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Teachers' Attitudes toward Parental Involvement in the Inclusion Process of Children with Special Needs

PhD THESIS ABSTRACT

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List of Acronyms

CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CMV	Common-Method Variance
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
IEP	Individualized Education Program
MATYA	Hebrew acronym for a regional support center
PI	parental involvement
SN	Special needs
TAPIQ	Teachers' Attitudes towards Parental Involvement Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary democratic Western society acknowledges diversity among children, which is accepted as essential and natural, and it is regarded as one of the characteristics of the human existence. Aspiration to maintain human dignity and the pursuit of equal opportunities emphasizes every person's right to education, and requires the development of various ways of adjustment and support for children with special educational needs to allow them the opportunity for optimal development in their environments (Blass & Laor, 2002; European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2014).

Decisions pertaining to inclusion of people with special needs (SN) are made by educational policy makers and academics. The success of inclusion in practice poses educational challenges to the teaching staff. Hence, teachers are actually the main actors in the process of the implementation of ideas into practice and cope with the challenges accompanying it. Therefore, teachers' attitudes and approaches are of significance to the nature of the inclusion process and its success (Shimoni & Gavish, 2006; Vidislavski, 2013).

Parallel to social processes and legislative changes in the field of people with disabilities in the last decades, an accelerated social process began (in Israel and in other countries around the world) pertaining to parental involvement (PI) in the education in general and in special education in particular. At the heart of this trend is the idea of involving society in decisions that influence its life, which also includes the people with SN (Noy, 2014).

It was found that the motivation for PI in special education stems, *inter alia*, from parents' concern that their children may not get appropriate services for their SN in the inclusion process (Burke, 2012; Turnbull et al., 2015). Therefore, much of the parents' involvement revolves around the legislative activity that guarantees appropriate public education. This involvement, together with the changes introduced by professionals with regard to the perception of the parents' role in the treatment of their SN children and their education, has been expressed in policy changes in Israel and around the world. In some places these changes have been anchored in legislation (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2014).

Benefits of cooperation between parents and school staff in general and parents of SN children in particular seem obvious, but apparently the implementation of this concept in day-to-day life is complex (Hess, Molina, & Kozleski, 2006; Shepherd & Djenne-Amal, 2016; Webster et al., 2017). Research has shown three main reasons why parents and teachers resist partnership and involvement: violation of the equal opportunities principle, violation of the partners' autonomy and privacy, and damage to the power and authority of teachers (Noy, 2014).

In families of children with SN, other considerations are added to the difficulty that accompanies raising a child with SN. The birth of a child with SN immediately influences the life of individuals in the family and may cause many changes in the life

of the family as a whole (Greenbank, 2016; Mishori, 2014; Shepherd & Djenne-Amal, 2016). Raising a child with SN, face the families with decisions, dilemmas, and with an ongoing high level of responsibility, that does not decrease over the years and often increases as parents grow older (Greenbank, 2016; Hodatov, 2001; Shepherd & Djenne-Amal, 2016). These challenges are often accompanied by chronic sorrow, helplessness, anger, and confusion that affect the relationship with the educational-therapeutic environment (Greenbank, 2016; Krispin, 2005).

The decision-making process and the family's right to choose is part of the family-centered practice. Support of the decision-making process and support of parents' choice was found to empower families and increase their ability to make informed decisions with regard to their children's needs (Bailey et al., 2004; Murray et al. (2007; Shepherd & Djenne-Amal, 2016; Webster et al., 2017).

The Dorner Committee (2009) in Israel determined that the education of a child with SN in Israel is an ongoing process shared by many factors, including parents, educators, and professionals as well as education authorities. Involving the parents alongside the work of professionals is essential for improving the educational decision-making pertaining to the child (Dorner, 2009).

According to the Special Education Law in Israel (1988), a placement committee has the role to determine SN children's eligibility for special education services and placement. Over the years, the parents' position has improved and their rights have been defined. Still, in Israel, the decision about the actual placement and the type of educational framework is in the hands of a statutory committee and not in the parents' hands (Special Education Law, Director General's Circular, 2014). The Dorner Committee has reached the conclusion that in the placement process, it is better that the parents make the choice out of the possible educational frameworks, regarding the specific framework where their child will be educated – inclusive or segregated (Dorner, 2009).

Passing the right to take educational and inclusion-related decisions onto the parents requires a re-examination of the role of the professionals. Hence, the traditional role of direct treatment of the child has to expand, and the professionals have to accompany and support the families facing these decisions (Murray et al., 2007; Webster et al., 2017). For the change in the professional's role to succeed, it is important to examine their attitudes and their perceptions about PI and partnership in decision-making in education, especially in the placement process.

Gap in Knowledge

This doctoral research combines two topics: (1) educational policy toward inclusion and (2) involvement of parents of children with SN in the educational processes. Many studies have examined teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion and some toward PI. In addition, some studies addressed the importance and the influence of PI in the inclusion. Nevertheless, a literature review indicates a scarcity of the studies

pertaining to teachers' attitudes toward PI in the inclusion process of their children with SN.

The proposed research focused on understanding the attitudes of teachers and educational teams in Israel, who are in daily contact with the parents, and analyzed whether there is a gap between the inclusion policy, the principles of the new reform that is intended to implement in Israel, and the attitudes of the teachers who are responsible for applying it.

Research Goals

1. To examine Israeli teachers' attitudes regarding the involvement of parents of children with SN in the inclusion process and design an instrument allowing the assessment of these attitudes.
2. To examine the differences between the attitudes of teachers from mainstream and special education and from different regions (periphery and center) of Israel.

Keywords: Teachers attitudes, Parental involvement, Inclusion, Educational decision-making, Communication.

CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical review presented below pertains to two main issues that constitute the grounds for this research: PI and the inclusion of pupils with special needs (SN). To examine the research subject a number of theories were explored: socio-ecological theories referring to the connection between society and individuals, psychological theories referring to the influence of families on individuals within them, and social theories and models referring to people with disabilities in general and inclusion of pupils with SN in the educational system in particular.

I.1 Parental Involvement – Main Theories and Models

Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological theory, which emphasizes the significance of the environment in which children grow, focuses on the influence of family, their involvement in pupils' schools, and their outcomes. Bronfenbrenner (1986) claimed that every child has the biological potential (bio) whose means of expression depends on context and environment (ecology) and he viewed the context as a set of nested structures. The author posited five levels of contexts that influence children, ranging from immediate face-to-face interaction with another person, to a very general cultural belief systems: a microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Miller, 2011; Nelson et al., 2017). These five systems are dynamic and change over time with social and general economic changes, but also as a result of the connections between them. The better the systems with which a child is in contact are coordinated, the greater the improvement in his/her development. Interactions between all these systems result in stability on the one hand, but enable development on the other (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Bowen's (1966) psychological theory highlights the impact families, their structures, relationships within and functioning, as significant factors in children's development. It is based on the premise that every family is unique, because of the infinite differences in personal characteristics and cultural and ideological styles of every family member (Bruder, 2010):

- Family structures comprise the personal characteristics of every member. These characteristics include each member's ideological and cultural personality and style. Family structure provides the basis of how a family creates interactions.
- Family interactions define the significance of family systems with regard to cohesion, adaptation, and ways of communication. Family interactions are factors that promote or inhibit family functioning and child development.
- Family function is a result of family structure and interactions and is the practical expression of family individuals' realizing their needs.
- Life cycle- changes that occur in families and promote or inhibit the development and ability in which families operate.

From the theories described above, and from an understanding of the importance of family and its effect on children and vice versa, approaches and practices have developed to treat and work with families with children with SN. One of the main practices is family-centered practice.

Family-Centered Practice

Underlying the family-centered approach are four premises:

- Family and not professionals are the constant and central factor in the life of the child, involved in the process of growth;
- The family should and can determine the child's needs;
- Child care is more effective if help is given to the family;
- The family's decision-making and choice regarding the type of service provided to their child with respect strengthens families, improves the family's control, and opens the door to partnerships and collaboration (Dempsey & Keen, 2008).

Allen and Peter (1996) reviewed the literature and defined family-centered services using five components: referring to the family as a unit of reference, family choice, the family's strengths, family and team relations, and customized services to the family (Epley, Summers, & Turnbull, 2011). The literature regards the professionals' respectful approach to the families, considering the family's expertise concerning the child, its involvement, and decision-making to be an integral part of the conception (Bailey et al., 2004; Coogle, 2012; Dunst, 2002).

Family theories and a family-centered approach have changed attitudes and approaches to the functioning of family and its role in child development. These changes have brought about a turning point in the process relating to PI in intervention and treatment especially at young ages. The parents' status has gradually shifted from the position of the mediators and agents of change to the position of active participants (Ingber & Dromi, 2010 apud Alaluf, 2015; Alaluf, Ungureanu, & Rusu, 2016)). In many countries parents participate in policy making with regard to family-centered intervention programs.

Along with the increasing involvement in education and treatment of children with SN, parents need to make meaningful decisions with regard to the processes of education and rehabilitation of their children (Murray et al., 2007) and need the support of professionals more than ever before. The professionals' and the education system's role is to help parents, to support them in the process of choice and decision-making and to provide information, guidance, and counseling. The ways in which professionals help strengthen the partnership between them and the families influence the effectiveness of treatment (Dempsey & Keen, 2008 apud Alaluf, 2015; Alaluf, Ungureanu, & Rusu, 2016; Stormshak et al., 2016).

I.2 Integration and Inclusion - Main Theories and Models

This research examines the involvement of parents with SN children in light of the social and educational development regarding the inclusion of people with disabilities in society generally and of children with SN particularly. Nirje's (1969) principle of normalization and Oliver's (1983) Social Model of Disability acted to promote the rights and equal opportunities of disabled people in society, and constituted the basis, each separately, for adjusting the educational system for the inclusion of pupils with SN (Nirje, 1969; Oliver & Barnes, 2012; Shakespeare, 2013).

Behavioral Model: Principle of Normalization

The term "normalization" is defined in the literature as a principle that allows basic living conditions that are as close to the norm possible, for people with disabilities (income, housing, health care), while using accepted normative and cultural practices. The principle should be applied in every society, at every age, and for every degree of disability. The principle must be adapted to social changes and personal development of each individual (Nirje, 1969).

Normalization emphasizes the common normative behavior among people and seeks to do away with the difference between people with disabilities and other people, and make "like everyone else". Therefore, to reach such conditions, equal civil rights to those should be granted to all citizens (Kumar et al., 2015). The normalization principle constituted the grounds for the development of integration model in the 1970s.

The integration model is based on the notion of "the least restrictive environment" according to which the preference of placing a child with SN is to be preferred, as much as possible, in regular educational frameworks (Ronen, 2007). Children should be placed in frameworks that are least restrictive for development, quality of life, and reaching educational goals. The principle refers to the preference of the regular framework only if it can provide solutions for a child's special needs (Ronen, 2007).

The integration model advocates a sequence of frameworks: special education schools, special education classes in regular schools, and partial or full inclusion in a regular class based on the children's diversity, types of disabilities, and their severity.

Individual and Social Models of Disability

The Social Model of Disability (SMD) is a model that developed in the 1980s in response to the medical model that prevailed at the time (Oliver & Barnes, 2012). Advocates of SMD have regarded society as the main source of people's disabilities and sought to introduce political, perceptual, and social changes in attitudes towards people with disabilities and they have suggested that while physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychological disability may cause functional limitations, it does not necessarily entail a state of handicap. The latter is rather caused when the

environment fails to adapt to the needs of people with disabilities (Shakespeare, 2013; Simpson, 2017).

The SMD is based on the assimilation of the difference between the terms "handicap" and "disability". According to the model, disability is influenced by the interaction between people and their environment. SMD sets out against the principle of normalization and argued that the attempt to "fix" the individual who copes with a disability, and adapt him or her to the environment and society, is a cause of discrimination and prejudice and in fact creates social discrimination of minority groups in society (Oliver & Barnes, 2012).

The inclusion movement adopted the principles of SMD, according to which disability is not a property of an individual, but rather a state of interaction between an individual and his or her environment and the help provided to him or her. The inclusion movement advocates abolishing segregated frameworks and the placement of children with SN in regular classes. The movement is working towards including pupils with SN in regular classes based on a firm belief in the principle of equality and equity (Ronen, 2007).

Much like in the rest of the Western world, the perception of children with SN and the special education system has gone through many changes over the years. The reality in present-day Israel is similar to the spirit of American law that refers to the least restrictive environment. The 1988 Israeli Special Education Law and its 2002 amendment have emphasized preference of integration, but not at any cost. Placement will be determined based on each child's needs and existing frameworks (Director General's Circular, 2014, 5A).

The Dorner Committee was established by the Israeli Ministry of Education in 2007 to examine the issue of pupils with SN. The committee's aims were to examine Israeli Ministry of Education policy regarding the treatment of pupils with SN, examine budget allocations for these pupils, and recommend an action plan and priorities (Dorner, 2009, p. 3). The Dorner reform (2009) emphasized the right of children to learn in regular schools and receive special education resources wherever they are enrolled, and recognized the right to inclusion and the integration of pupils with SN in regular education and society.

The committee therefore recommended:

1. **Giving parents the right to choose** where the child learns, whether it is a segregated special education framework, or inclusion in a regular education framework.
2. **Funding following the child** – Changing the budget system so that the budget is based on the child's disability and functioning and attached to the individual with SN and follows him/her to whichever framework he/she is placed in.
3. **Characterizing the pupils by functioning and not only by disability** – The level of support is determined by the child's functioning and not only by his or her disability.

Today, after five years of the pilot study, four local authorities participate in the implementation of the Dorner Committee recommendations in grades 2–6 (about 1,500 pupils). Every year the processes recommended by the committee are examined and studied

I.3 Conceptual framework of the thesis

The conceptual framework of this research is the consequence of the theories and concepts mentioned above and constitute a basis for the research. The conceptual framework includes four interconnected components: PI in the educational system, involvement of parents with SN children, inclusion of SN pupils, and the characteristics of teachers who teach pupils with SN. All these join together, to examine **teachers' attitudes toward the involvement of parents of pupils with SN in inclusion processes.**

The model, presented in Figure 1 and the later narrative description present the model's components and the connections and effects between them.

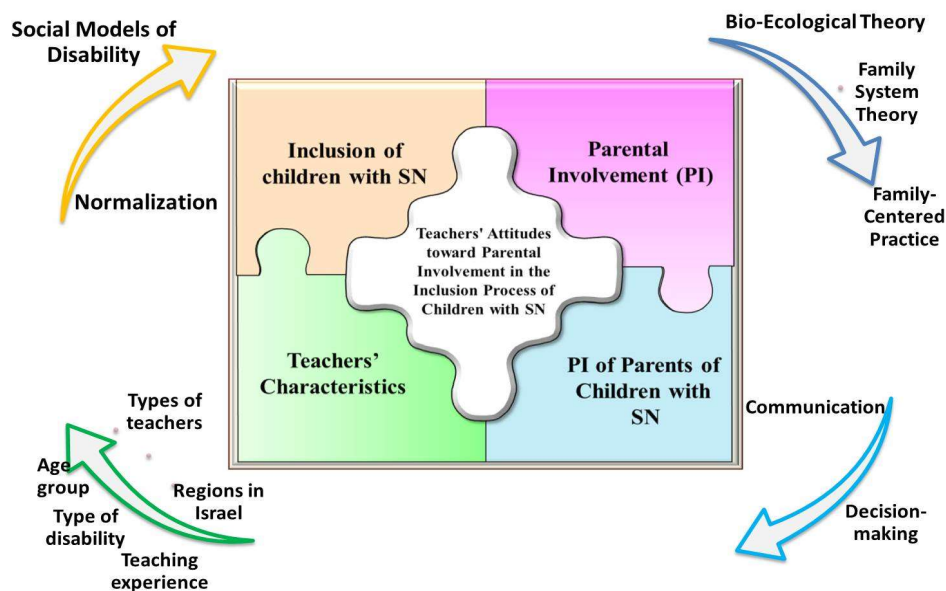


Figure 1: *The conceptual framework of the PhD research*

Parental Involvement (PI)

PI is a concept that has been widely researched in recent decades and its origin is in social processes that believe in the rights of citizens to be involved in processes affecting their life (Noy, 2014), and the development of theories presented above showing the importance of families and their effects on family members.

Studies have proven consistently that PI and cooperation with schools is positive, in terms that it beneficially affects the educational and social development of the pupils. PI was found to correlate to improved pupil achievements, increased learning

motivation, improved self-image, reduction in behavioral problems, and more (e.g. Dor, 2013). Nonetheless, despite these benefits, professionals still find it difficult to implement this cooperation and a gap remains between statements and how they operate in practice (e.g. Turnbull et al., 2015).

It appears that the meaning of the concept PI and its implementation has been interpreted differently by parents and professionals. The concept of PI is rather a broad one, describing actions carried out by schools for and with parents to advance pupils (Lavan & Heiman, 2011). In 2001, Epstein proposed a model for cooperation between schools and families and ranked six levels of involvement that encouraged children's development and learning success: parenting, communicating, volunteering, extending learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with family (Epstein, 2011). Epstein's proposed model constitutes a basis for this research examining the involvement of parents of pupils with SN in their inclusion.

Involvement of Parents of Children with Special Needs

Research into the involvement of parents of children with SN is broad, but while in regular education most reference to the links between parents and the education system uses the concept 'PI', in special education, more widespread and frequent use is made of the concept 'family-school partnership' (Burke, 2012). The concept partnership is defined as a situation in which professionals and families reach an awareness of the knowledge and judgement of the others and work together to promote specific aims (Turnbull et al., 2015).

Turnbull et al. (2015) examined Epstein's model and levels of involvement defined by her, and reached the conclusion that partnership in special education is unlike this model, mainly because of the two levels that most professionals and parents emphasize in this partnership: communication between professionals and families and vice versa as well as PI in decision-making regarding pupils with SN (Turnbull et al., 2015). These two issues together with the general contribution of PI were examined in this research from the point of view of teachers.

Teachers' Characteristics in relation to Parental Involvement

Social processes that have influenced perceptions of the role of parents in their children's education have forced policy makers to adjust themselves and the education system to this change (Noy, 2014). Therefore, various reforms emphasizing partnership with parents and their role in decision-making were introduced (Dorner, 2009). Such reforms, by nature, are not taken in partnership with teachers and educational staff working in the field, but affect them directly and on a daily basis. Teachers' attitudes towards proposed changes affect their cooperation and policy implementation (Greenberg & Sorek, 2003; Vidislavski, 2013).

Nonetheless, teachers' attitudes towards various issues were found to be linked to many factors such as training, working conditions, beliefs, and more (Talmor, 2007). Therefore, the current research examined teachers' attitudes while investigating different characteristics such as teacher training (special education versus regular

education), teachers' geographical placement (periphery or center), and teaching seniority and more.

Over the past fifty years, the acknowledgement that people with disabilities are entitled to equal rights and opportunities to be part of society, has grown and developed (Naon, Milstein, & Marom, 2012).

This acknowledgement was expressed, *inter alia*, in the theories presented above. Legislation and rights given to people with disabilities have been expressed by the increase in the number of pupils with SN who have been included in various educational frameworks (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2014). In Israel, there are three educational frameworks in which children with SN can study: special education schools, special education classes in regular schools, and regular classes. The latter two options are considered as inclusion frameworks in Israel, in which pupils with SN study together with their peers who are not disabled (part or all of the day). Including pupils with SN constitutes a challenge for education systems and there are many studies on the subject (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2014). The rise in PI in general and that of parents of children with SN in particular adds another layer to this challenge. In Israel, the reform, whose origin was in parents' dissatisfaction with the support provided by the state to children with SN in special education, has been partially implemented (Dorner, 2009). One of the cornerstones of this reform was the decision to give parents the sole right to choose the educational framework in which their children study (Dorner, 2009). This decision derived, *inter alia*, from parents' desire to expand the inclusion of pupils with SN into regular schools, and especially regular classes. Teachers' attitudes regarding the inclusion of pupils with SN and their attitudes towards PI are important to understanding the current research topic.

CHAPTER II:

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH "ISRAELI TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE INCLUSION PROCESS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS"

This chapter describes the research design and methodology that were used to reach the declared goals of this doctoral research. The chapter discusses the research paradigm, goals and questions, the research population, the research tools (variables, design), the methods of data collection, and the data analysis methods, and it presents the justifications for their use.

II.1 Research Goals

The following research goals were identified:

1. To examine Israeli teachers' attitudes regarding the involvement of parents of children with SN in the inclusion process and design an instrument allowing the assessment of these attitudes.
2. To examine the differences between the attitudes of Israeli teachers from mainstream and special education from different regions (periphery and center).

II.2 Research Questions

A mixed methods methodology was employed in this research to examine the attitudes of Israeli teachers with regard to involvement of parents of children with SN in the inclusion process. The research was designed to answer the following questions:

Quantitative and qualitative question:

1. What are the Israeli teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement (PI) in the inclusion processes of children with SN?

Quantitative questions:

2. What are the similarities and differences in attitudes of special and regular education Israeli teachers regarding PI (as reflected by TAPIQ) in the inclusion of SN children?
3. What are the similarities and differences in attitudes towards PI (as reflected by TAPIQ) of Israeli teachers from different regions (periphery and center) in Israel towards PI in the inclusion of SN children?

Before the elaboration of the research questions, a literature search (pilot study), was performed to identify the main categories of attitudes which could be included in a standard instrument for assessing Israeli teachers' attitudes regarding the involvement

of parents of children with SN in the inclusion process. This standard instrument is referred to as TAPIQ (Teachers' Attitudes toward Parental Involvement Questionnaire).

II.3 Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses were based on the previous findings of studies investigating the differences between attitudes of Israeli special education teachers and regular teachers regarding inclusion of pupils with SN and differences in parents' awareness of their children's rights between central Israel and the periphery. The hypotheses derived from the main research questions and goals:

1. Israeli teachers in general will express favorable attitudes toward PI in the inclusion of SN children.
2. Special education teachers will express more favorable attitudes toward PI in the inclusion of SN children than regular education teachers.
3. Israeli teachers from the periphery will express more favorable attitudes towards PI than teachers from central Israel, regardless of whether they teach in regular or special education classes in regular schools.

II.4 Research Variables

- **Types of teachers:** Israeli teachers from regular classes and Israeli teachers from Special Education classes un regular classes.
- **Regions in Israel:** cities in the periphery and center of Israel (for example Eilat in the periphery and Ramat Gan in the center). A figure indicating the cities in the center and periphery that participated in this research is presented below.
- **Participants' personal characteristics:**
 - **Age group of the pupils being taught** (age group below): primary (6-12) and junior high school (13-15).
 - **Types of pupil disabilities that teachers taught** (types of disabilities below): behavioral problems, learning difficulties and attention deficit disorders, and complex disabilities (autism, motor disabilities, hearing and visually impaired, and more).
 - **Experience in teaching:** teachers' length of service (in years).

II.5 Research Population

II.5.1. Participants in Quantitative Research

The research population included 138 Israeli teachers divided into two categories with two modalities each: (1) type of frameworks: special education classes and regular classes, and (2) geographical position: center and periphery of Israel. All the participants were women (aged between 25 and 55).

The teachers in the research vary in their professional experience and they cover all graders from first graders to high school students. Teachers Although teachers are divided between standard classes and special classes, their experience includes complex disabilities (26.1%), behavioral problems (26.8%), and learning difficulties and attention deficit disorder (47.1%). Table 1 provides the teachers' background information.

Table 1: Descriptive information regarding the Israeli teachers included in the quantitative analysis (N=138)

Variable	Categories	Number	Percentage
Type of class	Regular classes	70	50.7
	Special classes in regular schools	68	49.3
Regions in Israel	Periphery	64	46.4
	Center	74	53.6
Experience in teaching	0-5 years	37	26.8
	6-10 years	26	18.8
	More than 10 years	75	54.3
Age group	Elementary school	100	72.5
	Secondary school	38	27.5
Type of disability the teachers have experience with	Complex disabilities	36	26.1
	Behavioral problems	37	26.8
	Learning difficulties and attention deficit disorders	65	47.1

II.5.2 Participants in Qualitative Research

a. Participants in the semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, aiming to understand in depth the behavior of teachers and their thoughts and attitudes toward PI in the inclusion of SN children, with eight participants from those who filled in the quantitative questionnaire and agreed to be interviewed (Table 2).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the Israeli teachers included in the semi-structured interviews.

N=8	Center	Periphery	
Special education teachers	2	2	4
Regular education teachers	2	2	4
	4	4	

b. Participants in the focus group

A purposeful, homogenous sampling strategy was employed in this research to answer the research questions (Cleary et al., 2014). The focus group included ten female participants, i.e., special education counselors that specialize in different population types: learning difficulties and attention deficit disorders (N=4) and complex

disabilities (N=6). In Israel, the counselors accompany special and regular education teachers and guide them through the process of including SN pupils enrolled in regular classes or special education classes in regular schools.

II.6 Research Design and Methodology

Mixed methods approach was chosen for this research. The basic significance of this approach is that it can provide different mental models for the same research space, through mutual learning to better understand the researched phenomena (Greene, 2007) and in this study understanding teachers' attitudes.

To understand teachers coping with a growing level of involvement of parents in the process of their children's education, as well as in their professional orientation in recent years, it is considered that besides discovering the attitudes or measuring the differences between teachers in regular or special education classes, it is also necessary that teachers be allowed to talk about their experience in a changing situation where parents are taking a new role. Hence, the researcher assume that qualitative research methodologies may help to reveal the teachers' personal perspective regarding PI and the combination of all the research tools will allow for extended understanding of the phenomenon as a whole (Pritzker & Hen, 2010; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, Bryman, 2006, 2012).

As part of the mixed methods approach, the current research uses different research tools for the purpose of triangulation, complementarity, development, and expansion.

II.6.1 Research Stages

The current doctoral research is based on four stages mixed methods research, as follows:

Pilot study: Quantitative part – constructing the quantitative research tool-questionnaires

Stage 1: Quantitative part – attitudes' questionnaires based on a four-point Likert scale

Stage 2: Qualitative part – semi-structured interviews

Stage 3: Qualitative part – focus group

II.7 Research Tools

The current research made use of three research tools: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups.

II.7.1 Development of the Teachers' Attitudes toward Parental Involvement Questionnaire (TAPIQ)

Since no questionnaire was found to suit the specific research questions regarding Israeli teachers' attitudes toward PI in the inclusion of children with SN, the need to construct a new questionnaire was identified.

A search in the research literature that addresses the issues of teachers' attitudes, PI, and inclusion was conducted. Existing research tools (questionnaires), together with the theoretical background, and the researcher's experience in the field of special education served as grounds for constructing and identifying the domains and types of items to develop a new questionnaire about Teachers' Attitudes towards Parental Involvement Questionnaire (TAPIQ) (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, and Reed, 2002; Ingber and Dromi, 2010; King et al., 2003; McAnuff-Gumbs, 2006; Shamay, 2008).

The topics chosen were:

- a) Teachers' attitudes regarding the implications and contributions of PI;
- b) Teachers' attitudes regarding PI in decision making;
- c) Teachers' attitudes regarding PI and communications.

The following stage consisted of collecting **75 statements** from the questionnaires referred in the above-mentioned studies. Initial classification and arranging of statements, as well as the wording corrections and some modifications took the overlap between some statements into account, reducing the statements to **60** (Alaluf, Ungureanu, & Rusu, 2016).

Experts' Evaluation of the Selected Statements - A preliminary evaluation of these statements was done by a group of experts in the field, which consisted of six Israeli referees including the researcher herself. In this stage of the preliminary evaluation, the agreement criteria for the selection of the statements to be included in the questionnaire were set. Eventually, of the 60 statements with which the questionnaire started, 53 were left for the survey. The resulting **53-item questionnaire** was constructed on a four-point Likert scale, meaning each item appeared in the form of a statement to which participants had to respond on a four-point scale: 4 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree (Alaluf, Ungureanu, & Rusu, 2016). The final questionnaire was distributed among a preliminary sample of Israeli teachers in a pilot study (N=59), which is presented below.

Pilot Study – Factoring the Main Survey Instruments - To check the validity and reliability of the 53-item instrument (TAPIQ), the pilot questionnaire was distributed to 59 teachers (28 in special education classes and 31 in regular education classes) in a city in the center of Israel (Alaluf, Ungureanu, & Rusu, 2016). The analysis of the questionnaires then focused on the factor dimensions based on an **Exploratory Factor Analytical strategy (EFA)**. Exploratory Factor Analysis is meant to combine

statements, aka questionnaire items, which share a common factor that is latent to the researchers (Osborne, 2014). In this case, we look at factor loadings – the standardized regression coefficients. This preliminary analysis provided the basis for building meaningful research indices (Alaluf, Ungureanu, & Rusu, 2016).

A principal axis factoring technique was used with VARIMAX rotation to extract the optimal number of factors. The VARIMAX rotation is a constraint that imposes maximum orthogonality between factors; that is, correlations between factors are set to zero (Brown, 2015). For example, four dimensions (factors) for the first topic of the questionnaire contribution and implication of parents' involvement was found. Altogether, these dimensions explained 58% of the variance across the total of 17 items. This analysis was followed by **reliability analysis for each factor**. Although in some factors the reliability was slightly below the common threshold (alpha Cronbach <.70), in other factors, the reliability was above 0.70 and satisfactory (Alaluf, Ungureanu, & Rusu, 2016).

Table 3: Questionnaire structure (topics and dimensions) and reliability analysis.

Topics	Dimensions
Teachers' attitudes towards the implications and contributions of PI (alpha Cronbach = 0.76)	• Effect of PI on teachers' sense of self-efficacy
	• Effect of PI on school and other pupils who do not have SN
	• Effect of PI on the level of investment and training teachers need
	• Effect of PI on pupils with SN in different areas
Teachers' attitudes towards PI and communications (alpha Cronbach = 0.55)*	• Type of information passed from school to parents and vice versa
	• Communication frequency and sequence between school and parents and vice versa
	• Professional language clarity in dialogue with parents
Teachers' attitudes towards PI in decision-making (alpha Cronbach = 0.73)	• Taking decisions with regard to choosing the type of education framework in which SN pupils will learn
	• Taking decisions with regard to building IEPs for SN pupils

Final modification such as rephrasing statements that received high variability across teachers or total agreement among all teachers (no variation at all), or switching the scale such that low becomes high and the vice versa in misleading items, were included in the final field questionnaire.

Statements that were loaded very low (loading value < .30) on all potential latent factors were excluded from the final field questionnaire. The finalized field

questionnaire was built of **41 statements/items** (Alaluf, Ungureanu, & Rusu, 2016). While at this preliminary stage we only explored potential structures for the main survey instruments and helped reshape and design the final questionnaire, the analysis of the data included both exploratory analysis (to reproduce the preliminary results and support the final structure of the research indices), and confirmatory factor analysis, which confirmed the theoretical meaning of the dimensions of the questionnaire with empirical data.

Building the Final Version of TAPIQ: Exploratory and Confirmatory Analyses -

The methodology to reduce the number of questionnaire items into a set of meaningful factors combines two types of analytical approaches: (1) the **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)** and the (2) **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)** (Byrne, 2010). In this doctoral research, both approaches were used simultaneously to determine the gaps between theory and empirical data and to adjust the final research indices for the dimensions of the target concepts accordingly. The main purpose of this methodology is to develop research indices that provide the maximum coverage to the three main research topics from multiple aspects. The confirmatory stage has two levels: the level of sub-factors within each main topic of the research. Separated sets of indices per each topic were developed. In the second stage the potential for three principal factors for the three research primers is observed. In other words, it tests whether all relevant items of one topic may be expressed in one factor rather than several sub-factors. This approach is also known as the common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003) The outcome factors from the two confirmatory stages were further analyzed in a comparative manner across children's ages, types of problems, school locations, etc.

Research Final Indices and Components - The Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor analyses resulted in two sets of research indices that were calculated as the mean of the index components (the mean across the items). All questionnaire items with respect to the factoring results are listed below (Table 4). Each research index is the mean across the items that are its components. As mentioned, indices are divided into three categories: (1) Teachers' attitude towards the contribution of parental involvement; (2) Teachers' attitude towards parental involvement and communication; (3) Teachers' attitude toward parental involvement in the decision-making process.

Loading value above .30 is considered reasonable, yet the higher the loadings are, the better the factor is in terms of model fit and hence validates the final structure of the index (Byrne, 2010). Although some loading values are lower, they are all significant at $p < .05$. In addition, an index of internal consistency was calculated using the Cronbach's alpha index for reliability. The standard and common threshold for this index among academic scholars is 0.70, and in that case, the reliability is medium for several indices but acceptable for others.

Table 4: Factoring loading values of three dimensions revealed by the CFA.

Topics	Dimensions	Question No.	Laoding	SE	
Teachers' attitudes towards the implications and contributions of PI (alpha Cronbach = 0.76)	• Effect of PI on teachers' sense of self-efficacy	Q2	.60***	.07	* p<.05 **p<.01. ***p<.001. CFI=.964, TLI=.955, RMSEA=.036, Chi-Square=113.41, df=96, p=.11
		Q6	.58***	.07	
		Q25	.70***	.06	
		Q30	.76***	.06	
	• Effect of PI on school and other pupils who do not have SN	Q12	.36***	.09	
		Q14	.68***	.06	
		Q23	.79***	.05	
		Q28	.55***	.07	
	• Effect of PI on the level of investment and training teachers need	Q9	.50***	.11	
		Q19	.38**	.12	
		Q21	.55***	.11	
		Q32	.43***	.11	
	• Effect of PI on pupils with SN in different areas	Q4	.39***	.09	
Q24		.76***	.06		
Q26		.46***	.08		
Q31		.53***	.07		
Teachers' attitudes towards PI and communications (alpha Cronbach = 0.55)*	• Type of information passed from school to parents and vice versa	Q1	.36**	.11	**p<.01. ***p<.001. CFI=.986, TLI=.977, RMSEA=.028, Chi-Square=18.84, df=17, p=.34,
		Q17	.75***	.17	
	• Communication frequency and sequence between school and parents and vice versa	Q11	.51***	.08	
		Q13	.87***	.10	
		Q15	.46***	.09	
	• Professional language clarity in dialogue with parents	Q5	.69***	.09	
		Q20	.59***	.09	
		Q33	.47***	.09	
	Teachers' attitudes towards PI in decision-making (alpha Cronbach = 0.73)	• Taking decisions with regard to choosing the type of education framework in which SN pupils will learn	Q16	.72***	
Q22			.56***	.08	
Q29			.59***	.08	
• Taking decisions with regard to building IEPs		Q3	.58***	.07	
		Q7	.70***	.06	

	for SN pupils	Q8	.69***	.06
		Q10	.76***	.05
		Q18	.35***	.09
		Q27	.60***	.07

A matrix of correlations between indices within the topic complements the presentation of factor loadings as indicated by the CFA.

Generalization of Research Indices - The next step was to test a possible construction of three major factors without a division within survey instruments. Thus, each factor included all items in the survey instrument. Table 11 provides the results for this Common-Method Variance analysis (CMV). CMV allows testing whether the variance is attributable to the measurement. The modifications which were added to each factor were, usually, a deletion of one item or more. Items that are double strikes were excluded from the analysis due to low matching with the survey instrument overall context. This type of test is usually done to ensure the earlier division is superior to one common factor per each instrument (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The fit quality of this model is high (CFI=.972, TLI=.968), which is similar to fit results of the divided measurement models.

Table 5: Structural correlations between the factors – a three-factor analysis (extracted from the structural variance covariance matrix).

	Common-Method Variance (CMV)	Loadings	SE
Teachers' attitudes regarding the implications and contributions of PI	Q2	.19*	.09
	Q6	.30***	.09
	Q25	.38***	.08
	Q30	.46***	.08
	Q12	.38***	.08
	Q14	.60***	.07
	Q23	.72***	.05
	Q28	.59***	.07
	Q9		
	Q19	.29**	.09
	Q21		
	Q32	.31***	.09
	Q4	.47***	.08
	Q24	.65***	.06
	Q26	.38***	.08
	Q31	.57***	.07
Teachers' attitudes regarding PI and communications	Q1	.30***	.09
	Q17	.57***	.08
	Q11	.28**	.09

	Q13	.47***	.08
	Q15	.64***	.08
	Q5	.55***	.08
	Q20	.39***	.09
	Q33	.45***	.08
Teachers' attitudes regarding PI in decision-making	Q16	.26**	.09
	Q22	.18*	.09
	Q29		
	Q3	.56***	.07
	Q7	.73***	.05
	Q8	.68***	.06
	Q10	.73***	.05
	Q18	.35***	.09
	Q27	.58***	.07

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001. CFI=.972, TLI=.968, RMSEA=.024, Chi-Square=398.96, df=370, p=.14; double strike items were excluded

II.7.2 In-Depth Interviews

The **in-depth interviews** were composed for this study with the goal of understanding the behavior of teachers and their attitudes toward parental involvement in the inclusion of SN children. In-depth interview is one of the most prevalent ways of conducting qualitative research in general and in educational research in particular (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). The interviews in this research referred, *inter alia*, to the results obtained in the first quantitative research stage, and the purpose was to shed light on personal perspectives of some teachers about parental involvement in the inclusion of their children with SN.

The semi-structured interview in this study started with general questions, and worked towards more specific questions concerning the three topics this study deals with in parental involvement in the inclusion of SN children. During the interview, clarifying questions and complementing questions were added

II.7.3 Focus Group

The focus group was constructed after completing the second part of the research, with the purpose of examining the group's understanding and attitudes toward the findings of research stages 1 and 2.

A **focus group** is an accepted and well-known tool that has been used in qualitative research for over four decades (Creswell, 2011). A focus group focuses on attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of individuals within the group. The group constitutes a discussion group that is carefully guided by a moderator. A focus group seeks to promote self-exposure among participants, who are invited to ask each other questions and respond to the attitudes and opinions of others (Kruger et al., 2014).

As mentioned above, the focus group in this research included ten Israeli special education counselors, specializing in different types of population and disabilities. The meeting began with refreshments and small warm-up talk and continued with a discussion that lasted about two hours. The research findings were introduced by the researcher, whereas the discussion was facilitated by an organizational counselor specializing in group facilitation, who was unknown to the participants, to avoid the researcher's over-involvement. The moderator used questions that were prepared in advance, through which the participants were asked to express their opinions and insights regarding the research results as found in research stages 1 and 2.

It is important to note that the uniqueness of this focus group was in the participants' accumulated experience gained from accompanying and counseling teams that operate in the city where the Dorner Reform is implemented, and leading the change in the approach to the involvement of SN children's parents as a result of the reform (contrary to research participants in earlier stages, who were neither exposed nor implement the Dorner Committees' recommendations).

II.8 Data Analysis

Table 6: Research procedure and data analysis - quantitative part

Research Questions	Mixed-Methods Approach and Tools	Data Analysis	Aim
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot study: constructing Teachers Attitudes toward Parental Involvement Questionnaire (TAPIQ) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What are the similarities and differences in attitudes of special and regular education teachers regarding parental involvement (as reflected by TAPIQ) in the inclusion of special needs children? 2) What are the similarities and differences in attitudes towards PI (as reflected by TAPIQ) of teachers from different regions (periphery and center) in Israel towards parental involvement? 	<p>TAPIQ- Teachers Attitudes toward Parental Involvement Questionnaire</p>	<p>Questionnaires' reliability tested by Cronbach's alpha and by EFA for each component and for the entire instrument.</p> <p>Questionnaire' validity tested by CFA.</p>	<p>The quantitative research will reflect teachers' attitudes and will enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comparison between Israeli special education teachers and regular education teachers in center of Israel and periphery • An examination of relationship between variables. • Generalization from the sample, teachers from this study, to the population of teachers in Israel.

<p>Research Hypotheses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Israeli teachers in general will express favorable attitudes toward parental involvement in the inclusion of special needs children. 2. Special education teachers will express more favorable attitudes toward parental involvement in the inclusion of special needs children than regular education teachers. 3. Teachers from the periphery will express more favorable attitudes towards PI than teachers from central Israel, regardless of whether they teach in regular or special education classes 	<p>Analysis of research hypothesis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To examine the attitudes and the level of agreement, goodness of fit was conducted (Chi-Square test) • For the comparison between special education teachers and regular teachers and for the comparison between the attitudes of teachers from the peripheral and central Israel t-test was conducted. • To examine the relationship between teachers' personal characteristics, several tests was conducted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Age group - t-test □ Types of disabilities - a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) □ Experience in teaching- Spearman's correlation
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Table 7: Research procedure and data analysis - qualitative part

Research Questions	Mixed-Methods Approach and Tools	Data Analysis	The Aim
1) What are the Israeli teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in the inclusion processes of children with special needs?	<p>Semi-Structured Interview: Interview questions derived from the quantitative findings</p> <p>Focus group: Questions will be derived from the results of the previous parts: Questionnaires and in-depth interviews</p>	Data analysis in this research was conducted via content analysis	<p>The qualitative research will reflect and expand the understanding of teachers' attitudes. It will allow extended understanding and confirming of the qualitative findings regarding teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement.</p>

CHAPTER III:

MAIN RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative findings regarding the research questions in purpose to understand teachers' attitudes toward PI in the inclusion of children with SN.

III.1 Findings for the First Research Question (Quantitative) and the First Research Hypothesis: Israeli Teachers' Attitudes towards PI in the Inclusion Process of Special Needs Children

The first research question:

- What are the Israeli teachers' attitudes toward PI in the inclusion processes of children with SN?

The first research hypothesis:

- Israeli teachers in general will express favorable attitudes toward PI in the inclusion of SN children.

The quantitative research results showed that the level of agreement with most of the topics and dimensions (contribution of PI and communication with families) was high (70%-97/5%) and testifies that Israeli teachers generally have favorable attitudes towards PI in the inclusion of SN children, and that there is an understanding that this involvement is essential.

Nonetheless, in the field of PI in decision-making, large differences were revealed in the level of agreement and the level, in general, was low (8%- 68.8%). In choice of the type of educational framework the average agreement was the lowest (28.25%).

The first research hypothesis was partially confirmed. Our findings indicate that Israeli teachers in general expressed high level of agreements towards the most aspects regarding the PI in the inclusion of the SN children, but with reservations regarding educational decision-making.

In the in-depth interviews (qualitative research), it was also found that all teachers expressed their desire for parents to be involved and cooperative. *"I have said more than once, you brought this child into the world...take responsibility and be there for the child 100% in everything he/she needs..."* All interviewees referred to the contribution of PI and its importance. *"Getting parental cooperation is the ultimate at work"*. However, in the field of decision-making, the greatest reservations emerged especially regarding the type of educational framework. ***"This is not a black and white area, because I don't know how to say this, whether to completely deny parents the right to decide what is right for their children or not, again it really depends"***.

As such, the interviews reinforced the findings obtained in the quantitative section regarding all three areas examined. Some interviewees explained their reservations

regarding PI in decision-making and motivated these reservations in parents' personal capabilities and intellectual abilities to make the correct and optimal decisions for the inclusion and education of their SN children. A.S. *"Not everyone is intelligent enough to do this and some of them don't do it correctly ... I think that it greatly depends on their intelligence..."*

It is important to note that the areas where parents should be involved as expressed in the interviews with teachers, testify to their perception of the concept 'PI'. They chose to refer to communication with parents, the benefits of PI, and the implications for them. Nonetheless, the subject of PI in decision-making did not arise until after the researcher introduced it into the conversation and asked to hear their opinions.

III.2 Findings for the Second Research Question (Quantitative) and the Second Research Hypothesis: Comparison of the Regular and Special Education Teachers

The second research question:

- What are the similarities and differences in attitudes of Israeli special and regular education teachers regarding PI (as reflected by TAPIQ) in the inclusion of SN children?

The second research hypothesis:

- Special education teachers will express more favorable attitudes toward PI in the inclusion of SN children than regular education teachers.

Quantitative research results showed that there were no significant differences between special and regular education Israeli teachers in both areas (PI and communication, and implications and contributions of PI). However, it was found that Israeli special education teachers' attitudes were more favorable regarding PI in decision-making in comparison to regular education teachers (Table 8):

- Israeli special education teachers (N=68) were more favorable to PI in the process of decision-making than teachers in regular classes (N=70) ($t=-2.16$, $p<.05$), and in taking decisions in building IEPs ($t=-2.46$, $p<.05$).
- The effect of PI on teachers' self-efficacy in special education teachers was significantly higher than teachers in regular classes ($t=-3.64$, $p<.001$). The special education teachers highly agreed that PI does not harm their self-efficacy and does not lessen the care pupils receive from them.

Table 8: Comparison between the two types of teachers regarding the aspects of PI in the inclusion of SN children, as reflected by TAPIQ

	Topics/ dimens ions	Regular teachers (n=70)		Special education teachers (n=68)		df	t
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Teachers' attitudes towards the implications and contributions of PI	Sca1	3.04	0.33	3.12	0.33	136	-1.44
Teachers' attitudes towards PI and communications	Sca2	3.14	0.30	3.17	0.38	136	-0.48
Teachers' attitudes towards PI in decision-making	Sca3	2.49	0.46	2.66	0.48	136	-2.16*
Effect of PI on teachers' sense of self-efficacy	Sca1_1	2.99	0.55	3.29	0.44	136	-3.64***
Effect of PI on school and other pupils who do not have special needs	Sca1_2	3.04	0.44	3.03	0.47	136	0.03
Effect of PI on the level of investment and training teachers need	Sca1_3	3.16	0.44	3.08	0.44	136	1.11
Effect of PI of pupils with SN in different areas	Sca1_4	3.02	0.40	3.08	0.41	136	-0.85
Type of information passed from school to parents and vice versa	Sca2_1	3.29	0.49	3.42	0.48	136	-0.32
Communication frequency and sequence between school and parents and vice versa	Sca2_2	2.92	0.41	2.86	0.54	124.5	0.44
Professional language clarity in dialogue with parents	Sca2_3	3.18	0.46	3.30	0.44	136	-1.54
Taking decisions with regard to choosing the type of education framework in which SN pupils learn	Sca3_1	2.14	0.49	2.12	0.54	136	0.23
Taking decisions with regard to building IEP for SN pupils	Sca3_2	2.62	0.52	2.85	0.57	136	-2.46*

- *p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001; * PI = parental involvement; * SN = Special Needs;

IEP = Individualized Education Program

The interviews reinforced the results acquired in the quantitative part regarding differences between special and regular education teachers on the subject of decision-making and even elaborated on interpretations of the data. In the interviews, special education teachers agreed that it was the right of parents to be included and involved in IEPs and referred to the fact that it is Ministry of Education policy, whereas regular education teachers defined involvement in IEPs as parents approving a program decided upon and structured by staff without involvement in decisions. Regular

education teachers demonstrated less favorable attitudes with regard to parents' role in IEP decision-making processes. *"That is to say their involvement was whether they accepted this plan or not. That was the only thing"*.

The second research hypothesis was partially confirmed. Special education teachers believe that parents have the right to actively participate in meetings regarding the development of the IEP, as well as be involved as full partners in decision-making regarding their children's IEP more than regular education teachers. Also, in the case of special education teachers, they expressed a higher level of professional confidence regarding PI, i.e., they considered that PI does not harm their self-efficacy, professionalism, and manner in which they care for pupils with SN.

III.3 Findings for the Third Research Question (Quantitative) and the Third Research Hypothesis: Comparison of Attitudes towards PI (reflected by TAPIQ) between Israeli Teachers from Peripheral and Central Schools

The third research question:

- What are the similarities and differences in attitudes towards PI (as reflected by TAPIQ) of teachers from different regions (periphery and center) in Israel towards PI?

The third research hypothesis:

- Israeli teachers from the periphery will express more favorable attitudes towards PI than teachers from central Israel, regardless of whether they teach in regular or special education classes.

Quantitative research results showed that:

Teachers in peripheral schools (N=64) considered PI implications and contributions more favorable than teachers in schools in the center (N=74) ($t=1.95$, $p<.05$). This indicates that Israeli teachers in peripheral areas perceive PI and its implications as being favorable and contributory more than teachers in central Israel do. Within this topic, findings in two dimensions emerged:

- The comparison results for "effect of PI on school and other children without SN" indicated that the teachers from the periphery evaluated the effect as being significantly higher than those from central Israel ($t=1.61$, $p<.05$). This indicates that the teachers from peripheral areas of Israel consider more than the teachers from the center of Israel that PI is important and that it positively affects pupils without SN, as well as the school's image and school's ability to cope with SN pupils.
- The effect of PI on children with SN was considered to be significantly higher among teachers in peripheral areas in comparison to those in central areas of Israel ($t=1.78$, $p<.05$). This indicates that the PI is perceived by

teachers from both areas as being significant in regard to pupils with SN and enables them to progress in their studies and social achievements.

Table 9: Comparison of teachers in peripheral and central areas regarding the PI aspects (reflected by TAPIQ): means, standard deviations, and one-tail t-test

		Periphery (n=64)		Center (n=74)		df	t
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Teachers' attitudes towards the implications and contributions of PI	Sca1	3.14	0.34	3.03	0.33	136	1.95*
Teachers' attitudes towards PI and communications	Sca2	3.19	0.34	3.12	0.33	136	1.23
Teachers' attitudes towards PI in decision-making	Sca3	2.50	0.44	2.64	0.49	136	-1.73
Effect of PI on teachers' sense of self-efficacy	Sca1_1	3.21	0.53	3.07	0.51	136	1.55
Effect of PI on school and other pupils who do not have SN	Sca1_2	3.10	0.49	2.98	0.42	136	1.61*
Effect of PI on the level of investment and training teachers need	Sca1_3	3.14	0.45	3.10	0.44	136	0.42
Effect of PI on pupils with SN in different areas	Sca1_4	3.11	0.42	2.99	0.39	136	1.78*
Type of information passed from school to parents and vice versa	Sca2_1	3.50	0.47	3.32	0.48	136	2.17*
Communication frequency and sequence between school and parents and vice versa	Sca2_2	2.90	0.49	2.89	0.48	136	0.05
Professional language clarity in dialogue with parents	Sca2_3	3.28	0.47	3.21	0.44	136	0.89
Taking decisions with regard to choosing the type of education framework in which SN pupils learn	Sca3_1	2.09	0.47	2.16	0.55	136	-0.73
Taking decisions with regard to building IEP for SN pupils	Sca3_2	2.65	0.54	2.81	0.56	136	-1.69

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001. PI = parental involvement; SN = special needs; IEP = individualized education program

The third research hypothesis was partially confirmed. Hence, our findings indicate that the Israeli teachers in peripheral areas have more favorable attitudes towards PI and its implications in the educational process and inclusion, as well as their role and obligations regarding the type of information that is passed from teachers to parents and vice versa.

Teachers' personal characteristics - Types of pupil disabilities that teachers taught and attitudes of teachers towards PI (reflected by TAPIQ)

For the analysis of teachers' attitudes towards PI in relation to the disability type of children they taught (disabilities were classified as complex, behavioral, and learning), we applied a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) that resulted in several indices in which group means were found to be different from one another. These tests were followed by a ranking analysis based on a post-hoc pairwise analysis with Bonferroni correction. The post-hoc analysis provided a follow up ranking across the three groups to determine the larger versus smaller group means. Ranking is provided by small Latin letters for which "a" represents the smaller group, and so on (Table 10).

Table 10: Comparison of teachers' attitudes towards PI between types of disabilities (means, standard deviations, and F test values)

	Complex disabilities (n=36)		Behavioral problems (n=37)		Learning + attention deficit disorders (n=65)		F	η_p^2
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Teachers' attitudes towards the implications and contributions of PI	3.08	0.30	3.16	0.36	3.04	0.34	1.60	.02
Teachers' attitudes towards PI and communications	3.12	0.39	3.19	0.36	3.15	0.30	0.33	.01
Teachers' attitudes towards PI in decision-making	2.78 ^b	0.44	2.48 ^a	0.50	2.50 ^a	0.45	5.13**	.07
Effect of PI on teachers' sense of self-efficacy	3.19	0.45	3.20	0.51	3.07	0.56	1.07	.02
Effect of PI on school and other pupils who do not have SN	3.06	0.45	3.13	0.52	2.97	0.42	1.60	.02
Effect of PI on the level of investment and training teachers need	3.12	0.44	3.05	0.44	3.16	0.45	0.79	.01
Effect of PI on pupils with SN in different areas	2.97 ^a	0.35	3.20 ^b	0.41	3.00 ^a	0.42	3.54*	.03
Type of information passed from school to parents and vice versa	3.32	0.48	3.46	0.45	3.42	0.50	0.85	.01
Communication frequency and sequence between school and parents and vice versa	2.94	0.52	2.89	0.57	2.87	0.41	0.20	.003
Professional language clarity in dialogue with parents	3.18	0.44	3.30	0.46	3.24	0.46	0.65	.01
Taking decisions with regard to choosing the type of education framework in which SN pupils learn	2.18	0.51	2.04	0.48	2.15	0.54	0.83	.01
Taking decisions with regard to building IEP for SN pupils	3.00 ^b	0.51	2.65 ^a	0.61	2.64 ^a	0.51	6.08**	.08

*p<.05. **p<.01. PI = parental involvement; SN = special needs; IEP = individualized education program

The analysis revealed the following:

1. "*Attitudes towards PI in decision-making*" (F=5.13, p<.01)

The values for this item reveal that both the behavior and the learning problem groups had lower mean values compared to the complex disability group of teachers. This might indicate that the Israeli teachers who were teaching pupils with complex disabilities agreed more that parents should be involved in the decision-making process in general.

Within this topic, similar differences were also found in the following dimensions: "*Involvement in taking decisions with regard to building individualized education program for SN pupils*" (F=6.08, p<.01). This might indicate that teachers of pupils with complex disabilities agreed more towards PI in building IEPs compared to the teachers of children with the other two categories of disabilities.

2. "*Effect of PI on pupils with SN in different areas*" (F=3.54, p<.05). The behavioral problem group had the higher mean value (the letter "b"), while complex and learning problem groups had lower mean (both share the letter "a"). In other words, according to teachers, the effect of PI on pupils with SN themselves is higher when pupils have behavioral problems than other disabilities.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION OF MAIN FINDINGS

This chapter examines the findings presented in the previous chapter according to the three research questions, research hypotheses, and the relevant research literature, with reference to the research literature. The chapter constitutes the grounds for the conclusions and recommendations deriving from the research.

IV.1 Discussion of the First Research Question (Quantitative) and the First Research Hypothesis – Teachers' Attitudes towards PI in the Inclusion of Children of Children with SN

The results in the quantitative part indicated that generally the level of teachers' agreement with the statements of the first two topics (contribution of PI and communication) were very high and testified to the fact that Israeli teachers' attitudes were favorable in these respects.

IV.1.1 Teachers' Attitudes toward the Contribution of Involvement of Parents of Children with Special Needs in Inclusion Processes

Israeli teachers, according to the results presented in Chapter III, believe that involvement of parents of children with SN is important and benefits children with and without disabilities, and schools in general. Teachers also expressed in the in-depth interviews their strong desire for parents to be involved and to cooperate with, strengthen, and support schools. **D. (regular education):** "... I expect that parents will take the initiative and help their children...involvement has to be 100%."

They emphasized the significant contribution PI can have for pupils, particularly for their emotional wellbeing as well as on teachers themselves and their feelings: **M. (special education teacher):** "it increases their children's motivation, **it affects their emotional** and not just learning state, **their emotional state**, there is something supporting them, they have support at home and it can be seen."

In addition, Israeli teachers expressed frustration and difficulties when PI does not exist or exists solely at a minimal level. . **(special education teacher):** "It's difficult because even talking to them is impossible ... there was not communication with the parents, really none ... **it was extremely hard...."**

The sense of frustration and difficulty expressed by teachers when PI appears to be non-existent or rather limited indirectly strengthens the need and the importance that teachers see in PI. These results correlate with many studies on the topic of PI. Professionals in diverse studies have generally expressed positive attitudes toward and desire for PI (De Bruïne et al., 2014; Epstein et al., 2008; Forlin & Hopewell, 2006; Ingber & Dromi, 2010; Koutrouba et al., 2009; Tozer et al., 2006). Teachers view PI as an important condition for promoting schools and pupils (Addi-Raccah & Arviv-Elyashiv, 2008; Dor, 2013; Dor & Rucker-Naidu, 2012; Fisher & Kostelitz, 2015; Ingber & Dromi, 2010).

IV.1.2 Teachers' Attitudes toward Involvement of Parents of Special Needs Children and Communication

Teachers expressed commitment to and understanding of the need for frequent and ongoing communication with parents, taking responsibility for the type of information that must be passed between schools and parents (for example, passing on information about their rights) as well as respectful and clear discourse adjusted for parents. That is to say, Israeli teachers in our sample appear to be aware of their role in creating clear and routine communication with parents of children with SN. Teachers viewed information passed on by parents as helpful to them in their work with pupils and understanding their functioning throughout the day.

The communication component in the school-parent partnership generally and those with SN children in particular is a topic that has been researched and frequently discussed. Communication in many studies has been defined as part of the components and dimensions that must exist in partnerships between families and professionals. Researchers have shown that the communication concept includes clear discourse and passing on information relevant to families for educational decision-making purposes, whilst paying attention and being empathetic (Blue-Banning et al., 2004; Epstein, 2011; Francis et al., 2016; Haines et al., 2015; Kyzer et al., 2012; Murray et al., 2007; Murray & Mereoiu, 2015; Turnbull et al., 2009, 2015).

Teachers understand that fluent and open communication with parents is a way of preventing conflicts with parents and a means of bridging home and school (Addi-Raccah & Arviv-Elyashiv, 2008; Haines et al., 2015).

In conclusion, it can be said that Israeli teachers' attitudes toward two of the three components of PI examined in this research (contribution of PI and communication with parents) are most favorable and are in line with the findings in previous studies.

IV.1.3 Teachers' Attitudes toward the Involvement of Parents of Children with Special Needs in Educational Decision-Making

The first two areas detailed above indeed showed clear, favorable attitudes and overwhelming agreement. Nevertheless, in the third topic about which teachers' attitudes were examined (i.e., PI in decision-making in IEP and choice of framework type), a huge difference was found between participants' answers and levels of agreement, which were, on average, low. The results indicate that the teachers' attitudes in general are less favorable regarding anything to do with PI in educational decision-making and that the diversity within the research population's answers was large.

In-depth interviews reinforced these findings in a number of aspects: the first interview question examined what the concept of PI meant to interviewees and how they defined it. Among those areas initiated by teachers, as mentioned earlier, were communication and information transfer, whereas involvement in educational decision-making did not emerge at all in their definitions of PI.

This finding is congruent with findings of research carried out on Israeli teachers in 2009, which testified that teachers and principals did not see parental decision-making as a part of the 'parental involvement' definition (Fisher, 2009).

The literature that defines PI in general and the involvement of parents of children with SN in particular regards educational decision-making as one of the important components of PI and the family-centered approach (Dunst, 2002; Dunst & Dempsey, 2007; Epstein, 2011; Epstein et al., 2009; Hebel, 2014; Ingber & Dromi, 2010; Lindsay et al., 2016; Webster et al., 2017). The right of parents and family to choose and influence on behalf of their children with SN is part of the family-centered approach that espouses respectful partnership between parents and professionals by giving support and opportunities to parents to be central factors in decision-making with regard to their children (Bailey et al., 2004; Dunst, 2002; Dunst & Dempsey, 2007; Murray et al., 2007; Murray & Mereoiu, 2015; Turnbull et al., 2015).

Despite the above, the results in this study are similar to what has been found in other studies testifying that in practice, it is extremely difficult for educational teams to process this approach and accept the place of parents as a decision-making factor regarding their children's education (Banerjee et al., 2016; Razalli et al., 2015). They still do not view parents of children with SN as equal partners in education (Epstein 2011; Ingber & Dromi, 2010; Razalli et al., 2015; Zhang, 2016).

This is also reflected in perceptions of the concept of PI. As emerged from the interviews in the qualitative section of the research, the Israeli teachers in our sample defined the concept of PI as passing on information to schools and implementing recommendations which correlates to the professional experts' model.

This assumption is further reinforced when teachers referred to the parents' abilities / inability to make decisions. When the issue of parents making decisions arose in the in-depth interviews, teachers expressed reservations about parents' ability and even stated that there are parents who cognitively do not understand the needs of pupils (their children) and are not capable of making the best decisions for pupils. *A.S. (regular education teacher): "Not everyone is **intelligent** enough to do this and some of them don't do it correctly ... I think that it **greatly depends on their intelligence, parents' emotional maturity...**"*

To conclude, the findings regarding the first research question, it can be said that the Israeli teachers in this study expressed favorable attitudes towards communication with parents and view the involvement of parents of children with SN as an important contribution to the progress of their children, other children without disabilities, and of the schools themselves. Nevertheless, educational decision-making is an area that Israeli teachers in our sample find difficult to allow parents take part in and their attitudes on this issue are less favorable and not uniform.

In addition, it can be conclude that the attitudes such as those found in the three examined areas, together with the way the concept of PI is defined by Israeli teachers and the manner in which they evaluate parents' capabilities to make decisions

indicates that teachers in Israeli schools operate principally according to the expert model/ professional centered and have not yet adopted family-centered principles.

IV.2 Discussion of the Second Research Question (Quantitative) and the Second Research Hypothesis: Comparison between Regular and Special Education Israeli Teachers

The second research question discusses the differences and similarities between special and regular education teachers with regard to the involvement of parents of children with SN in the inclusion processes. The research hypothesis was that attitudes of special education teachers will be more positive than regular education teachers, but this hypothesis was only partially supported.

In the current research, significant differences were found between the attitudes of special and regular education teachers regarding the involvement of parents of children with SN in educational decision-making, as well as the influence of PI on teachers' self-efficacy (sub-topic in the contribution of PI and its implications).

IV.2.1 Differences between Regular and Special Education Teachers' Attitudes toward Parental Involvement in Educational Decision-Making

The Israeli teachers included in this research expressed a low level of agreement regarding PI in decision-making (as detailed in the discussion about the first research question), but nonetheless significant differences between regular and special education teachers were found. Special education teachers revealed more favorable attitudes than regular education teachers with regard to PI in decision-making generally and making decisions about IEP in particular. As stated above, there are studies that directly examined teachers' attitudes toward PI (Addi-Racah & Ainhoren, 2009; Addi-Racah & Arviv-Elyashiv, 2009; Dor & Rucker-Naidu, 2012; Shamay, 2008), but very few have examined teachers' attitudes with regard to PI in **decision-making** (Addi-Racah & Arviv-Elyashiv, 2008; Razalli et al., 2015). Furthermore, no studies were found dealing with the differences between the attitudes of special and regular education teachers regarding PI in general and in educational decision-making in particular.

It is considered that these differences are attached, among others, to factors linked to teachers and ways of teaching in regular classrooms: (a) attitudes and views of regular education teachers regarding the inclusion of pupils with SN in regular classes - in studies about attitudes, it was found that regular education teachers express less positive attitudes than special education teachers (Shemesh, 2009; Tomer & Malki, 2015); (b) challenges facing regular education teachers with the inclusion of pupils with SN - Teachers raised reservations about inclusion and described many reasons that make inclusion difficult: teachers' workloads, overcrowded classes that do not allow teachers to work appropriately and individually with SN pupils and more (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Gasteiger-Klicpera et al., 2013; Gavish, 2017; Heiman

& Olenik-Shemesh, 2001; Shemesh, 2009); (c) differences in work characteristics of special education teachers in contrast to regular education teachers - teachers in regular education use to work less individually, they are not trained to plan individualized educational programs and don't used to adjust programs to the needs of individual SN pupils (Almog & Shechtman, 2004; De Neve & Devos, 2016)

These three factors are likely to influences regular education teachers' capabilities to cope with pupils with special needs and their parents.

Factors linked to parents of children with SN and their characteristics are added to these: (d) different motives and motivations of parents of SN children regarding PI of parents of children without SN; (e) the emotional complexities parents bring to the discourse with teachers. Parents arrive to school tired of the way things had been done up to now, and most of the time they feel that they have to fight for everything - the parents are vulnerable and aggressive and it is necessary to know how to work with these complexities. Regular education teachers do not study and are not skilled to do this and are likely to view this connection with parents as interference.

In conclusion, one can say that factors linked to teachers and their coping with the inclusion of SN pupils and factors linked to parents of children with SN and their characteristics are likely to affect teachers' attitudes regarding PI in educational decision-making.

IV.3 Discussion of the Third Research Question (Quantitative) and the Third Research Hypothesis: Comparison of Attitudes towards PI (Reflected by TAPIQ) between Israeli Teachers from Peripheral and Central Schools

The third research question sought to examine the differences between the attitudes of teachers in the periphery and those in central Israel regarding the involvement of parents of pupils with SN in inclusion processes. The hypothesis was that teachers from the periphery will express more favorable attitudes than their counterparts from the center.

The results from this current study partially support the hypothesis of the third question. The findings revealed that attitudes of teachers in the periphery were more favorable in the first of the three areas examined: the contribution of PI and its implications. Israeli teachers in the periphery expressed more favorable attitudes regarding the contribution of PI to school, to pupils with SN, and those without disabilities.

A reexamination of characteristics of cities that participated in the research and the differences between them raises the possibility that attitudes of participating teachers who teach in the periphery are more favorable against a background of **lower PI** in these parts of Israel. Levels of PI appear to be influenced or connected by many factors, including (a) **parental awareness of their children's rights** - on a study of MATYA directors it was found that there was greater awareness among parents living

in central Israel about the support families are entitled to demand from schools for the children (Naon et al., 2011); **(b) socio-economic circumstances** - a large number of studies found that the level of involvement of parents with low socio-economic status was low (Bakker et al., 2007; Ofarim, 2014; Yotyodying & Wild, 2016). In this research, the participating teachers came from areas in both the periphery and center defined as average socio-economic status (4 to 7 in scale). Nevertheless, the average measurement calculation of peripheral cities participating in the research was around 4-5, a lower average measurement than central cities (6-7); **(c) pupils' type of disability** - studies testify that parents of children with behavioral problems often distance themselves from involvement in schools. Fear of hearing bad news from schools might cause them to avoid school communications (Hornby, 2011, Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). In the current research, there was a large gap detrimental to the periphery in the number of pupils with behavioral problems; **(d) parents' perceptions of schools' role** - Hayisraeli (2016), who examined the link between family and education in the Israeli periphery, found that most families in the periphery accept the authority of schools as agents of the state. They assume that schools fulfill their educational goals, and for them, school and public education in particular symbolize the state's education arm (Hayisraeli, 2016).

To conclude on findings to the third research question, one can say that differences that were found between the attitudes of Israeli teachers in the periphery and those in the center with regard to the contribution of PI can be explained by differences between the periphery and center in the level of involvement of parents with SN children. It appears that low levels of involvement, which might reduce the foci of friction between schools and families, are likely to reduce the level of opposition to PI among teachers, and to lead to more favorable attitudes. In addition, understanding the implications of lack of involvement causes teachers to better acknowledge the contribution of this involvement (predominantly regarding pupils with behavioral disorders) and to favorable attitudes of teachers.

CHAPTER V:

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER DIRECTIONS

This chapter presents the factual and conceptual conclusions and the implications deriving from the conclusions, research limitations, and recommendations for future research. The last part introduces the research's contribution to knowledge and the innovations.

V.1 Factual and conceptual conclusions

1. First Research Question - Teachers' Attitudes towards PI in the Inclusion of Children of Children with SN
 - a) **Factual conclusion** - Teachers in Israel have favorable attitudes towards the contribution of PI in the inclusion processes of children with SN and the need of good communication with them. It is yet difficult for Israeli teachers to perceive this involvement educational decision-making
 - a) **Conceptual conclusion** - Israeli teachers act according to the experts' model
2. Second Research Question - Comparison between Regular and Special Education Israeli Teachers
 - a) **Factual conclusion** - Israeli special education teachers were more favorable about PI in decision-making than regular teachers.
 - b) **Conceptual conclusion** - Including pupils with SN in regular classes is complicated and constitutes a challenge for regular education staff.
3. Third Research Question - Comparison of Attitudes towards PI (Reflected by TAPIQ) between Israeli Teachers from Peripheral and Central Schools
 - a) **Factual conclusion** - Teachers in the periphery express more favorable attitudes toward the contribution of PI than those in the center.
 - b) **Conceptual conclusion** - Low levels of PI make it difficult for teachers to cope with pupils with SN and causes teachers to recognize the contribution of this involvement.

All these conclusions reflect a gap between Israeli teachers' attitudes and the leading Dornier reform principles which encourage the inclusion of pupils with SN and enable parents to be decision-makers.

V.2 Practical Implications of the Research

The main conclusion of this research was that there is a gap between Israeli teachers' attitudes to the involvement of parents of children with SN in inclusion and the principles leading the Dornier reform. In this section, several recommendations and practical implications relying on this research's conclusions are described. These recommendations refer to both top-down processes that pertain to Ministry of Education policy (Section 1) and to

bottom-up processes pertaining to teachers who engage in day-to-day relationship with parents and their involvement in the educational field:

1. It is important that the Israeli educational system clearly redefine the model of involvement of parents of SN children according to which the educational system will operate under the consumer or family-centered models.
2. It is important to provide teachers with conditions that will raise their capabilities to include pupils with SN on the one hand and establish partnerships with parents on the other.
3. Encourage parents to be actively involved in the school system:

V.3 Research Limitations

Research Population Limitation - Distribution of disabilities taught by teachers, at least in the periphery, was not uniform and it is possible that this slightly affected the results. Nevertheless, the focus group (ten counselors) reinforced the quantitative and qualitative findings and produced triangulation.

Researcher involvement- The researcher is a MATYA manager in a city in central Israel, where the Dorner reform has been implemented. To maintain research reliability and avoid potential biases, the researcher chose not to conduct most of her research in the city where she works

V.4 Future Research

As a result of the research findings and conclusions, a number of future research directions emerged that will broaden knowledge on the subject and they are presented as follows:

1. Examining the link between teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of SN pupils and their attitudes toward the involvement of parents of these pupils in educational decision-making.
2. Examining the link between teachers' self-efficacy regarding the inclusion of pupils with SN and their attitudes toward parental involvement in educational decision-making.
3. Examining the attitudes of parents of children with different types of SN included in regular education toward their place in making decisions about IEPs and choosing the type of framework, and comparing them to teachers' attitudes.

V.5 Contribution to Knowledge

The research contributes to knowledge in Israel and in other countries and cultures on the following subjects:

- The study adds another knowledge layer regarding teachers' attitudes towards the involvement of parents with special needs children's inclusion.

- The research shed light on differences between special and regular education teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement.
- The research emphasized geographical effects on teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement

V.6 Innovations

Theoretical - This study is among the first to emphasize and focus on difficulties of teachers and their attitudes toward parental involvement in educational decision-making; this study is among the first to examine the connection between type of disability and teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement.

Methodological - TAPIQ questionnaire was developed specifically for this study. TAPIQ underwent validity and reliability testing and can be used for additional studies. Research results that mainly indicated the difficulties in teachers accepting parental involvement in educational decision-making reinforced the need, as in this case, for tools to examine specific areas of parental involvement for SN pupils.

V.7 Importance of the Research

The main importance of this research is adding valuable information to the knowledge about Israeli teachers' attitudes toward the involvement of parents of SN children in inclusion, focusing on the issue of decision-making. Parental involvement in decision-making turned out to be a complicated and sensitive issue that constitutes a difficulty for teachers, and this difficulty appears to be expressed in their attitudes. The decision-making component is the one that differentiates between different models of parental involvement, and it can affect both views of teachers' roles and the parents' place in the education system. Also, decision-making it is considered an issue relevant to education systems around the world dealing with the growing involvement in the educational system of parents in general, and of parents of SN children in particular. In approaching policies and models of parental involvement, it is important for education systems and their policy makers to take into account the component of decision-making and its complexities as revealed in this research.

Beyond its importance at level of understanding the components of parental involvement in relation to the attitudes of the teachers, this research has cultural importance regarding the implementation process of the Dorner reform in Israel. The findings of this study indicated the difficulty Israel teachers have accepting the involvement of parents of SN children in making decisions about IEP and determining the type of educational framework. The attitudes examined in this doctoral research reveal several gaps between teachers' attitudes towards aspects of parental involvement and leading principles of the reform and are likely to delay or thwart implementation. This research is important to understanding teachers' attitudes toward the involvement of SN children in inclusion that will enable planning, structuring, and

implementing future modes of operation to target these attitudes in the direction of building an optimal collaboration between families and the school system.

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Appendix 1: TAPIQ: Teachers' Attitudes toward Parental Involvement Questionnaire
Please indicate the level of your agreement with the following statements

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The role of schools is to inform parents of SN children and explain them their rights and rights of their children				
2	Involvement of parents of SN children is likely to harm teachers' sense of self-efficacy				
3	Parents are invited to IEP meetings to be partners in constructing their child's program				
4	SN children's parental involvement in school reinforces the relationship between teachers and SN pupils in school				
5	It is the school's responsibility to speak to parents using clear concepts and to explain professional terminology				
6	SN children's parental involvement in school causes a lessening of quality of care of a child him/herself (because of the time this takes)				
7	It is important that parents are full partners in decision-making with regard to their child in building personal programs				
8	It is important that parents take an active role in IEP meetings				
9	Teachers have to invest a lot more time in involvement of parents with SN children than those without SN				
10	Individual education programs (IEP) should be built for SN children by the school in partnership with parents				
11	Meetings with SN children's parents should take place with the same frequency as parents of non SN children				
12	SN children's parents involvement in school contributes to reducing disciplinary problems				
13	More meetings have to be initiated with parents of SN children that with those of non SN children				
14	SN children's parents involvement in school helps the school cope with SN children				
15	Regular and frequent meetings should be held with parents of SN children				
16	Parents of SN children should be allowed to decide what type of framework is appropriate for their child (regular class, special education class in regular school, special education school)				
17	It is the school's responsibility to give parents detailed information about integration or placement committees				
18	Initiative and ideas raised by parents serve as a basis for building IEP				
19	Teachers require special training to successfully navigate parental involvement				
20	One must make sure that parents of SN children understand professional jargon/concepts				
21	SN children's parents involvements demands a great deal of time and work from me				
22	Decisions with regard to type of framework taken by parents alone is likely to result in flawed and unprofessional decisions				
23	SN children's parents involvement in school contributes to increasing parents' levels of satisfaction with the school				
24	SN children's parents involvement in school contributes to improving pupils' learning achievements				
25	Parental involvement is likely to harm teachers' professionalism				

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
26	SN children's parental involvement increases a positive attitudes toward SN children at school				
27	Parents of SN children should be enabled to take some of the decisions with regard to their child's individual education program (IEP)				
28	SN children's parental involvement is important to the school and its image				
29	Parents of SN children should be allowed to decide on the framework in which their child is placed even if it is in contrast to the professional team's position				
30	SN children's parental involvement is likely to damage my position and ability to fulfill my role				
31	SN children parental involvement advances their children's social achievements				
32	SN children's parental involvement requires special training of teachers in order to have an optimal communication				
33	I often find myself explaining to parents professional terms and concepts that they encounter				

Are you prepared to be interviewed personally?

Please circle as appropriate: YES/NO

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

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