Resource Room Support Services for Students with Learning Disabilities: The Context of Oman

إعداد

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Abstract

This article reviews literature on the use of resource room in providing support services to students with learning disabilities (LD) in the Sultanate of Oman. First, the article first describes the context of Oman in terms of support services to students with LD. Second, the article discusses social learning theory as a theoretical perspective within which the use of resource room is examined. Third, the article reviews research studies that explored different stakeholders' perceptions of the use of resource room support services to students with LD in public schools in Oman. Implications are discussed with regard to how inclusive education practices can be boosted through the use of resource room support services.

Keywords: resource room- learning disability- support services- Sultanate of Oman.

خدمات دعم غرفة المصادر للطلبة ذوي صعوبات التعلم: في السياق العماني

د/ خولة بنت هلال المعمري : أستاذ مساعد بقسم علم النفس-   كلية التربية-   جامعة السلطان قابوس- عمان

الملخص:

تستعرض هذه المقالة مراجعة للأدبيات حول استخدام غرفة المصادر (برنامج صعوبات التعلم) في سلطنة عمان. أولاً، يصف المقال نوع خدمات الدعم المقدمة للطلبة المحالين لغرف المصادر وفق السياق العماني. ثانيًا، يناقش المقال نظرية التعلم الاجتماعي كمنظور نظري يتم من خلاله فحص استخدام غرفة المصادر. ثالثًا، يستعرض المقال الدراسات البحثية التي استكشفت تصورات مختلف أصحاب المصلحة حول استخدام خدمات دعم غرف المصادر للطلبة الذين يعانون من صعوبات التعلم في المدارس الحكومية في عمان. المشاركات والمناقشة ركزت على الآثار المتعلقة بكيفية تعزيز ممارسات التعليم الشامل من خلال استخدام خدمات الدعم في غرف المصادر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: غرف المصادر - صعوبات التعلم- خدمات الدعم- سلطنة عمان.

Introduction:

In response to an increased demand for special education services for children with learning disabilities (LD), the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Oman has expanded the availability of specialised learning services (The Ministry of Education, 2012a). A resource room is one such resource for students with learning difficulties. Other terms, such as such as pull-out programme (Rea, McLaughlin & Walther-Thomas, 2002) and mainstream class (Hove, 2015) are common; however, for the purpose of the current research, the author uses resource room to describe the room where students with special education needs receive education to support their specific educational needs.

Oman's Ministry of Education provides free education to students of all ages, including general, basic, and post-basic education, as well as special educational requirements (Al Mamary, 2017). In recent years, the field of special educational requirements in Oman has expanded significantly. In the academic year 1974-1975, Oman's Ministry of Education established a special educational services branch in the Directorate of General Education, which was launched when it sent children with exceptional educational requirements to study overseas (Al Mamary, 2017). Al Amal School was founded in 1980 by the Ministry of Education in Oman for students with hearing impairments. Later, in the academic year 2000, the Ministry of Education developed the Omar bin Al- Khatab Centre, a school for pupils with visual impairments (Al Mamary, 2017). The Ministry of Education also implemented a policy of admitting children with exceptional educational needs to the same basic educational level as pupils without special educational needs (Al Mamary, 2017). In addition, the Minsitry of Education in Oman provided programme in regular schools for students with learning disabilities is called Learning Disabilities Programme which is same with resource room programme globally. The students with learning disabilities get support in this rooms two or three sessions in a week each session is 45 minutes, then the student go back to his/her regular classroom. It's like integration class in regular schools (Al Mamary, 2017).

In Oman, the resource room is used as part of the inclusive programme. The resource room may be used as part of or in parallel to an inclusive programme because in Oman the application of the resource room comes from American guidelines of SEN (The Ministry of Education, 2012b). In Oman, children with LD attend the resource room for 45-minute sessions twice a week (The Ministry of Education, 2012a; 2012b). Part of the shortcoming of the Omani resource room programme is that the amount of time and support provided to children with LD is not dependent on the type or severity of their learning difficulties, which puts some children with LD at more of disadvantage than other students.

Through this study, the researcher aimed to address a gap in academic understanding about the effectiveness of resource rooms for educating students with LD in the context of Oman schools. According to Oslund (2015), the use of resource rooms, where children spend time in both mainstream classrooms and specialised care during a school day, is a relatively new practice. There was a need to understand the perceptions of key stakeholders about the use of resource rooms as a strategy that could help students with LD, given that their participation was often crucial in the success of resource rooms (Al-Khateeb & Hadidi, 2009; Somaily, Al-Zoubi, & Rahman, 2012). The effectiveness of resource rooms can be influenced by the attitudes, involvement, and collaboration of parents, teachers, and school administrators, underscoring the need to explore the perceptions of all stakeholders. For the present study, the author will conduct a literature review of recent studies focusing on the perspective of students, teachers, parents, and administrators on resource rooms. Thus, the recent study wants to answer about three questions: 1. What ways are resource rooms benefit to support children with learning disabilities in Oman?. 2. What ways are resource rooms drawbacks to support children with learning disabilities in Oman?. 3. What are the experiences of stakeholders' perspectives of resource rooms in Oman?

Resource Rooms Use in the Context of Oman

The Ministry of Education in Oman provides free education to students of all ages, which include access to general education, basic education, post basic education, and special education needs (SEN) (The Ministry of Education, 2014). The scope of special educational needs in Oman has become increasingly broad in recent years. In the 1974 to 1975 academic year, the Ministry of Education in Oman developed a section in the Directorate of General Education related to special educational services, which was launched when it sent children with SEN to study abroad. The MoE in Oman established Al Amal School in 1980 for students with hearing impairments. Later, in the academic year of 2000, the MoE established an institute for students with visual impairments, known as Omar bin Al-Khatab Centre. The MoE also implemented a policy of taking in children with SEN at the same level as students without SEN at the basic educational level.

In general, researchers have suggested that inclusive education is effective for students with LD (Oslund, 2015). Based on this analysis, the Oman Mistry of Education provided sufficient resource room services for children with LD(Al-Said, 2005). There is limited research, however, about the placement of children with LD in resource rooms within the specific geographic context of Oman (Al-Ghafri, 2009; Chappell, 2000; Cook & Inglis, 2012). In the Sultanate of Oman, limited researchers have examined the use of resource rooms in children with LD (Al-Ghafri, 2009; Cook & Inglis, 2012). Thus, there is a need to explore the perceptions of the key stakeholders in the use of resource rooms in Oman in order to improve the implementation of the educational setting strategy.

There is currently a lack of academic consensus on the appropriateness of using resource rooms for students with learning difficulties. Previous researchers in the body of related literature have suggested that resource rooms are an enhanced, effective, and convenient method of teaching students with LD (Craig, 2006). Other researchers, however, have suggested that resource rooms restrict the social

interaction of children with LD (Al-Ghafri, 2009). Students with LD are more susceptible to emotional and social problems compared to students without SEN (Bryan et al., 2004). More specifically, there is a lack of studies focusing on the appropriateness of the placement of children with LD in resource rooms in Oman. The purpose of this literature review is to understand the use of the resource room and how it supported children with LD residing in Oman. The current author reviews current literature focusing on the use of reading rooms for students with LD in general, and the students with LD in Oman specifically.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

The overarching theoretical framework of this article is social learning theory. Social learning theory is directly related to the research problem because the theory provides insights into the role of the educational environment in the learning process of children with learning difficulties. Social learning theory also emphasises the importance of the interaction of students with LD with their teachers and peers in the learning process. This framework provide insight into the benefits of resource rooms for children with learning difficulties.

Albert Bandura (1977) developed social learning theory. Bandura explained that people learn cognitive and behavioural skills by observing, modelling, and imitating others. Academic and behavioural modelling is adopted via verbal instruction, live modelling (i.e., by another individual), and symbolic modelling (Miller, 2010). According to the social learning theory, these occur in four stages: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Miller, 2010). Through these four means, children with LD have the opportunity to learn behaviourally and academically in the inclusion class. Observational learning theory inclusion may act microcosmically, as society or learning communities occur in which children with LD can interact with students without LD, thereby developing friendships and working habits (Miller, 2010). This cooperative learning means the students can act as each other's teachers, feeding knowledge to one another (Ross, 1994; Slavin, 2019). Pairings of

students with and without LD would not only build a sense of belonging for students with LD, but also develop their communication and listening skills.

Social learning theory is directly related to the research problem because the theory provides insights into the role of the educational environment and social interaction in the learning process of children with LD. The main principle of social learning theory is that social interaction is the foundation of the process of learning of individuals (Vygotsky, 1998). Two levels of learning processes are necessary to occur in order to develop cognition: (a) social and (b) individual.

Social learning theory has become a popular theoretical foundation for understanding learning and the importance of social interaction, particularly between teachers and students (Mercer & Howe, 2012; Murphy et al., 2009). Social learning theory considers that the social environment or learning community has an impact on the learning process (Murphy et al., 2009). According to this theory, learning occurs through purposeful engagement and valued activities (Bender, 2008; Illeris, 2018; Pritchard, 2013). Children learn various skills through social interactions in their classrooms (Murphy et al., 2009).

Within the social learning perspective, the current study examines the use of resource room support services for students with LD. The aim of the article, therefore, is twofold: (1) to evaluate the benefits and drawback of using resource room public schools in Oman to support students with LD, and (2) to explore the previous reports of how resource room is perceived by different stakeholders in Oman.

SEARCH STRATEGY:

The researcher gathered relevant articles for inclusion in the review of literature using online journal databases such as ScienceDirect, ProQuest, Scoups, Springer, SAGE journals, Willey Online Library and EBSCO Host. The author used the following search terms individually and jointly: resource room, inclusive education, special education, disability, in-service training, and pedagogy. These search terms produced many relevant results, from which the author identified 14 studies. In this study, the researcher used the qualitative method for depth information. The study's objective for using a qualitative research approach is to establish similarities and differences among the seven selected schools in Oman, based on rich and extensive data gathered from various stakeholders. This strategy could produce data that answers the study's research questions. The researcher was able to acquire a better knowledge of the resource room as a learning environment for children with LDs by conducting semi-structured interviews and observations in the resource room.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Benefits of Resource Rooms:

A primary benefit of resource rooms is that they allow students with LD to complete their education in general education facilities (Hadidi & Al Khateeb, 2015). Hadidi and Al Khateeb cited resource rooms as a primary tool used in Arabic countries to bring students with LD into the general education population. According to these researchers, decades of research have supported the inclusion of students with LD into the general student population, but integration can be challenging to achieve in practice. Hadidi and Al Khateeb asserted that integration efforts are still in the early stages, with pilot programs undertaken in Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. Most of these pilot programs relied on resource rooms as an integration tool (Hadidi & Al Khateeb, 2015).

Parents of students with LD typically prefer their children to be included with the general population (Al Mamari, 2017). Al Mamari conducted a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from seven different Oman schools. The population included headmasters, special education teachers, general education teachers, and parents. The sample included 21 parents, of which all but one preferred that their student be educated in a general population with the support of additional services like resource rooms (Al Mamari, 2017). This sentiment was echoed by teachers of students with learning disabilities, who argued that inclusion strongly benefited students with learning disabilities. In the same study, parents of students with LD argued that inclusion in the general population, with support of reading rooms, provided valuable socialisation for their students. Al Mamari reported that all of the sampled parents stated that the usage of resource rooms allowed students to improve their social skills.

In a literature review which included 42 relevant studies, Hadidi and Al Khateeb (2015) found that there are generally positive attitudes surrounding the integration of students with LD into the general student population. Despite the general support, the literature review revealed that stakeholders are concerned about full integration due to the disruption students with LD could present and a lack of education and support for teachers leading integrated classrooms (Hadidi & Al Khateeb, 2015). Among all stakeholders, parents of students with LD had the most positive opinion of resource rooms. These parents expressed support for the resource rooms, stating that they provided positive opportunities to support students within the general student population (Hadidi & Al Khateeb, 2015).

In addition to positive opportunities to integrate with the general population, parents of students in reading rooms citied an improvement in their child's academic record as a positive benefit of the reading room (Hadidi & Al Khateeb, 2015). Resource rooms provide an opportunity to give special attention to students with LD without isolating students from the general population. Special instruction can improve student

achievement by targeting issues specific to that student (Al-Zoubi & Al-Adawi, 2019). In an experimental study of 14 students enrolled in resource rooms, Al-Zoubi and Al-Adawi tested various teaching techniques. The administration of these techniques was made possible through resource rooms, as they provided an opportunity to educate just the students with learning disabilities. Al-Zoubi and Al-Adawi found that unconventional educational programs, including music and art, were beneficial to teaching students with learning disabilities.

The theme of utilisation of non-conventional educational techniques in resource rooms is prevalent in the body of recent literature (Goransson et al., 2016). Using a qualitative content analysis approach, Goransson et al. filmed 18 mathematics lessons across six classes in resource rooms in Swedish schools. Goransson et al. found that common themes emerged across the mathematics lessons, and that the students with LD responded positively. For students with learning disabilities, the teachers developed pedagogical mathematics activities and focused on the student's perceptions of the math, rather than a straightforward explanation of the proper execution. Additionally, the teachers encouraged students to dialogue with each other about their perceptions of the lesson. It is easier to facilitate this interactive approach through small-group environments, suggesting that a benefit of a resource room could be the smaller environment with increased dialogue opportunities (Göransson et al., 2016).

Elements like increased individualised attention and innovative teaching strategies are benefits of resource rooms (Al Mamari, 2017). All of the parents in Al Mamari's study cited that increased individualised attention compared to inclusion only in the general population were benefits of the resource room. Echoing Al-Zoubi and Al-Adawi's (2019) findings, Al Mamari (2017) found that teachers approved of resource rooms because they allowed them to try innovative techniques for educating students with learning disabilities. In Al Mamari's study, 11 parents, two school inspectors, and the head of the Special Education

Department cited innovating teaching strategies as a benefit of using resource rooms compared to inclusion only in the general population.

Drawbacks of Resource Rooms:

Although many teachers view resource rooms as a useful tool for including students with LD in a general education setting, there are several obstacles to the successful education of students in resource rooms (Al-Zoubi & Rahman, 2016). Al-Zoubi and Rahman performed a descriptive analytical study with 42 teachers as the sample. The results of the study indicated that teachers perceive a lack of comprehensive educational programs prior to their teaching placement and after their teaching placement to be the primary impediments to successfully utilising a resource room (Al-Zoubi & Rahman, 2016). Al-Zoubi and Rahman argued that it would be possible to overcome such obstacles in teacher training through an increase in post-placement education for general and special education teachers. Classes and workshops dedicated to the successful usage of reading rooms could fill educational gaps left after the completion of pre-service educational programs (Al-Zoubi & Rahman, 2016).

In addition to a lack of education, Al-Zoubi and Rahman (2016) identified the ability to collaborate with other teachers as an obstacle to the successful implementation of resource rooms. The surveyed teachers cited a lack of collaboration as problematic, and Al-Zoubi and Rahman asserted that school leadership should provide pivotal support in setting resource room programming and integrating students who use resource rooms with the general educational population. Additionally, Al-Zoubi and Rahman concluded that there are collaboration issues between special education teachers leading the resource rooms and the general education teachers leading the general population education. The final and most minorly cited obstacle was a lack of school resources, such as classrooms and equipment, dedicated to resource rooms (Al-Zoubi & Rahman, 2016).

Understanding the drawbacks of reading rooms requires consideration of what the alterative for the student would be. For example, the drawbacks of using a reading room compared to inclusion only in the general education population are different than the drawbacks of using a resource room compared to education in a dedicated special education facility (Al Mamari, 2017). Compared to a dedicated special education facility, students who use resource rooms might receive less individualised attention, coupled with stigmatisation from the general education population (Al Mamari, 2017). In Al Mamari's multi-stakeholder study, special education teachers stated that there was sometimes stigma surrounding including special education students in the general population. Additionally, special education students received less specialised attention while outside of the resource room than they might have in a dedicated facility (Al Mamari, 2017).

The drawbacks of reading rooms extend beyond the direct impact on students (Li, 2017). Al-Zoubi and Rahman (2016) explained that resource rooms require separate funds from the general classroom education—albeit less funding than a fully separate class or academic institution. In a literature review of 34 studies on Chinese resource rooms, Li (2017) found that resource rooms were most common in developed areas. Furthermore, Li noted that areas with less educational funding struggled to set aside funding for the continuous support of resource rooms. In some instances, even if fully developed, these rooms failed to remain operational or experienced significantly diminished attention and capacity (Li, 2017). This finding suggested that a drawback of a resource room is the additional funding it requires, although this drawback must be tempered by the reasonable assumption that resource rooms are less expensive than separate schools (Li, 2017).

Other drawbacks include the need for increased teacher education and training (Li, 2017). Effective operation of a resource room requires teachers who are capable of leading educational programming for students with LD in a limited amount of time (Li, 2017). Special education teachers receive extensive training on supporting children with

learning disabilities, but not all resource room teachers are special education teachers (Li, 2017). Furthermore, even those teachers who receive education on the needs of students with learning disabilities, they must be able to assess and address student needs from the perspective of success in a general education class. These teachers are not with students all day, and limited communication between general teachers and resource room teachers could lead to unaddressed gaps in student needs (Li, 2017).

Addressing the need for teacher collaboration, Dev and Haynes (2015) argued that co-teaching students can be both a benefit and drawback of resource rooms. In a qualitative study of teacher perceptions of resource rooms, Dev and Haynes questioned teachers about their observations regarding the determinants of resource room success or failure, observing that almost all teachers who participated in the study citied the importance of staff communication. While Dev and Haynes found that pre-service and post-service education on resource rooms greatly enhanced teacher perceptions of success, this level of preparation was not sufficient to overcome breakdowns in communication between general education teachers, resource room teachers, and administrative staff. While the potential breakdown in communication and resulting difficulties are a potential drawback of resource rooms, the study participants also noted that successful teaching partnerships could lead to positive student outcomes and enhanced teacher workplace satisfaction. The idea that intercommunication is a drawback of resource rooms should, therefore, be tempered by the understanding that opportunities for collaboration may also increase teacher experience and functionality (Dev & Haynes, 2015).

Perceptions of Resource Rooms:

Understanding stakeholders' perceptions of resource rooms requires soliciting feedback from a broad range of stakeholders (Hussein, Al-Shayeb, & Al-Qaryouti, 2015). Stakeholders that are interested in educating students with disabilities include general education teachers,

special education teachers, social workers, principals, parents of students with disabilities, parents of students without disabilities, and students (Hussein et al., 2015). Hussein et al. performed a widespread quantitative study of the above-mentioned stakeholder groups which included 2,430 various participants. Forty-three percent of these stakeholders stated that they preferred students with disabilities to be educated in an entirely separate school, while 29% indicated that they preferred students with disabilities be educated in a separate classroom within a general education school. Among the stakeholders, 12 percent stated that a resource room combined with a general education classroom was the most appropriate setting for students with disabilities. Just under 16% of the total population preferred that students with disabilities be educated in a general education classroom. Special education teachers preferred that students with disabilities be educated in a separate class, rather than using a resource room within the general education population (Hussien et al., 2015).

Parents of disabled students and resource room teachers generally perceive resource rooms positively and express satisfaction with the educational opportunities that they provide (Al-Khateeb & Hadidi, 2009). In a study of 190 parents of children with disabilities and teachers, Al-Khateeb and Hadidi found that the parents were satisfied with their child's education and appreciated their child's improved academic performance. Al-Khateeb and Hadidi also found that resource room teachers perceived resource rooms positively. The elements that improved teachers' perception of resource rooms included adequate training, resources, and collaboration with other teachers. Parents also perceived resource rooms to positively impact their child's emotional progress, and wanted school to establish positive policies for educating students with disabilities (Al-Khateeb & Hadidi, 2009).

General education teachers, or teachers who are not specifically focused on educating students with disabilities, have similar opinions to the general stakeholder population (Hussein & Al-Qaryouti, 2014). In a quantitative study of 704 general education teachers in Oman, Hussein

and Al-Qaryouti determined that 48% of teachers favored a totally separate educational setting for students with disabilities, while 33% preferred students with disabilities be educated in a self-contained class within a general school. Just under 10% of teachers selected a resource room as their preferred educational methodology for students with disabilities, while approximately 9% of general education teachers would prefer that students with disabilities be educated in the general student population (Hussien & Al-Qaryouti, 2014). Compared to the general stakeholder group, general education teachers prefer that students with disabilities be educated in separate educational settings at a higher rate and resource rooms at a lower rate (Hussien & Al-Qaryouti, 2014).

Prevailing educational philosophies differ depend on the audience and geographic location (Tupas & Pendon, 2016). The differing educational philosophies were evident in Hussein and Al-Qaryouti (2014), who reported that parents of students with disabilities had different opinions on inclusiveness then other stakeholder groups. This is also evident in Hornby's (2015) literature review. Hornby discussed the differences between special education and inclusive education. According to this author, special education focuses on individual student assessments, goal-driven instruction, and student performance evaluations. In contrast, inclusive education focuses on valuing educational learners in the general school community and celebrating the diversity of learners (Hornby, 2015). According to Hornby, many stakeholders involved with educating students with disabilities perceive special education programs such as resource rooms to place an inherent label and stigma on the student. From this perspective, individuals may feel that enrolling students in separate resource rooms places unhealthy labels on students (Hornby, 2015).

Despite varied perceptions about the stigma associated with resource rooms (Hornby, 2015), researchers have asserted that children who are taught in resource rooms require a greater degree of assistance than children who have disabilities but are taught in a general classroom (Bottge et al., 2018). Based on the findings of Bottge et al., this opinion

is partially based on perception and assumption, and partly based on supportive data. For example, in a study of education in resource rooms and the general education population, Bottge et al. found students in resource rooms to achieve substantially worse testing results than students with disabilities who were taught through general education classrooms. The researchers attributed the lower performance not to the educational vehicle, but to the higher disability severity level associated with children taught through resource rooms. Interestingly, Bottge et al. found that the tested educational techniques decrease student mathematical computation error rates more significantly among resource room students than among students with disabilities who were taught in the general population. These results could imply more effective delivery through resource rooms or that the educational technique had a greater impact on students with a greater degree of disability severity. There is a need for additional research regarding whether the perception of stigma surrounding placement in resource rooms accurately represents student achievement levels (Bottge et al., 2018).

In determining the appropriateness of a resource room for a particular school or a particular child, it is important to consider the full context in which the child will be learning (Wilson, 2017). In a literature review of inclusive education, Wilson discussed the importance of inclusive learning principles that acknowledge the wide range of students and student needs which must be accommodated in classrooms. Adding a service such as a resource room may not sufficiently educate a child with specific needs if the full academic situation is not inclusive (Wilson, 2017). Wilson used a case study of a young female student to describe the dangers of a non-inclusive educational setting. The student was ostracised from her peers due to demographic and learning differences, and received very little attention from either her peers or teacher. The child was sent to a resource room to receive extra support, but the removal from her general education classroom increased her stigmatisation and disrupted her general classroom education (Wilson, 2017). In this instance, the resource room was insufficient support for a

child with special educational needs (Wilson, 2017). Wilson argued that specific treatments, like resource rooms, are insufficient when the entire educational situation is not designed to meet student needs.

Discussion and conclusion:

The relevant literature on resource rooms, focusing on resource rooms in Oman, revealed mixed conclusions. It is challenging to research perceptions of reading rooms because any perception of the educational technique is relevant to the perception of the alternative. For example, a stakeholder's perspective on a reading room as opposed to a general education classroom may be different from the same individual's perception of a reading room compared to a dedicated educational facility or a dedicated classroom (Al Mamari, 2017). In the following section, the author addresses the overarching themes present in recent literature related to the benefits, drawbacks, and perceptions of resource rooms.

Research Question 1 asked in what ways resource rooms benefit children with learning disabilities, specifically in Oman. Further illustrating the importance of comparison, one theme which emerged in the body of literature is that a benefit of resource rooms is that they better allow students with disabilities to be educated in general education facilities (Hadidi & Al Khateeb, 2015). Researchers have suggested that both children with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities prefer that students be included in the general population as much as possible (Al Mamari, 2017). Broader stakeholder audiences have been generally supportive of this inclusion, but general education teachers in Oman have stated their preferences for separated education for students with disabilities (Hadidi & Al Khateeb, 2015).

Other benefits of resource rooms include the ability to provide students with disabilities more attention and opportunities to test innovative teaching strategies (Al Mamari, 2017; Göransson et al.,

2016). Both of these benefits hinge on the assumption that the counterpoint to resource room education is education in a general classroom setting. Scholars have suggested that students with disabilities greatly benefit from peer discussion based education, which is more achievable in a smaller group setting (Göransson et al., 2016).

Although authors have cited many benefits associated with resource rooms (Al Mamari, 2017; Göransson et al., 2016; Hadidi & Al Khateeb, 2015), drawbacks exist as well (Al-Zoubi & Rahman, 2016; Li, 2017). Research Question 2 asked about the perceived drawbacks of reading rooms, focused on the Oman population. One significant drawback to the development of resource rooms is school funding (Al-Zoubi & Rahman, 2016) Al-Zoubi and Rahman found that schools with limited resources often failed to adequately set up and maintain resource rooms. Resource rooms require materials, teaching, and funding resources to be taken from the general education fund, and some school districts are unable to produce such funding. Similar to the benefits of resource rooms, this drawback prompts questions about the counterfactual. If schools were unable to fund resource rooms, they would presumably be equally unable to fund separate schools or separate classrooms.

Other organisational challenges exist (Al-Zoubi & Rahman, 2016). Al-Zoubi and Rahman found that teachers often cited a lack of communication between the general education staff, resource room staff, and administrators as a challenge of successfully implementing resource rooms. Some of these challenges might be abated by pre-service and post service training, but Li (2017) reported that many teachers feel unprepared to teach resource rooms even after completing their educational training. Providing teachers with more opportunities to collaborate, specific organisational strategies, and increased training might mitigate the drawbacks associated with resource rooms (Li, 2017).

Research Question 3 addressed stakeholders' perspectives of resource rooms. Recent researchers have suggested that many teachers

still prefer students with disabilities to be educated outside of the general population. Although these teachers perceive resource rooms to be preferable to education through the general population, many still prefer that students receive their education in completely separate schools (Hadidi & Al Khateeb, 2015). There are some factors that effect the support of students with LDs in resource room from teachers' point of view in this study. One of these factors, the teachers are not effectively qualified to diagnose and teach students with LDs. As most of the teachers are specialized in different field other than the learning difficulties, and they were trained for one month only in the field of learning difficulties. Another factor is the lack of accurate and codified diagnostic tests to diagnose students with LDs, according to what was extracted from the interviews with the teachers, they stated that they are concerned if they will succeed in teaching these students, because there is no official educational guide for teaching students with LDs. The lack of teaching experience for teachers of students with LDs is also an important factor in providing appropriate support to each student according to the type of educational difficulties and how to face them.

The requirements needed to optimize the use of the room are providing financial support to provide the equipment and devices to be used in the resource rooms, such as laptops or PCs, audio books, etc. Also, providing standardized diagnostic measures and tests for detecting and identify students with LDs and determining the type of educational difficulties they face. Furthermore, the development of the professional and teaching skills of female teachers before service and during service is very important, such as providing intensive training courses in the field of LD for female teachers, also by encouraging the opening of teacher training programs in universities and colleges in the specialization of special education. It is very important to raise awareness among members of the community in general and the school community especially (school workers and the rest of the students) about what LD is and how to deal with students exposed to LD.

In addition to what's mentioned above is the costs of equipping the school and resource classes or rooms. These costs must be provided by the Ministry of Education. Unfortunately, the Ministry adopts a specific budget, and this budget does not cover all schools in which the Learning Disabilities Program is applied. Although, there are clear efforts by the Ministry, but these expenses are considered relatively simple with the equipment that should be available in this program to reach the desired goal.

The integration program (resource room programme) is based primarily on the theory of social learning and based on the involvement of students in social interaction within and outside the classroom. This interaction will therefore have a positive impact on the student's level not only social but also academic.

This marked preference for educating students with disabilities outside of a general education setting lags behind the research consensus that children should be included in the general population (Al Mamari, 2017; Hadidi & Al Khateeb, 2015). More research is necessary to understand why teachers continue to prefer separate education. If addressing the barriers to inclusive education results in more inclusive attitudes, this would suggest that teachers had practical concerns about inclusion, rather than concerns that children with disabilities would be better educated separately (Al Mamari, 2017; Hadidi & Al Khateeb, 2015).

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