Count	50	54	12	25	141
		% within Source	35.5%	38.3%	8.5%	17.7%	100.0%
	Parents of students with disabilities	Count	32	25	7	15	79
		% within Source	40.5%	31.6%	8.9%	19.0%	100.0%
	Parents of students without disabilities	Count	56	31	15	28	130
		% within Source	43.1%	23.8%	11.5%	21.5%	100.0%
	Student	Count	82	42	30	31	185
		% within Source	44.3%	22.7%	16.2%	16.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	480	351	122	169	1122	
	% within Source	42.8%	31.3%	10.9%	15.1%	100.0%	
Total	Regular Teacher	Count	303	210	62	55	630
		% within Source	48.1%	33.3%	9.8%	8.7%	100.0%
	Special Education Teacher	Count	94	52	34	44	224
		% within Source	42.0%	23.2%	15.2%	19.6%	100.0%
	Social Worker	Count	47	74	8	18	147
		% within Source	32.0%	50.3%	5.4%	12.2%	100.0%
	Principal	Count	113	94	36	48	291
		% within Source	38.8%	32.3%	12.4%	16.5%	100.0%
	Parents of students with disabilities	Count	77	53	26	52	208
		% within Source	37.0%	25.5%	12.5%	25.0%	100.0%
	Parents of students without disabilities	Count	154	84	55	68	361
		% within Source	42.7%	23.3%	15.2%	18.8%	100.0%
	Student	Count	181	83	47	68	379
		% within Source	47.8%	21.9%	12.4%	17.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	969	650	268	353	2240	
	% within Source	43.3%	29.0%	12.0%	15.8%	100.0%	

Question 2: Is the stakeholders' gender associated with their preference of educational placement setting for students with disabilities?

The chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the association between the stakeholders' gender and their preference of educational placement setting (separate facilities, self-contained class, resource room, and general education) for students with disabilities. The results revealed no association between the stakeholders' gender (male & female) and their preference of educational placement setting for students with disabilities, $\chi^2_{(3, 2240)} = 3.02, p > .05$.

Question 3: Is the stakeholders' role associated with their preference of educational placement setting for students with disabilities?

The chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the association between the stakeholders' role (regular teachers, special education teachers, social workers, principals, parents of students with disabilities, parents of students without disabilities, and students)

and their preference of educational placement setting (separate facilities, self-contained class, resource room, and general education) for students with disabilities. A significant association between stakeholders' role and their preference of educational placement setting for students with disabilities was revealed, $\chi^2_{(18, 2240)} = 105.85, p < .0001$.

Based on the results shown in Table 2 and Figure 1, it appears that the stakeholders preferred the separate facilities setting followed by the self-contained class setting, with the exception of the social workers, who preferred the self-contained class setting firstly, followed by the separate facilities setting. Moreover, it seems that the resource room setting was selected by stakeholders as the least preferred setting, with the exception of the regular teachers who selected the general education setting as the least preferred option.

Question 4: Do the differences between percentages of each category of stakeholders' responses on each pair of educational placement for students with disabilities differ significantly?

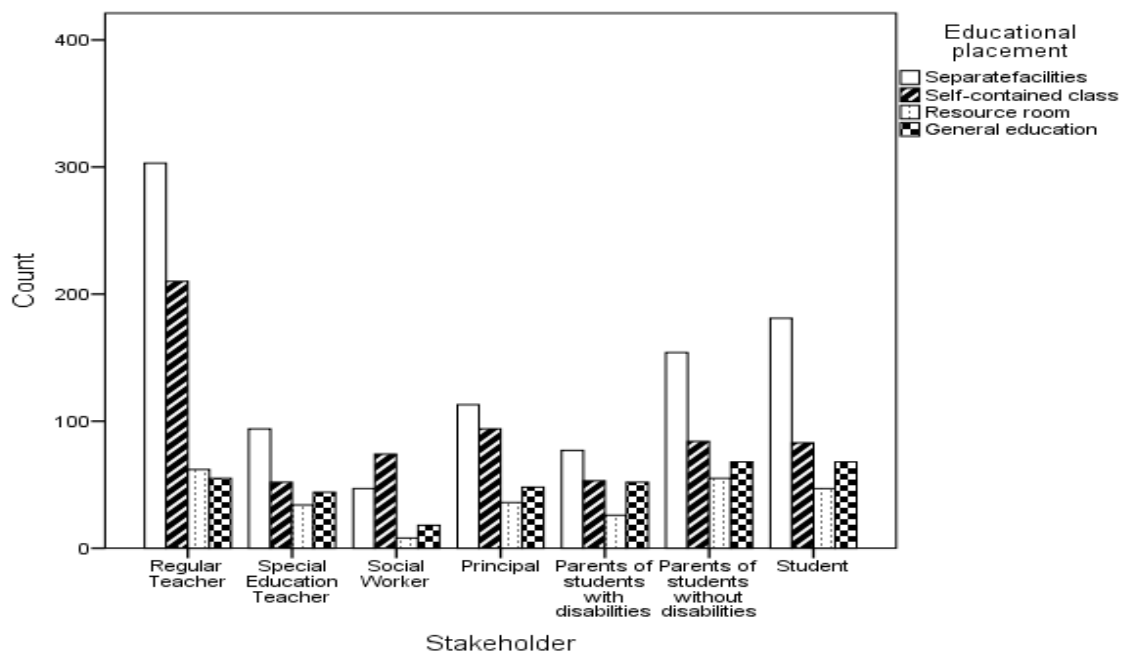


Figure 1
 Educational placement preference by the role of the stakeholder

The chi-square test of goodness of fit was performed to examine the differences between percentages for each category of stakeholders' responses on each pair of educational placement separately. These results are presented below according to each category of stakeholders.

Regular classroom teachers: The results in Table 3 indicate that a significantly higher proportion ($p < .001$) of regular classroom teachers selected separate facilities as the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with any other educational placement setting. In addition, a significantly higher proportion ($p < .001$) of regular classroom teachers selected self-contained class as the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with resource room and general education classroom settings. However, there was no significant difference ($p = .05$) between the proportion of regular classroom teachers who selected the resource room setting and the propor-

tion of those teachers who selected the general education classroom setting.

Special education teachers: The results in Table 4 indicate that a significantly higher proportion ($p < .001$) of special education teachers selected separate facilities as the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with any other educational placement setting. In addition, a significantly higher proportion ($p < .05$) of special education teachers selected self-contained class as a better educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with the resource room setting. However, there was no significant difference ($p = .05$) between the proportion of special education teachers who selected self-contained class setting and the proportion of those teachers who selected general education classroom setting. Similarly, there was no significant difference ($p = .05$) between the proportion of special education teachers who selected the resource room setting and the proportion of those teachers who selected the general education classroom.

Table 3
Results of the chi-square on the difference between percentages of regular classroom teachers' responses for each pair of educational placement

Setting	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp.sig.
Separate facilities	303	256.5	46.5	16.860	1	.000
Self-contained class	210	256.5	-46.5			
Total	513					
Separate facilities	303	182.5	120.5	159.126	1	.000
Resource room	62	182.5	-120.5			
Total	365					
Separate facilities	303	179.0	124.0	171.799	1	.000
General education	55	179.0	-124.0			
Total	358					
Self-contained class	210	136.0	74.0	80.529	1	.000
Resource room	62	136.0	-74.0			
Total	272					
Self-contained class	210	132.5	77.5	90.660	1	.000
General education	55	132.5	-77.5			
Total	265					
Resource room	62	58.5	3.5	0.419	1	.518
General education	55	58.5	-3.5			
Total	117					

Table 4
Results of the Chi-Square on the difference between percentages of special education teachers' responses for each pair of educational placement

Setting	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp.sig.
Separate facilities	94	73.0	21.0	12.082	1	.001
Self-contained class	52	73.0	-21.0			
Total	146					
Separate facilities	94	64.0	30.0	28.125	1	.000
Resource room	34	64.0	-30.0			
Total	128					
Separate facilities	94	69.0	25.0	18.116	1	.000
General education	44	69.0	-25.0			
Total	138					

Table 4
Results of the Chi-Square on the difference between percentages of special education teachers' responses for each pair of educational placement

Setting	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp.sig.
Self-contained class	52	43.0	9.0	3.767	1	.05
Resource room	34	43.0	-9.0			
Total	86					
Self-contained class	52	48.0	4.0	0.667	1	.414
General education	44	48.0	-4.0			
Total	96					
Resource room	34	39.0	-5.0	1.282	1	.258
General education	44	39.0	5.0			
Total	78					

Social workers: The results in Table 5 indicate that a significantly higher proportion ($p < .01$) of social workers selected self-contained class as the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with any other educational placement setting. In addition, a significantly higher proportion ($p < .001$) of social workers preferred separate facilities as a better educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with the resource room and general education classroom settings. The results also revealed that a significantly higher proportion ($p < .05$) of social workers preferred the general education classroom setting as a better educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with the resource room setting.

Principals: The results in Table 6 indicate that a significantly higher proportion ($p < .001$) of

principals selected separate facilities as the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with the resource room, and general education classroom settings. On the other hand, there was no significant difference ($p = .05$) between the proportion of principals who selected separate facilities and the proportion of those principals who selected self-contained class setting for students with disabilities. The results also indicate that a significantly higher proportion ($p < .001$) of principals selected self-contained class as the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with the resource room and general education classroom settings. It has also been revealed that there was no significant difference ($p = .05$) between the proportion of principals who selected resource room and general education classroom settings.

Table 5
Results of the Chi-Square on the difference between percentages of social workers' responses for each pair of educational placement

Setting	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp. sig.
Separate facilities	47	60.5	-13.5	6.025	1	.014
Self-contained class	74	60.5	13.5			
Total	121					
Separate facilities	47	27.5	19.5	27.655	1	.000
Resource room	8	27.5	-19.5			
Total	55					
Separate facilities	47	32.5	14.5	12.938	1	.000
General education	18	32.5	-14.5			
Total	65					
Self-contained class	74	41.0	33.0	53.122	1	.000
Resource room	8	41.0	-33.0			
Total	82					
Self-contained class	74	46.0	28.0	34.087	1	.000
General education	18	46.0	-28.0			
Total	92					
Resource room	8	13.0	-5.0	3.846	1	.050
General education	18	13.0	5.0			
Total	26					

Table 6
Results of the Chi-square on the difference between percentages of principals' responses for each pair of educational placement

Setting	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. sig.
Separate facilities	113	103.5	9.5	1.744	1	.187
Self-contained class	94	103.5	-9.5			
Total	207					
Separate facilities	113	74.5	38.5	39.792	1	.000

Table 6
Results of the Chi-square on the difference between percentages of principals' responses for each pair of educational placement

Setting	Observe N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. sig.
Resource room	36	74.5	-38.5			
Total	149					
Separate facilities	113	80.5	32.5	26.242	1	.000
General education	48	80.5	-32.5			
Total	161					
Self-contained class	94	65.0	29.0	25.877	1	.000
Resource room	36	65.0	-29.0			
Total	130					
Self-contained class	94	71.0	23.0	14.901	1	.000
General education	48	71.0	-23.0			
Total	142					
Resource room	36	42.0	-6.0	1.714	1	.190
General education	48	42.0	6.0			
Total	84					

Parents of students with disabilities: The results in Table 7 indicate that a significantly higher proportion ($p < .05$) of parents of students with disabilities selected separate facilities as the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with any other educational placement setting. In addition, a significantly higher proportion ($p < .01$) of parents of students with disabilities selected self-contained class as the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with the resource room setting, but not the general education classroom setting. The results also indicate that a significantly higher proportion ($p < .01$) of parents of students with disabilities selected general education classroom as a better educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with resource room setting.

Parents of students without disabilities: The results in Table 8 indicate that a significantly higher proportion ($p < .001$) of parents of students without disabilities selected separate

facilities as the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with any other educational placement setting. In addition, a significantly higher proportion ($p < .01$) of parents of students without disabilities selected self-contained class as a better educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with resource room setting. Moreover, it has been revealed that there was no significant difference ($p = .05$) between the proportions of parents of students without disabilities who selected self-contained class setting and those parents who selected general education classroom setting for students with disabilities. Similarly, there was no significant difference ($p = .05$) between the proportions of parents of students without disabilities who selected resource room setting and those parents who selected general education classroom setting for students with disabilities.

Table 7
Results of the Chi-Square on the difference between percentages of parents of students with disabilities responses for each pair of educational placement

Setting	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. sig.
Separate facilities	77	65.0	12.0	4.431	1	.035
Self-contained class	53	65.0	-12.0			
Total	130					
Separate facilities	113	74.5	38.5	25.252	1	.000
Resource room	36	74.5	-38.5			
Total	149					
Separate facilities	77	64.5	12.5	4.845	1	.028
General education	52	64.5	-12.5			
Total	129					
Self-contained class	53	39.5	13.5	9.228	1	.002
Resource room	26	39.5	-13.5			
Total	79					
Self-contained class	53	52.5	.5	0.010	1	.922
General education	52	52.5	-.5			
Total	105					

Table 7
Results of the Chi-Square on the difference between percentages of parents of students with disabilities responses for each pair of educational placement

Setting	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. sig.
Resource room	26	39.0	-13.0	8.667	1	.003
General education	52	39.0	13.0			
Total	78					

Table 8
Results of the Chi-Square on the difference between percentages of parents of students without disabilities responses for each pair of educational placement

Setting	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp.sig.
Separate facilities	154	119.0	35.0	20.588	1	.000
Self-contained class	84	119.0	-35.0			
Total	238					
Separate facilities	154	104.5	49.5	46.895	1	.000
Resource room	55	104.5	-49.5			
Total	209					
Separate facilities	154	111.0	43.0	33.315	1	.000
General education	68	111.0	-43.0			
Total	222					
Self-contained class	84	69.5	14.5	6.050	1	.014
Resource room	55	69.5	-14.5			
Total	139					
Self-contained class	84	76.0	8.0	1.684	1	.194
General education	68	76.0	-8.0			
Total	152					
Resource room	55	61.5	-6.5	1.374	1	.241
General education	68	61.5	6.5			
Total	123					

Students: The results in Table 9 indicate that a significantly higher proportion ($p < .001$) of students selected separate facilities as the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with any other educational placement setting. Moreover, a significantly higher proportion ($p < .01$) of students preferred the self-contained class setting over the resource room setting for students with disabilities. On the other hand, the findings revealed no significant difference ($p = .05$) between the proportion of students who selected self-contained class setting and those students who selected general education classroom setting. Finally, the findings indicate a significantly higher proportion ($p < .001$) of students preferred general education classroom setting to the resource room setting for students with disabilities.

Question 5: What is the stakeholders' educational placement preference (separate facilities vs. regular school) for students with disabilities?

The binomial test was performed for each category of stakeholders' responses to examine the significance of the difference between the proportion of stakeholders who selected the regular school setting and the proportion of those who selected the separate facilities setting as the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities. The results of the binomial test are presented in Table 10. These results showed a significantly higher proportion ($p < 0.01$) of stakeholders who preferred the regular school over the separate facilities setting for students with disabilities for all stakeholders'

Table 9
Results of the Chi-square on the difference between percentages of students' responses for each pair of educational placement

Setting	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp.sig.
Separate facilities	181	132.0	49.0	36.379	1	.000
Self-contained class	83	132.0	-49.0			
Total	264					
Separate facilities	181	114.0	67.0	78.754	1	.000
Resource room	47	114.0	-67.0			
Total	228					
Separate facilities	181	124.5	56.5	51.281	1	.000
General education	68	124.5	-56.5			
Total	249					

Table 9
Results of the Chi-square on the difference between percentages of students' responses for each pair of educational placement

Setting	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp.sig.
Self-contained class	83	65.0	18.0	9.969	1	.002
Resource room	47	65.0	-18.0			
Total	130					
Self-contained class	83	75.5	7.5	1.490	1	.222
General education	68	75.5	-7.5			
Total	151					
Resource room	47	57.5	-10.5	3.835	1	.050
General education	68	57.5	10.5			
Total	115					

categories, with the exception of two categories, i.e., regular education teachers and students showed no significant differences in their preference.

Question 6: What is the stakeholders' educational placement preference (separate facilities vs. regular school) for each type of disability?

The binomial test was performed to examine the differences between the proportions of the stakeholders who selected the regular school option compared with those who selected the separate facilities as the best educational placement setting for each separate type of disability. The results of the binomial test are presented in Table 11. The findings indicate that the regular school was selected as a better educational placement setting in comparison

with separate facilities by 78% of stakeholders for students with other health impairments, 77% for students with specific learning disabilities, 69% for students with speech and language disabilities, 61% for students with autism, 61% for students with hearing impairments, 59% for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities, 51% for students with physical disabilities, 51% students with visual impairments, and 50% for students with intellectual disabilities. The results also revealed that a significantly higher proportion ($p < .000$) of stakeholders selected regular school as a better placement for each type of disability, with the exception of physical disabilities, visual impairments, and intellectual disabilities, which showed non-significant differences ($p = .05$) between the proportion of stakeholders who selected the regular school and those who selected the separate facilities.

Table 10
Results of the binomial test for stakeholders' responses on educational placement (separate facilities & regular school) for students with disabilities

Type of disability	Response category	N	Observed prop.	Test prop.	Exact sig. (2-tailed)
Regular Teacher	Separate Facilities	303	.48	.50	.359
	Regular School	327	.52		
	Total	630	1.00		
Special Education Teacher	Separate Facilities	94	.42	.50	.019
	Regular School	130	.58		
	Total	224	1.00		
Social Worker	Separate Facilities	47	.32	.50	.000
	Regular School	100	.68		
	Total	147	1.00		
Principal	Separate Facilities	113	.39	.50	.000
	Regular School	178	.61		
	Total	291	1.00		
Parents of students with disabilities	Separate Facilities	77	.37	.50	.000
	Regular School	131	.63		
	Total	208	1.00		
Parents of students without disabilities	Separate Facilities	154	.43	.50	.006
	Regular School	207	.57		
	Total	361	1.00		
Student	Separate Facilities	181	.48	.50	.411
	Regular School	198	.52		
	Total	379	1.00		

Table 11
Results of the binomial test of stakeholders' responses on educational placement setting (separate facilities & regular school) for each type of disability

Type of disability	Response category	N	Observed prop.	Test prop.	Exact sig. (2-tailed)
Intellectual disability	Separate facilities	1114	.50	.50	.784
	Regular school	1128	.50		
	Total	2242	1.00		
Autism	Separate facilities	877	.39	.50	.000
	Regular school	1364	.61		
	Total	2241	1.00		
Emotional & Behavioral disability	Separate facilities	909	.41	.50	.000
	Regular school	1331	.59		
	Total	2240	1.00		
Hearing Impairment	Separate facilities	866	.39	.50	.000
	Regular school	1375	.61		
	Total	2241	1.00		
Other Health Impairment	Separate facilities	495	.22	.50	.000
	Regular school	1747	.78		
	Total	2242	1.00		
Specific Learning Disabilities	Separate facilities	523	.23	.50	.000
	Regular school	1718	.77		
	Total	2241	1.00		
Visual Impairment	Separate facilities	1093	.49	.50	.237
	Regular school	1150	.51		
	Total	2243	1.00		
Speech and Language Disability	Separate facilities	703	.31	.50	.000
	Regular school	1538	.69		
	Total	2241	1.00		
Physical Disability	Separate facilities	1097	.49	.50	.342
	Regular school	1143	.51		
	Total	2240	1.00		

Question 7: Does the stakeholders' educational placement preference for students with disabilities differ significantly according to the student's type of disability?

McNemar's test was performed to examine the differences between the proportion of the stakeholders who selected the regular school option compared with those who selected the separate facilities for each separate pair of various disabilities (health disabilities, specific learning disabilities, speech and language disabilities, autism, hearing impairments, emotional and behavioral disabilities, physical disabilities, visual impairments, and intellectual disabilities). The results of McNemar's test is summarized in Table 12.

The results suggest that the stakeholders' educational placement preference for students with disabilities differs significantly ($p < .000$) according to the students' disabilities, with the exception of the following disabilities: other health impairment vs. specific learning disabilities, autism vs. emotional and behavioral disabilities, autism vs. hearing impairment, hearing impairment vs. emotional and behavioral disabilities, intellectual disability vs. visual impairment, intellectual disability vs. physical disability, and physical disability vs. visual impairment. The stakeholders' educational placement preference did not change significantly ($p > .05$).

Table 12
Results of McNemar's test of stakeholders' responses on educational placement setting (separate facilities & regular school) for students with disabilities

Type of disability*	Pair differences %	N	Chi-Square**	Asymp. sig.
ID - AUT	-11	2241	77.248	.000
ID - EBD	-9	2239	51.585	.000
ID - HI	-11	2240	78.418	.000
ID - OHI	-28	2241	377.023	.000
ID - SLD	-27	2240	361.475	.000
ID - VI	-1	2242	.492	.483
ID - S-L	-19	2240	192.832	.000
ID - PHD	-1	2239	.319	.572
AUT - EBD	2	2239	1.538	.215

Table 12
Results of McNemar's test of stakeholders' responses on
educational placement setting (separate facilities & regular school)
for students with disabilities

Type of disability*	Pair differences %	N	Chi-Square**	Asymp. sig.
AUT - HI	0	2240	.136	.712
AUT - OHI	-17	2240	181.451	.000
AUT - SLD	-16	2239	156.247	.000
AUT - VI	11	2241	55.030	.000
AUT - S-L	-8	2239	39.066	.000
AUT - PHD	10	2238	60.386	.000
EBD - HI	-2	2240	2.413	.120
EBD - OHI	-19	2240	210.060	.000
EBD - SLD	-18	2239	180.485	.000
EBD - VI	8	2240	40.543	.000
EBD - S-L	-10	2238	53.878	.000
EBD - AUT - PHD	8	2237	43.129	.000
HI - OHI	-17	2241	189.875	.000
HI - SLD	-16	2240	158.854	.000
HI - VI	10	2241	77.979	.000
HI - S-L	-8	2239	40.885	.000
HI - PHD	10	2238	72.169	.000
OHI - SLD	1	2241	1.736	.188
OHI - VI	27	2242	395.132	.000
OHI - S-L	9	2240	68.449	.000
OHI - PHD	27	2239	400.445	.000
SLD - VI	26	2241	364.596	.000
SLD - S-L	8	2239	53.580	.000
SLD - PHD		2238	345.495	.000
VI - S-L	-18	2241	198.869	.000
VI - PHD	0	2240	.023	.880
S-L - PHD	18	2240	211.574	.000

*ID (Intellectual Disability), AUT (Autism), EBD (Emotional and Behavioral Disability), HI (Hearing Impairment), OHI (Other Health Impairment), SLD (Specific Learning Disabilities), VI (Vision Impairment), L-D (Speech and language disability), PHD (Physical Disability)

**Continuity Corrected

Discussion

The information provided by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development (2015) revealed that 5,325 children with disabilities received educational services in Oman. Twenty nine percent of these children are enrolled in special education classes in public school and 71% are enrolled in special education schools or centers. In comparison, 95% of children with disabilities in the United States receive their education in regular schools and the remaining in separate settings (Giangreco, Smith, & Pinckney 2006; Hocutt, 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

The data suggests that a very small number of Omani children with disabilities are receiving educational services; considering that WHO (2011) estimated about 15% of any population have a disability. This finding is consistent with the estimation of the percentage of children with disabilities who attend school in developing countries, which ranges from less than 1% to 10% (Peters, 2004; UNESCO, 2009).

The data also indicates that no special education services have been provided for children with disabilities in the general education classrooms so far. In comparison, 87% of children with disabilities in the United States are educated in the general education classroom setting (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Moreover, the data showed a separate and segregated special education system in Oman. Unfortunately, history shows that a separate and segregated education system was not successful in achieving inclusive schools in the U.S.A. (Lampert, Graves, & Ward, 2012) and more likely will not in Oman.

The results of the current study also showed a significantly higher proportion of special education teachers, social workers, principals, parents of students with disabilities, and parents of students without disabilities preferred the regular school as a better setting than the proportion of those who preferred the separate facility settings for educating students with disabilities. However, there were no significant differences between the proportion of the regular education teachers and the propor-

tion of the students who preferred regular school or the proportion of those who preferred the separate facilities. However, Byrnes, Sigafoos, Rickards, and Brown (2002) reported that 60.3% of students with hearing impairments from Australia preferred to be educated in their local school, not in a separate setting.

Further investigation into the stakeholders' preference of the educational settings (separate facilities, self-contained class, resource room, and general education) indicate the following: a) a significantly higher proportion of each category of stakeholder selected separate facilities as the best educational placement setting for students with disabilities compared with any other educational setting, with exception of the social workers, who preferred the self-contained class setting over the separate facilities setting, b) a significantly higher proportion of each category of stakeholder selected self-contained class as the best educational setting for students with disabilities compared with resource room and general education classroom settings, with the exception being the proportion of special education teachers, parents of students with disabilities, parents of students without disabilities and students who preferred the self-contained class, who did not differ significantly from the proportion of those who selected the general education classroom setting, and c) there were no significant differences between the proportion of each category of stakeholder who selected the resource room setting and the proportion of those stakeholders who selected the general education classroom setting, with the exception of a significantly higher proportion of social workers, parents of students with disabilities, and students, who preferred the general education classroom setting over the resource room setting. Similarly, Livingston, Reed, and Good (2001) found that principals from the state of Georgia, U.S.A, preferred the self-contained classroom in regular school as the best placement option for children with disabilities.

In addition, the results revealed that a significantly higher proportion of stakeholders selected the regular school as a better placement over separate facilities for educating students with the following disabilities: specific learning, other health impairment, speech and language, autism, hearing impairment, and emotional and behavioral. However, there were no

significant differences between the proportion of stakeholders who selected the regular school as a better placement and the proportion of stakeholders who selected separate facilities for educating students with the following disabilities: physical, visual impairment, and intellectual.

Moreover, the findings suggest that the stakeholders' preference for educating students in the regular school setting versus a separate facility varied according to the type of disability. The order, from more likely to least likely, of the stakeholders' preference for educating students in a regular school setting versus a separate facility according to the type of disability is the following: a) other health impairment or specific learning disability, b) speech and language disability, c) autism, emotional and behavioral disability, or hearing impairment, and d) physical disability, visual impairment, or intellectual disability respectively. Finally, there were no significant differences in stakeholders' preference for educating students in the regular school setting versus a separate facility between the following disabilities: other health impairment vs. specific learning disabilities, autism vs. emotional and behavioral disabilities, autism vs. hearing impairment, hearing impairment vs. emotional and behavioral disabilities, intellectual disability vs. visual impairment, intellectual disability vs. physical disability, and physical disability vs. visual impairment. Similarly, TASH (2009) and UNESCO (2010) documented that the likelihood of educating students with disabilities in the general education setting varied with the type of disability.

Finally, a significant association between stakeholders' role and their preference of educational placement setting for students with disabilities was found. However, the findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between stakeholders' gender and educational settings preference.

Recommendations

Overall, the stakeholders in Oman support the education of children with disabilities in regular school. In spite of this, the implementation of inclusive education is a complicated process. Successful inclusive education requires restructuring the education system, resources, accessible schools, and competent staff with positive attitudes. It is fundamental to develop

national policies and procedures that regulate and operationally define the following: special education services, the specific process of providing special education services, the rights of students with disabilities and their parents, definitions of each type of disability, and their eligibility criteria for special education.

In order to provide effective and efficient special education services in inclusive classrooms, the Ministry of Education must assure the availability of a sufficient number of special education teachers and support staff (psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech therapists). The availability also of qualified staff (administrators, supervisors, regular classroom teachers) in teaching students with disabilities is essential.

In addition, the availability of a continuum of placement options is necessary to meet the needs of all special education students. Finally, the availability of valid and reliable assessment instruments that measure academic, social, and emotional development, speech and language, adaptive behaviors, gross motor skills, fine motor skills are crucial for screening, determining eligibility, planning, progress monitoring, and evaluation.

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