MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES OF INCLUSIVE TEACHERS IN SOUTH LEBANON DURING COVID-19: FACTORS AND COPING STRATEGIES

Faten Hussein FARDOUN
M.A., Biology Coordinator, International School of Innovation (ISI), Tyre, Lebanon
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3600-3534
faten.fardoun@gmail.com

Ali Hussein EL AHMAD
Ph.D.. Lecturer, School of Education, Lebanese International University (LIU), Tyre, Lebanon
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0082-4029
ali.ahmad@liu.edu.lb

Abstract

In Lebanon, the COVID-19 pandemic compelled schools to swiftly adopt emergency remote or hybrid learning models, which presented distinctive challenges for teachers in general and for inclusive teachers teaching students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in mainstream classrooms in particular. These challenges led to increased workload and decreased mental health for inclusive teachers. This study aims to explore the factors contributing to the mental health challenges of inclusive teachers in private schools in South Lebanon following the reopening of schools for the 2021-2022 school year during the pandemic. It also seeks to describe the coping strategies these teachers employed to manage their mental health challenges. The study adopted a phenomenological research design. Data were obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted with a convenience sample of 6 inclusive teachers. Findings revealed that the factors influencing teachers' mental health were categorized into internal and external factors and fell under the themes: professionalism, the impact of COVID-19 on inclusive education, the education system, and support. Teachers' coping mechanisms were grouped into themes of personal coping strategies and support systems and categorized into emotion-focused and problem-focused mechanisms.

Keywords: Mental health, inclusive teacher, COVID-19, private schools, Lebanon.

INTRODUCTION
Background
The mental well-being of employees, notably in demanding roles like teaching, is universally recognized as a keystone of effective and efficient performance. In recent decades, there has been thorough research conducted on the subject of teacher stress. A recent survey in the United States revealed that 46% of teachers indicate they are under significant stress, ranking their profession alongside nursing as one of the most demanding occupations (Robu & Sandovici, 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound and extensive global impact, significantly affecting societies in various ways. In addition to the immediate health crisis, it has unleashed a chain of challenges in the social, economic, and educational domains.

Research Problem
The COVID-19 pandemic has affected Lebanon across multiple dimensions (Bizri, Khashfe, Fares, & Musharrafieh, 2020). According to El Ahmad (2024), Lebanese Law 220/2000, particularly Articles 59 and 60, guarantees the right of students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to receive their education in mainstream classes in both public and private schools. Inclusive teachers'

primary responsibility is to ensure that students with SEND receive the necessary accommodations and support for improved access to educational opportunities in mainstream classes. Prior to the pandemic, Lebanese inclusive teachers faced a range of complex challenges, including inadequate teacher training (El Ahmad & Kawtharani, 2022; Kayal, 2014; Kobrossy, 2019), lack of resources (El Ahmad & Kawtharani, 2022; Khoshen & Radford, 2012), lack of direction for teachers (Kayal, 2014), crowded classrooms (El Ahmad & Kawtharani, 2022), disruptive behavior of students (Kayal, 2014), and poor communication and cooperation between the school, parents, and local community (El Ahmad & Kawtharani, 2022; Kayal, 2014).

The global pandemic compelled schools to swiftly adopt emergency remote or hybrid learning models, presenting distinctive challenges for SEND teachers. The new work-related responsibilities not only increased the workload for SEND teachers but also worsened their mental health (Ahmed, 2023), especially in the context of school reopening for the 2021-2022 school year during the pandemic. As Yusoff, Shafi, and Ismail (2023) highlight, transitioning to a new way of life has a psychological impact, often leading individuals to experience feelings of anxiety, depression, worry, and fear of contracting the virus.

Rationale for the Study
While many studies have explored the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on various groups, with a focus on mental health, there has been limited research on how it specifically impacts teachers (Atchan, 2022). In Lebanon, there is also a shortage of literature on stress among teachers (Baroud et al., 2022). McCarthy et al. (2017) emphasize the need for additional research into teacher well-being and emotional regulation. Furthermore, El Ahmad (2023) argues that only two studies were conducted on the stress and burnout experienced by inclusive teachers in Lebanon. Therefore, with the lack of research on teacher stress and the fact that no studies have been conducted on the mental health of teachers of students with SEND during the COVID-19 pandemic in Lebanon, there is a need for such a study, particularly following the reopening of schools during the pandemic.

Significance of the Study
This study helps bridge the gap in the lack of research on teacher stress in Lebanon in general and on the mental health of inclusive teachers teaching students with SEND in mainstream classes in Lebanon after reopening schools for the 2021-2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular.

This study helps emphasize the human dimension of the pandemic, illuminating the unique mental health experiences of inclusive teachers while also providing valuable insights. These insights can guide the development of strategies and interventions for preserving teachers' mental health and well-being and enhancing their resilience not just during crises but throughout their ongoing professional careers, which eventually can help reduce their burnout and turnover.

In addition, conducting a study of this nature is essential for promoting awareness of the mental health issues that teachers, in general, and inclusive teachers, in particular, encounter throughout the Middle East region. The study can contribute to facilitating an open and constructive dialogue regarding mental health challenges within the educational field.

Finally, the experiences and challenges faced by inclusive teachers in Lebanon during the pandemic have the potential to resonate with educators worldwide. This, in turn, can make a valuable contribution to the global discourse on teacher well-being and the importance of providing support to those who are dedicated to delivering quality education.

Purpose of the Study
This study seeks to achieve the following two objectives:

1. Explore the factors that contributed to the mental health challenges of inclusive teachers in private schools in South Lebanon after reopening schools for the 2021-2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Describe the strategies employed by inclusive teachers in private schools in South Lebanon for coping with the mental health challenges they experienced after reopening schools for the 2021-2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following two research questions:

1. What factors contributed to the mental health challenges of inclusive teachers in private schools in South Lebanon after reopening schools for the 2021-2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What strategies did inclusive teachers in private schools in South Lebanon employ for coping with the mental health challenges they experienced after reopening schools for the 2021-2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Theoretical Framework

In this section, two key theories that form the basis of this study, helping the readers better grasp the complex dynamics of inclusive education (IE) and teachers' mental health, are explored.

Indicators of Inclusive Schools (Alberta Education, 2013)

According to the indicators of inclusive schools (Alberta Education, 2013), IE is an attitude and a set of actions that believe in universal acceptance and belonging for all students. This value-based approach emphasizes the need for all students to be given equitable opportunities for inclusion in their selected learning environment (Alberta Education, 2013).

The approach is organized into five dimensions, each of which involves several key indicators, called the indicators of inclusive schools (Alberta Education, 2013):

1. Establishing Inclusive Values and Principles
2. Building Inclusive Learning Environments
3. Providing Support for Success
4. Organizing Learning and Instruction
5. Engaging with Parents and the Community

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)

Widely employed in occupational health psychology, the JD-R model, introduced by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), categorizes job characteristics into two fundamental groups: job demands and job resources. Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli (2001) identified job demands as stressors capable of negatively affecting most individuals in various populations. These demands relate to the physical, social, or organizational aspects of a job that demand ongoing physical or mental effort, leading to physiological and psychological costs like exhaustion (Demerouti et al., 2001). Conversely, job resources, including physical, social, psychological, or organizational aspects of a job, contribute by aiding in goal achievement, facilitating job demands, and fostering personal growth and development (Demerouti et al., 2001).

While the JD-R model is relevant for understanding mental health, especially in inclusive teaching, inclusive teachers teaching students with SEND in mainstream classrooms face job demands that require continuous effort, potentially leading to psychological costs. The emotional and behavioral challenges of students further contribute to stress. Besides, job resources like training opportunities and good communication and cooperation among the school, parents, and local community act as shields, reducing the negative impact of demands and increasing teachers' motivation and overall engagement with their work. Maintaining a balance between the demands imposed on inclusive teachers and the resources at their disposal is vital. This balance is a significant factor that directly

supports and protects inclusive teachers' mental health, consequently impacting their job performance. The theoretical framework of the study is shown in Figure 1.
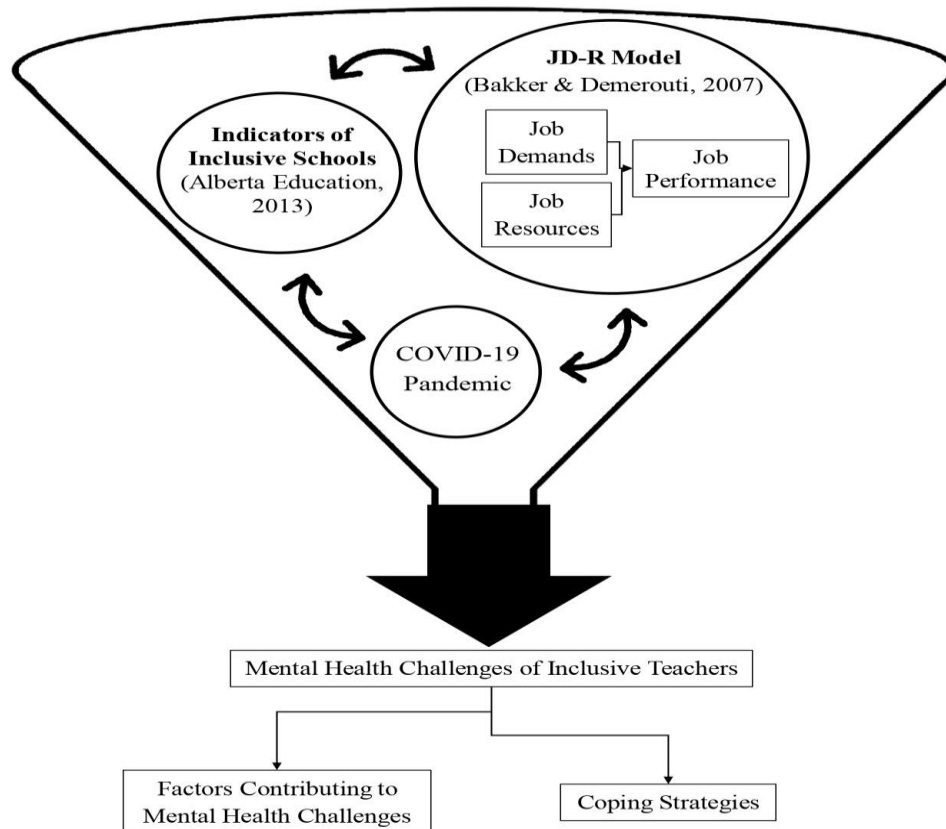
Figure 1. Theoretical framework of the study

Literature Review
Factors Contributing to Mental Health Challenges among Inclusive Teachers during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Psychological and biological factors, along with exposure to social, economic, geopolitical, and environmental conditions, contribute to people's vulnerability to mental health (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022). Teaching stands as one of the most stressful professions (Ahmed, 2023; Baroud et al., 2022; Gray, Wilcox, & Nordstokke, 2017; Salinas-Falquez, Roman-Lorente, Buzica, Álvarez, Gutiérrez, & Trigueros, 2022) due to its complexities (Zhang, Chen, Zhan, 2024). Excessive workload was identified as one of the key reasons contributing to increased teacher stress (Asia Society, 2018) and a lack of well-being across countries (Asia Society, 2018; Viac & Fraser, 2020). Other factors include reforms in the teaching profession following changes in the government, government interference in teaching methods, confusing accountability and evaluation systems, a lack of support for schools dealing with challenging student behavior, large class sizes, the challenges of inclusive classrooms, and a perceived lack of respect for the profession (Asia Society, 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic added another layer of pressure, since teachers encountered new challenges, including the shift to emergency remote teaching [ERT] (Atchan, 2022; MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2020; Salinas-Falquez et al., 2022), social distancing, and technologically mediated communication with all stakeholders. All this while teachers were managing their routine responsibilities (Atchan, 2022) and implementing measures to prevent the spread of the disease in the classroom (Salinas-Falquez et al., 2022), especially in a country like Lebanon that had not been

prepared for such an outbreak (Baroud et al., 2022). A study revealed that high levels of generalized anxiety disorder, burnout, and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic were associated with gender, high workload, low job motivation, disruptions social relationships, fear of contracting the disease, and adherence to social distancing measures (Santiago et al., 2023).

In inclusive settings, teachers face various challenges in meeting the needs of all students (Gray et al., 2017). The new set of work-related responsibilities increased the workload of special education teachers, further impacting their mental health (Ahmed, 2023). Ahmed (2023) found that, after the reopening of schools during COVID-19, special education teachers experienced stress attributed to students' behaviors, safety measures, responsibilities related to IEPs, uncertainty, and the challenges associated with contact tracing (Ahmed, 2023).

Coping Strategies Employed by Inclusive Teachers for Managing Mental Health Challenges during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Teachers with poor coping skills experience high levels of stress, which adversely impacts their performance (Rajesh et al., 2022). Rajesh et al. (2022) state teachers report experiencing stress and anxiety by insufficient coping strategies. Brackenreed (2011) states that personal coping strategies include cognitive strategies, physical strategies, behavioral strategies, emotional strategies, and rational/time organization. Professional coping strategies entail self-management, and preparation for teaching while social coping involves contact with family and friends (Brackenreed, 2011). Institutional coping refers to utilizing the organizational structure and interacting with others at school (Brackenreed, 2011). Maintaining a sense of humor, looking on the bright side, making a plan of action, discussing the situation with colleagues, and developing interests outside the school were also perceived as useful (Brackenreed, 2011). Brackenreed (2011) found that, despite experiencing stress, inclusive teachers were least inclined to resort to giving up strategies such as applying for sick leave, or resigning from teaching.

In their study on stress and coping strategies among special education and general classroom teachers, Kebbi and Al-Hroub (2018) found that special education teachers commonly employ the strategy of taking a nap to step back from the demands of teaching and reduce stress.

The key findings of a study conducted on Ecuadorian teachers who adopted online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that social support and activities aimed at maintaining and enhancing participants' physical health were the most frequently mentioned approaches (Hidalgo-Andrade, Hermosa-Bosano, & Paz, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, four female teachers in Peru who specialize in IE, mentioned resorting to activities they had not previously engaged in, such as watching television, listening to music, and finding solace in cleaning their homes (Arellano et al.,2022). Teachers' resilience acts as a protective factor for including students with special educational needs, even when they experience emotional exhaustion and frustration with their own psychological needs (Salinas-Falquez et al., 2022).

METHOD

Research Design

Wipulanusat, Panuwatwanich, Stewart, and Sunkpho (2020) state that the research design dictates the method for data collection and analysis to address the research questions, necessitating alignment of each component with these questions and significantly influencing the research process's scope. The current study adopts a phenomenological research design to study the factors affecting the mental health of inclusive teachers teaching students with SEND in mainstream classes at private schools in South Lebanon and their coping mechanisms.

Phenomenology, a philosophical and qualitative approach, offers a distinct perspective on human experience and has recently gained significant popularity in educational research as an alternative to the limitations of traditional quantitative methods (Gagura, 2024). This approach is grounded on the

assumption that the meaning of any concept is determined by how it is experienced. As a qualitative methodology, phenomenology focuses on detailed accounts of participants' lived experiences, enabling researchers to gain insights into multifaceted issues, such as inclusive teachers' mental health challenges, which may be difficult to quantify.

Research Sample

Selecting participants involves ensuring that the reasons for selecting a particular sample in a research study are consistent with the fundamental goals of the study (Campbell et al., 2020). Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was employed to select participants who had provided their contact information and were willing to participate. This method is preferred by many researchers due to its minimal effort, cost, time investment, and simplicity of operation (Golzar & Tajik, 2022). The convenience sample consisted of six female inclusive teachers, aged between 22 and 34 years, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of research sample

Inclusive Teacher #	Age	Most Grade Levels Taught	Most SEND Category Encountered
1	31	*Grades 2-3	*Learning difficulties *Psychosocial disorders
2	34	*Preschool *Grades 1-3 *Grades 7-9	*Speech, language, and communication impairment *Visual impairment *Hearing impairment *Chronic health problems
3	33	*Preschool *Grade 3 *Grades 7 and 8 *Grades 10-12	*Learning difficulties *Psychosocial disorders *Speech, language, and communication impairment
4	24	*Grades 4-6 *Grades 7 and 8	*Learning difficulties
5	22	*Grades 1-3 *Grades 4 and 5	*Learning difficulties *Psychosocial disorders *Intellectual impairment *Visual impairment *Chronic health problems
6	26	*Grades 1-6	*Learning difficulties *Psychosocial disorders *Speech, language, and communication impairment

Research Instrument

In this section, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain insights into the factors contributing to the mental health problems of inclusive teachers and their coping strategies when teaching students with SEND in mainstream classes at South Lebanon private schools following the reopening of schools for the 2021–2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Semi-structured interviews are a qualitative research approach where a predefined set of open-ended questions, encouraging discussion, is combined with the flexibility for the interviewer to delve deeper into specific themes or responses as they arise (KnowFife, 2018). Thus, they combine aspects of structured and unstructured approaches (George, 2022). In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer usually follows a thematic framework while also ensuring thorough preparation of specific topics to explore (Ruslin, Mashuri, Abdul Rasak, Alhabsyi, & Syam, 2022). Ruslin et al. (2022) discovered that the semi-structured interview is advantageous for qualitative research, as it allows gathering detailed information from participants in a flexible and adaptable manner.

The interview questions were developed by the researchers in alignment with the research questions and the overarching objectives of the study, and they were reviewed by a special educator with an MA

in Special Education. The questions specifically addressed areas such as mental health experiences, challenges faced, coping strategies, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pilot Study

A pilot study is a preliminary, small-scale investigation intended to assess the feasibility of the methods planned for a more extensive and rigorous research project (Lowe, 2019). The primary objective, as noted by Lowe (2019), is not to answer specific research questions, but to ensure that researchers have sufficient understanding of the methods before embarking on a large-scale study. Thabane et al. (2010) believe that conducting a pilot study before the main research can increase the likelihood of success for the study and help prevent potential failures.

Based on the results of the pilot study, which involved two interviews with general education teachers, several adjustments to the interview questions were made. The teachers, colleagues of the researchers, were selected for their experience in the school setting. The interviews were conducted by the researchers, recorded, and transcribed verbatim. The findings were reviewed to identify any issues with the questions, such as ambiguity or redundancy.

The pilot study revealed that the original order of the questions was not optimal, necessitating a reorganization for better flow and coherence. Additionally, the initial question was refined to focus more specifically on the teachers' experience with teaching SEND students, rather than a general introduction about themselves. Furthermore, it was observed that three questions related to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic factors on inclusive teaching and challenges impacting mental health were somewhat redundant. To streamline the interview and avoid overlap, one of these questions was canceled. The remaining two questions were revised to address distinct areas: one concentrates on the personal factors influencing the inclusive teacher's experience, while the other explores external factors in the work environment that affect inclusive teaching. Also, the question "How do you feel when you are depressed, anxious, and stressed?" was found to be unclear since it asks about feelings using terms that are themselves feelings. The question was rephrased to ask, "What symptoms or behaviors indicate that you are experiencing depression, anxiety, or stress? How do these feelings manifest in you?". These changes were intended to enhance the clarity and effectiveness of the interview, ensuring that they elicit the most relevant and insightful responses from the participants.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection began on May 30, 2024 transparently and with integrity, adhering to ethical guidelines, and encompassing several steps. The study protocol, including the pilot study, received approval from the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese International University on April 9, 2024, with the reference number LIUIRB-240412-FHF-344. In both the pilot and main studies, participants received an informed consent form with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, participants' rights, potential risks, and benefits.

To ensure the accessibility and accuracy of the data collection instruments for participants with limited English proficiency, the informed consent and the interview questions underwent a comprehensive translation process. The initial step involved a forward translation, where the questions were translated from the original language to Arabic by a professional translator with a strong educational background, well-versed in both the source and target languages. This was followed by a rigorous back-translation process, where they were translated back to the original language to verify linguistic accuracy and semantic consistency. After the translation process, a pilot test was conducted to evaluate the clarity and comprehensibility of the Arabic version of the interview questions. This thorough translation and validation process ensured that the instrument maintained its integrity, thereby enhancing the validity of the study's findings.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted both face-to-face and via Zoom sessions, depending on the participants' preferences and availability. Each interview lasted approximately 25 minutes. During

face-to-face interviews, the researchers asked the questions orally and recorded notes on participants' answers. For Zoom sessions, the interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy in capturing the responses, which allowed for flexibility and accommodated the varying schedules and comfort levels of inclusive teachers.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data extracted from the interviews underwent thematic analysis (TA) to identify recurring patterns related to the mental health experiences and coping strategies of the participants. Braun and Clarke (2012) state that TA is not concerned with uncovering unique meanings within individual data items; instead, it aims to identify shared patterns in how a topic is discussed. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) suggest that this usually indicates that the data have been summarized and organized rather than thoroughly analyzed. Braun and Clarke (2006) believe that TA is not a linear process of moving sequentially from one phase to the next but rather a recursive process involving movement back and forth as needed throughout the phases. In their framework, they delineated six essential steps to conduct TA effectively.

The process begins with the researcher familiarizing themselves with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Next is generating initial codes by systematically coding interesting features across the entire dataset and organizing data relevant to each code (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Maguire and Delahunt (2017) state that coding reduces large amounts of data into smaller, meaningful chunks. Braun and Clarke (2006) add that this is followed by the identification of themes, where codes are grouped into potential themes and all relevant data are collected for each identified theme. A theme is a meaningful pattern in the data that addresses the research question (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The fourth phase involves reviewing themes to ensure their alignment with coded extracts and the dataset and to create a thematic map of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The fifth phase, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), requires defining and naming themes. Finally, the production of the report involves the selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, conducting a final analysis of these extracts, relating the findings to the research question, and ultimately presenting a scholarly report detailing the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Trustworthiness of Qualitative Findings

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher employed the four key criteria introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985) which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.
To ensure credibility, the researchers employed negative case analysis and member checking. Negative case analysis refines hypotheses to include all cases while member checking validates data and interpretations with the original stakeholders (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability, as discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), refers to the applicability of the findings to other contexts. The researchers ensured it by using thick descriptions of the research sample, and the number and details of semi-structured interviews conducted. Additionally, the researchers employed the audit trail to ensure dependability and confirmability. They described the sampling procedures and documented the steps involved in data collection and analysis and securely stored transcripts of the interview responses. Moreover, reflexivity was integrated into the research process to enhance confirmability by reflecting on potential biases and to strengthen the objectivity of the findings.

RESULTS

This section addresses the research questions, offering a detailed TA of the findings.

Factors Contributing to Mental Health Challenges of Inclusive Teachers Post-COVID-19 Reopening

Research Question 1: What factors contributed to the mental health challenges of inclusive teachers at private schools in South Lebanon after reopening schools for the 2021–2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic?

To address this question, themes and sub-themes related to factors contributing to the mental health challenges faced by inclusive teachers were identified. The TA of the semi-structured interviews revealed four overarching themes concerning the factors that contributed to the mental health challenges of inclusive teachers at private schools in South Lebanon after reopening schools for the 2021–2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic: professionalism, COVID-19's impact on IE, the education system, and support. The first theme, professionalism, focuses on the values, attitudes, and skills expected in a professional setting, emphasizing how personal conditions and the teacher's understanding of IE are influencing factors. The second theme, COVID-19's impact on IE, explores how the pandemic contributed to the mental health challenges of inclusive teachers through a decline in students' academic performance, disruptions in classroom routines, and the increased demands associated with the development of new teaching skills. The third theme, education system, examines how various factors, such as class size and SEND categories taught, the clarity of school communication regarding the cases of students with SEND to teachers, school strategy and workload, cooperative learning environment, financial compensation, and physical resources influenced inclusive teachers' mental health. The final theme, support, illustrates how human resources support affected the mental well-being of these teachers. Figure 2 presents the sub-themes within the context of the four overarching themes.
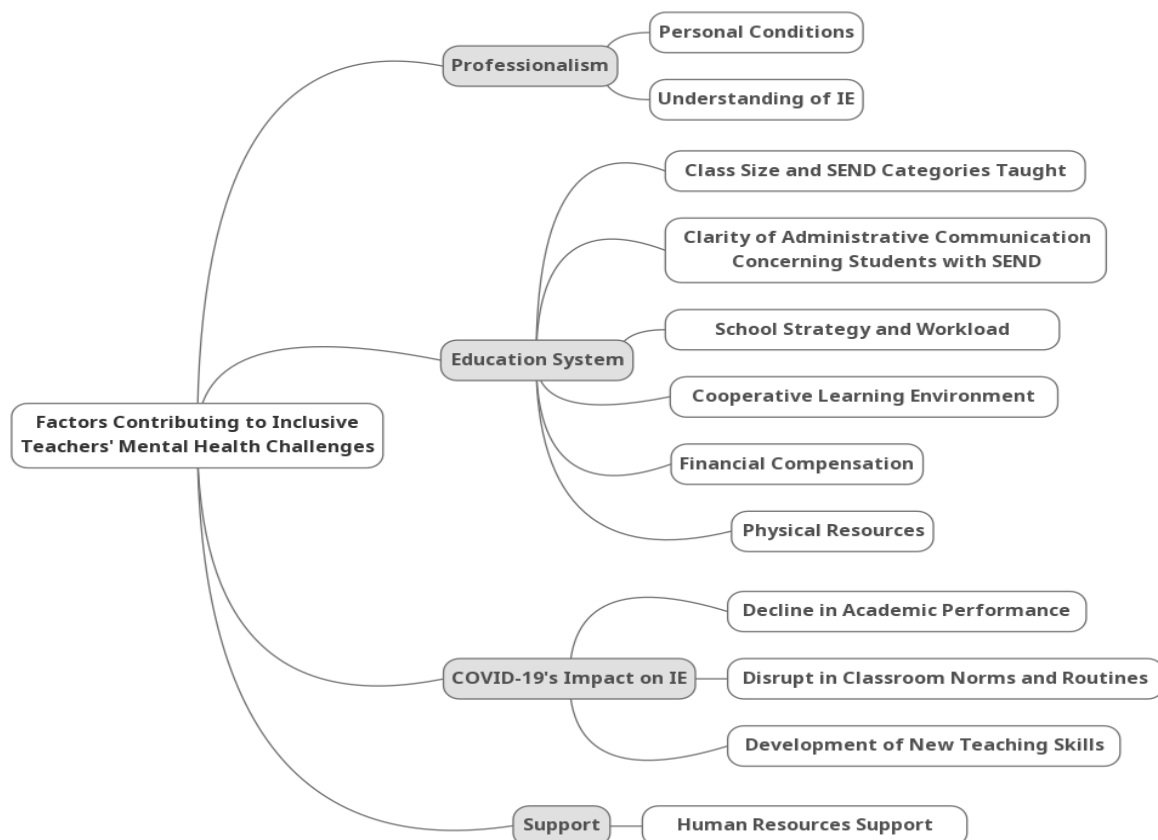
Figure 2. Thematic map of factors contributing to mental health challenges of inclusive teachers

1. Personal Conditions

Personal conditions play a significant role in shaping teachers' mental health. For instance, family problems and health issues can create additional stress on inclusive teachers making difficult to manage their professional duties effectively. Balancing personal responsibilities with professional

duties can be challenging, and the support system within one's personal life can either favor or reduce the challenges. These factors were exemplified in the participants' statements as follows:

- *My family problems impacted my performance.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)
- *I think family circumstances and personal issues are primary considerations. A teacher's personality plays a crucial role in how they separate their personal issues from their performance at work.* (Inclusive Teacher 2)
- *Things that affected my job included conflicts with others or encountering car issues, like a flat tire. However, my passion for teaching and seeing students happy and energetic often helped me to overcome feelings of anger, stress, or depression.* (Inclusive Teacher 3)
- *Family issues, having other responsibilities, or experiencing conflicts with someone at home.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)
- *Problems at home and health issues.* (Inclusive Teachers 5 and 6)

2. Understanding of IE

IE is a value-based approach and set of actions that advocate for universal acceptance and belonging for all students (Alberta Education, 2013). It emphasizes the necessity of providing equitable opportunities for inclusion, as outlined by the Indicators of Inclusive Schools (Alberta Education, 2013). While three participants showed a robust understanding of IE:

- *IE is integrating students with disabilities into regular classrooms.* (Inclusive Teacher 2)
- *IE includes students with problems and difficulties alongside other students without impairments or difficulties.* (Inclusive Teacher 5)
- *IE are classes where students without difficulties and disabilities are included alongside those with educational difficulties and disabilities.* (Inclusive Teacher 6)
  Two other participants expressed less comprehensive understandings of IE:
- *I think that IE is integrating students with learning difficulties or disabilities into classes with their peers of similar academic or cognitive abilities. Sometimes IE involves segregating these students from certain classes, such as Arabic and Spanish, where extensive writing is required.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)
- *IE is integrating a student who is different from their peers into the same classroom. This difference doesn't necessarily mean a disability or impairment but rather a difference in learning pace.* (Inclusive Teacher 3)

Some participants expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of inclusion, as reflected in the experience of inclusive teacher 2:

- *I do not actually believe in the effectiveness of IE, especially in Lebanon, where bullying among students is prevalent due to a lack of awareness among parents and students. Students with disabilities face bullying because of their distinct learning abilities, which creates a gap between them and their colleagues.*

According to Alberta Education (2013) and Jahnukainen (2011), the primary choice for educating students with SEND should be their inclusion in mainstream classrooms. Nevertheless, two participants favored segregation over IE, as shown in their following statements.

- *I remember having 10 learners with disabilities who struggled academically in grade four. To support them, I provided additional assistance outside their classroom. Unfortunately, this decision exposed them to increased bullying.* (Inclusive Teacher 2)
- *IE is placing students with SEND in the same classes as students without SEND. However, these students receive additional support outside the main classroom in some classes or sessions.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)

This gap in understanding IE can worsen inclusive teachers' mental health challenges faced by fostering role uncertainty especially without adequate guidance, leading to struggles with their professional responsibilities amidst conflicting expectations.

3. Decline in Academic Performance

Teachers, and inclusive teachers in particular, rely on students' prerequisite knowledge to introduce new concepts effectively. As inclusive teacher 2 stated:

● *Teaching is a cumulative process, where each teacher builds upon what previous teachers have taught.*

When students' academic performance is limited, it significantly complicates the teacher's role. Many participants noted that teaching during COVID-19 was ineffective, leaving students without essential foundational knowledge. This gap has made it difficult for teachers to address new material in their teaching, as illustrated by the statements below:

● *Students experienced a decline in academic performance, which significantly impacted us… even the most outstanding and capable students were academically weaker than before… We faced increased workloads to help students catch up after returning to school post-pandemic.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)
● *Academically, many students lacked the essential knowledge they should have acquired in elementary grades when they transitioned to online learning.* (Inclusive Teacher 2)
● *Teaching during COVID-19 had not been very effective and that students had missed some key concepts.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)
● *The academic level of students with and without disabilities decreased, requiring teachers to put in double the effort to review necessary prerequisites, as online teaching during COVID was ineffective compared to face-to-face teaching.* (Inclusive Teacher 6)

4. Disrupt in Classroom Norms and Routines

A well-managed classroom enables teachers to focus on teaching and facilitates students' learning processes. After COVID-19, many teachers struggled to re-establish these norms with participants in the interview noting that reteaching classroom rules was a major issue post-pandemic. Here are some statements from the participants:

● *Students exhibited a lack of interest and attention.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)
● *Students showed less maturity, sometimes requiring more basic guidance compared to younger children... This gap was evident even in basic classroom routines such as lining up, raising hands before speaking, and organizing their materials.* (Inclusive Teacher 2)
● *Students struggled to focus and were easily distracted.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)
● *Students were harder to manage, and some of them did not know the classroom rules. Younger students had trouble distinguishing between books and copybooks… After COVID, students lost their focus, became less attentive, and were harder to manage as they quickly got bored in class and wanted to play.* (Inclusive Teacher 5)
● *I also had to re-teach students discipline.* (Inclusive Teacher 6)

5. Development of New Teaching Skills

According to Alberta Education (2013), effective teaching involves collaborative planning and implementation of diverse strategies, leveraging students' needs, and interests. Some participants noted that the COVID-19 pandemic equipped them with new skills, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT), which introduced new demands on inclusive teachers. Demerouti et al. (2001) identified job demands as stressors that can negatively impact individuals. Participants' statements support the idea that using new skills acquired during COVID-19 has both benefits and challenges in the classroom:

● *I needed to exert much more effort compared to before.* (Inclusive Teacher 2)

- *IE requires direct interaction with students with SEND, which was impossible during the pandemic's shift to online platforms. The teacher needs to maintain eye contact and work individually with students… I began to incorporate more strategies and materials in the classroom. I started using the concrete representational abstract approach, it's important in helping students catch the missed concepts more effectively.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)
- *COVID-19 had a positive effect on teaching. During the pandemic, I and other inclusive teachers became more accustomed to using multimedia in our lessons. After schools reopened, I started relying more on videos and pictures in class.* (Inclusive Teacher 5)
- *Teaching during COVID-19 equipped inclusive teachers with new skills, like simplifying ideas so all students could understand. I became more knowledgeable about platforms, technologies, and the best ways to deliver ideas to students.* (Inclusive Teacher 6)

6. Class Size and SEND Categories Taught

A high number of students in inclusive classes increases the likelihood of encountering a diverse range of SEND within the same classroom which amplifies the challenges faced by inclusive teachers. IE necessitates tailoring instruction to meet the unique needs of each student. Consequently, managing a large class size adds pressure on teachers. This extensive individualization of teaching methods can be overwhelming leading to heightened stress. The additional workload significantly increases the demands placed on inclusive teachers. Participants expressed this challenge in their statements:

- *I worked with students who had hearing and vision impairments, as well as a student who underwent heart surgery. I tried hard to accommodate my teaching approach to each student's needs without emphasizing their disabilities negatively.* (Inclusive Teacher 2)
- *Having various SEND categories made communication with me less successful and affected my ability to deliver information effectively, which in turn impacted in some days my mental health.* (Inclusive Teacher 3)
- *My experience teaching students with SEND was challenging, especially because I worked with upper-grade students who had varying degrees of learning difficulties… The number of students in the class can sometimes be challenging.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)
- *My experience was challenging and hard to manage. I worked with a student with ADHD; it was difficult to manage his movements. I also had a student with dyslexia and another student who had a delay in speaking.* (Inclusive Teacher 5)
- *It's never an easy experience to teach students with special educational needs in mainstream classes: You have to focus on students without educational difficulties and those with different challenges.* (Inclusive Teacher 6)

7. Clarity of Administrative Communication

For an inclusive teacher to effectively plan for their class, a comprehensive understanding of their students' needs is essential. Access to detailed information about students with SEND is important to tailor the teaching strategies and provide appropriate accommodations. However, one participant expressed frustration about the lack of clarity and communication from the school regarding a particular student's situation. Here is their concern:

- *At the beginning, my experience with students with SEND was challenging, not because the student's case was especially severe, but because the administration had not clearly communicated the specific details about the student's condition.* (Inclusive Teacher 3)

8. School Strategy and Workload

Teaching, learning, and evaluation strategies differ from one school to another. Some schools burden their teachers with multiple tasks, which can put significant pressure on them, especially in inclusive settings. Participants have criticized certain school practices they deem unnecessary or counterproductive. Here are their statements:

- *Work-related factors that affected my experience were the administrative pressure, dissatisfaction with the school's working strategies.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)

- *The school assigned tasks of lesser importance while I was engaged in more critical work. For example, I remember a situation where I was asked to sign all students' copybooks with a strict deadline, which caused stress and pressure.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)

9. Cooperative Learning Environment

School administration and staff collaborate to enhance inclusion (Alberta Education, 2013) aligning the educational community's goals to create an inclusive environment. Effective implementation of IE relies on administrators and teachers working together to identify and accommodate diverse student needs. A supportive work environment helps reduce stress, isolation, and fosters a sense of community. Participants emphasized the importance of their collaboration in their words:

- *A supportive and positive environment significantly impacts a teacher's performance and well-being.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)
- *A positive work environment and good relationships with colleagues are essential. A teacher who feels comfortable and supported in their workplace tends to perform their best... Feeling successful and happy in the work environment contributed significantly to my overall job satisfaction and performance.* (Inclusive Teacher 2)
- *Having good relationships with my colleagues in the science unit has had a positive impact on my work.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)

On the other hand, a lack of cooperation and support increases the emotional burden on teachers, leading to heightened stress. This finding is illustrated in the statements below:

- *Work-related factors that affected my experience were..discomfort with colleagues.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)
- *Having problems with the principal, administration, or colleagues affected my performance.* (Inclusive Teacher 5)
- *Regarding work-related factors that affected my experience, I think conflicts with the administration, communication problems with the administration and the supervisors, not being praised or encouraged enough.* (Inclusive Teacher 6)

10. Financial Compensation

Fair and adequate compensation can influence teacher retention, enabling teachers to focus on delivering high-quality instruction, thereby effectively meeting the diverse needs of their students. Salary was the most common work-related factor mentioned by participants:

- *I was unhappy with the salary.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)
- *Salary, although agreed upon at the beginning of the academic year, impacted my performance.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)
- *Not being fairly compensated while working too much* (Inclusive Teacher 5)
- *Not being paid enough affected my experience.* (Inclusive Teacher 6)

11. Physical Resources

Demerouti et al. (2001) state that job resources encompass physical, social, psychological, and organizational aspects that aid in managing job demands. Inadequate physical resources can create feelings of overwhelm and frustration, impacting teachers' ability to effectively manage their classrooms and support their students' learning. This finding is illustrated in the comment below:

- *Lebanese schools generally lack adequate resources and infrastructure to fully support students with disabilities.* (Inclusive Teacher 2)

12. Human Resources Support

Inclusive teachers often need additional support from the school community, specialists, or parents which is important to ensure that students receive the tailored assistance they need to thrive academically and socially in inclusive settings. Some participants cited receiving inadequate human support as a factor contributing to their mental well-being:

- *The parental support was limited. As a result, we faced increased workloads to help students catch up after returning to school post-pandemic.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)
- *I received some support from the school, which included workshops, with one or two focusing on teachers' mental health. I would rate the school's support a six out of ten.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)
- *It took an entire academic year, with the help of a specialist, to hear the voice of the student with a speech delay… I needed support but felt that sometimes I received blame instead.* (Inclusive Teacher 5)
- *For classes where I was alone without an assistant, the experience was difficult. However, I was able to manage when I had an assistant in class to help take care of students with special difficulties… Among factors affecting my job were the communication issues with the parents of students.* (Inclusive Teacher 6)

Several factors, both internal, related to the teacher's personal attributes, and external, related to the work environment, contributed to the mental health challenges experienced by inclusive teachers. Almost all participants agreed that the teacher's mental health impacts their professional performance, as illustrated in the comments below:

- *A person with good mental health is patient and feels comfortable in their work environment… A bad mental health negatively affects professional performance. It decreases effectiveness in teaching and interaction with students.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)
- *A mentally healthy teacher performs to their fullest potential. I believe that a teacher's mental health is more important than their experience and educational qualifications.* (Inclusive Teacher 2)
- *Mental health issues have a negative impact on the teacher's professional performance.* (Inclusive Teacher 3)
- *My mental health issues have affected my job. My ability to effectively explain lessons has decreased, or I didn't explain them as thoroughly as she should. I became less patient, particularly when it comes to giving time for individualized work with students. I felt rushed to finish the class.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)
- *My mental health issues negatively affected my job.* (Inclusive Teacher 5)
- *Mental health issues made me not necessarily less productive but rather less energetic in class and less friendly with students.* (Inclusive Teacher 6)

To overcome their mental health challenges, these teachers referred to various coping mechanisms.

Coping Strategies Employed by Inclusive Teachers Post-COVID-19 Reopening
Research Question 2: What strategies did inclusive teachers at private schools in South Lebanon employ for coping with the mental health challenges they experienced after reopening schools for the 2021–2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic?

To address this question, themes and sub-themes related to the coping strategies employed by the inclusive teachers were identified. The TA of the semi-structured interviews identified two overarching themes regarding the coping mechanisms employed by inclusive teachers to manage their mental health challenges. The first theme, personal coping mechanisms, encompasses strategies such as dedicating time for relaxation and engaging in activities that teachers found beneficial. The second theme, support networks, highlights the importance of social and professional support that aided teachers in coping with their mental health challenges. Figure 3 presents the sub-themes within the context of the two overarching themes.
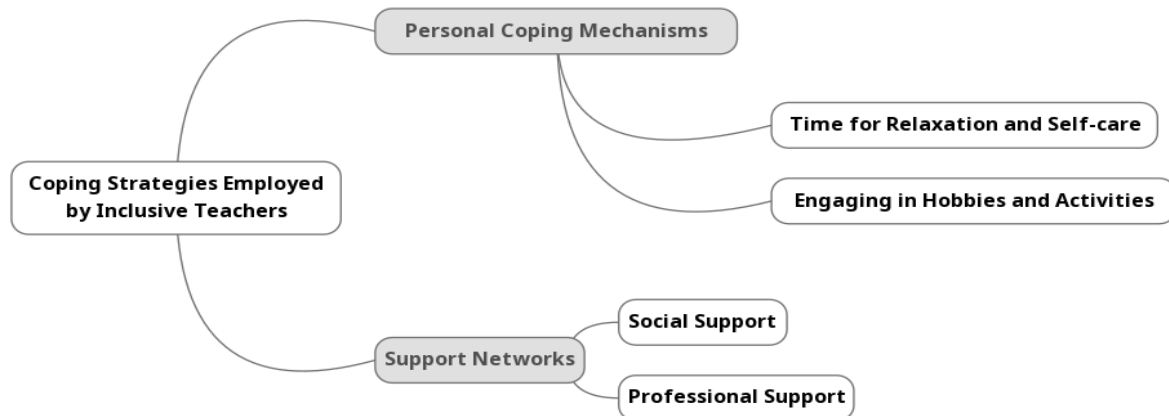
Figure 3. Thematic map of coping strategies employed by inclusive teachers

1. Time for Relaxation and Self-care

Personal coping mechanisms are strategies individuals employ to preserve emotional well-being and address mental health challenges. The choice of coping mechanisms reflects personal preferences and needs. The following statements illustrate personal coping mechanisms used by participants:

- *I used to take one to two hours for myself to distance myself from sources of stress and work-related pressures.* (Inclusive Teacher 2)
- *My coping strategy involved going home and consciously setting aside the causes of my stress. It is important to give myself time to calm down and relax.* (Inclusive Teacher 3)
- *One strategy I used is taking the weekend off for myself. No time to work! I disconnect from my phone and messaging apps like WhatsApp to relax.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)
- *I cope with challenges by taking time for myself, and not talking to anyone because I am not sure they will understand my issues. I sit by myself to relax.* (Inclusive Teacher 5)

2. Engaging in Hobbies and Activities

Additional personal coping mechanisms include pursuing hobbies, engaging in physical exercise, or participating in activities that promote personal well-being. The statements below exemplify some of the methods used by participants:

- *Taking personal time to engage in activities such as shopping, going out, or getting adequate sleep, provided me with distraction and relaxation.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)
- *I found relaxation in activities such as cycling.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)
- *I relied on outdoor activities that distracted me and helped me forget my work problems. Activities like karting and hiking, which increase adrenaline levels, were particularly helpful for me.* (Inclusive Teacher 6)

3. Social Support

Social support refers to the ways individuals utilize their social network to manage emotional challenges. This includes seeking emotional reassurance from friends and family, participating in group activities or therapy sessions, and receiving assistance from life coaches. However, not all inclusive teachers find this beneficial, as articulated by inclusive teacher 2:

- *I did not receive any external support for my mental health issues. People are their own support, and no one understands oneself better than oneself.*
  This sentiment contrasts with other participants:
- *I engaged in activities outside the school, such as spending time with friends, colleagues, or even students, as a way to distract myself.* (Inclusive Teacher 2)
- *I received support from friends and family to cope with my mental health issues.* (Inclusive Teacher 3)

- *I found relaxation in activities such as going on picnics with friends.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)
- *At other times, I talk to someone I love or someone who can distract me from the main issue until I get the energy to return to work.* (Inclusive Teacher 5)
- *I received support from a best friend and a life coach.* (Inclusive Teacher 6)

4. Professional Support

Professional support refers to assistance that individuals receive from their work environment, such as colleagues, supervisors, or professional mentors. This includes practical advice, emotional reassurance, or access to resources that help teachers maintain their well-being in the workplace. However, some teachers did not receive adequate professional support, as reflected in their statements:

- *Discussing mental health issues with my colleagues did not address the root causes and led to no meaningful solutions.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)
- *I had to independently identify the best approaches to support my student… I did not discuss my mental health issues with my colleagues and preferred not to engage in such discussions.* (Inclusive Teacher 3)
- *I did not receive support from the school or administration. I needed support but felt that sometimes I received blame instead.* (Inclusive Teacher 5)
- *I do not find myself able to discuss mental health issues with all colleagues, as they are not often receptive, but I can discuss these issues with a few colleagues… I did not receive any support from within the school.* (Inclusive Teacher 6)

Conversely, some others did benefit from limited support:

- *I received some support from the school, which included workshops, with one or two focusing on teachers' mental health. I would rate the school's support a six out of ten.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)
Others found effective support mechanisms within their workplace:
- *When I was dissatisfied with my salary, I went to the administrative personnel to seek a resolution.* (Inclusive Teacher 1)
- *It was easy to discuss my mental health issues related to teaching students with SEND with my colleagues, especially those in the science unit. We often discussed various work-related issues, exchanged advice and solutions, and supported each other… The most significant support came from my colleagues.* (Inclusive Teacher 4)

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and RECOMMENDATIONS

Factors Contributing to Mental Health Challenges of Inclusive Teachers Post-COVID-19 Reopening

Research Question 1: What factors contributed to the mental health challenges of inclusive teachers at private schools in South Lebanon after reopening schools for the 2021–2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic?

1. Personal Conditions

The research revealed that personal conditions influence teachers' mental health. Family problems in particular can cause stress for inclusive teachers, adversely affecting their well-being. This finding aligns with Santiago et al. (2023), who identified a strong correlation between high levels of distress and disruptions in family life. The impact of family-related stress on teachers' mental health can be attributed to the challenge inclusive teachers face in separating their personal and professional lives. Negative emotions stemming from disrupted family dynamics can be carried into the classroom, diminishing the teacher's overall effectiveness.

2. Understanding of IE

The study identified that an insufficient understanding of IE exacerbates mental health challenges among inclusive teachers, leading to uncertainty about their roles. This finding is consistent with Lee's (2021) emphasis on the necessity of understanding inclusion for effective teaching practices. Proficiency in inclusive instructional strategies empowers teachers to adapt their methods in ways that benefit their students optimally. Conversely, a lack of such understanding can leave teachers without essential knowledge, as highlighted by Acquah Tandon, and Lempinen (2016), who found a significant correlation between teachers' awareness of diversity and their ability to employ effective strategies for teaching diverse student populations. This finding can be attributed to insufficient professional development. Many teachers may not receive adequate training on IE, leading to gaps in their knowledge. Additionally, the rapid evolving demands in education, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, may have left teachers without the necessary resources and time to fully grasp and implement inclusive practices.

3. Decline in Academic Performance

The researchers noticed that the academic decline of students resulting from ERT during the pandemic has a significant impact on teachers' mental health. Teachers faced the challenge of addressing gaps in students' learning processes. This finding aligns with Agyapong, Obuobi-Donkor, Burback, and Wei (2022), who highlighted that student performance contributes to teachers' stress. This situation led to varying levels of knowledge among students within the same classroom, compounded by their diverse abilities and disabilities. Upon returning to school, teachers were tasked with ensuring that all students acquired missed information and caught up with their peers. This necessitated providing feedback and forward guidance before proceeding with planned objectives.

4. Disrupt in Classroom Norms and Routines

The researchers found that following COVID-19, inclusive teachers encountered significant challenges in reinstating classroom norms. This observation resonates with Naghieh, Montgomery, Bonell, Thompson, and Aber (2015) and Ahmed (2023), who emphasized that primary stressors for teachers often include pupil behavior. It also aligns with Collie, Shapka, Perry, and Martin (2015), who noted that teacher dissatisfaction can stem from administrative issues, including managing classroom discipline. This finding might be attributed to the fact that maintaining effective classroom discipline is crucial for fostering smooth learning environments. It reduces interruptions during instruction and minimizes disruptions that can increase job demands and contribute to teacher stress. Effective discipline practices support overall teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

5. Development of New Teaching Skills

The researchers' findings are consistent with those of Atchan (2022), Maclntyre et al. (2020), and Salinas-Falquez et al. (2022), which indicate that COVID-19 added another layer of pressure, compounding the pre-existing stress experienced by teachers. Teachers encountered new challenges, including the shift to ERT, which contributed significantly to their mental health issues. The pandemic equipped inclusive teachers with new teaching skills, such as mastering ICT. Upon returning to traditional classrooms, teachers integrated these new methods, potentially enhancing their instruction. However, while these skills enriched their teaching repertoire, the additional pressure of adopting new methodologies strained inclusive teachers' mental health. This finding is supported by Adeniyi, Olufemi, and Adeyinka (2010), Agyapong et al. (2022), Ahmed (2023), and Asia Society (2018), all of whom note that workload is a major contributor to teacher stress.

6. Class Size and SEND Categories Taught

One of the findings indicated a relationship between high student numbers and teachers' mental health. This aligns with Agyapong et al. (2022), who highlight that factors such as class size contribute significantly to teacher stress. Similarly, Collie et al. (2015) assert that dissatisfaction with working conditions often stems from coping with large class sizes.

Adeniyi et al. (2010) revealed that an increase in student overpopulation, particularly among learners with multiple disabilities or severe disabilities, contributes to stress among teachers. Gray et al. (2017) also highlight the challenges faced by inclusive teachers, where meeting the needs of all students, including those with SEND, is a significant challenge within mainstream classrooms. Thus, the situation is particularly complex in inclusive settings. The increased workload places significant demands on inclusive teachers. This finding is supported by Agyapong et al. (2022), who emphasize that teaching students with special needs requires substantial teacher input, depending on the severity and type of disability. A study by Engelbrecht, Swart, and Eloff (2000) found that teachers teaching students with cognitive disabilities experience higher stress levels compared to those teaching students with physical disabilities (Hay, Smit, & Paulsen, 2001).

7. Clarity of Administrative Communication Concerning Students with SEND

The researchers identified that inclusive teachers encounter frustration due to inadequate clarity from the school regarding specific students' circumstances. Access to detailed information about students with SEND is crucial for tailoring teaching strategies and providing appropriate accommodations. This finding aligns with Carlotto and Câmara (2015), who emphasized that role ambiguity contributes significantly to teachers' feelings of anxiety and depression.

Inclusive teachers require comprehensive information about all students, not just those with SEND, to plan their sessions and accommodate diverse learning preferences, such as visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing styles. Without this, teachers may struggle to deliver effective instruction, resulting in vague teaching approaches, frustration, and negative feelings. Several factors can explain why administrations sometimes fail to provide clear information about SEND cases to teachers. Confidentiality concerns can lead to withholding detailed information about students' specific needs. A lack of awareness among school administrators about the importance of sharing detailed student information can result in incomplete communication. Administrative overload, with multiple responsibilities, can lead to insufficient time dedicated to detailed communication. In addition, administrators might assume that teachers have the necessary knowledge to identify and address the needs of students with SEND without needing detailed briefings, leading to a lack of clarity in communication.

8. School Strategy and Workload

The researchers found that burdening inclusive teachers with multiple tasks can exert significant pressure. This finding is supported by Adeniyi et al. (2010), Agyapong et al. (2022), Ahmed (2023), and Asia Society (2018), who all note that workload is a major contributor to teacher stress. Ahmed (2023) and Carlotto and Câmara (2015) emphasize that demanding workloads are significantly correlated with symptoms of depression and anxiety. Santiago et al. (2023) identify high workloads as significant risk factors for generalized anxiety, burnout syndrome, and depression. This finding may be attributed to several factors. Naghieh et al. (2015) suggest heavy workload, long working hours, covering for teacher shortages and absences, and administrative duties are factors contributing to teachers' mental health problems. Furthermore, the complexity of IE requires teachers to develop individualized learning plans with the need to address diverse student needs, especially those with SEND. The need for continuous assessment and adaptation of teaching methods can also contribute to a heightened sense of job demands.

9. Cooperative Learning Environment

The researchers found that a supportive work environment significantly alleviates stress. Conversely, a lack of cooperation increases the emotional burden on teachers, leading to heightened stress and burnout. This finding is consistent with Borrelli, Benevene, Fiorilli, D'Amelio, and Pozze (2014) and Viac and Fraser (2020), who emphasize the link between unfavorable work conditions and poor mental health. Similarly, Olafsen, Niemiec, Halvari, Deci, and Williams (2017) noted that a lack of

connection at work can lead to higher stress, physical and emotional exhaustion, and increased intentions to quit and absenteeism.

This finding can be attributed to several factors. Ineffective communication can lead to a lack of clarity regarding responsibilities. A competitive culture may be inadvertently promoted, where teachers feel the need to outperform their peers rather than collaborate. High workloads limit opportunities to collaborate, while a lack of professional development on teamwork can leave teachers without the skills needed for effective collaboration.

10. Financial Compensation

Collie et al. (2015) found that dissatisfaction is the primary reason why teachers leave their profession, with one significant factor being compensation. This finding resonates with the current research, which identified salary as a key factor affecting teachers' overall performance.

In Lebanon, the need for employment drives many teachers. Teachers who view their financial and non-financial compensation as reflective of their hard work are more likely to be motivated and dedicated to their roles. Conversely, inadequate compensation can negatively impact their willingness to invest in their teaching duties. In recent years, Lebanon has been facing economic challenges. Economic instability, budget constraints in public education, and the strain on the private education sector contribute to disparities in teacher compensation. Teachers, particularly in private schools, may not receive sufficient pay due to financial difficulties faced by these institutions.

11. Physical Resources

The researchers found that inadequate physical resources can create feelings of frustration among teachers, negatively impacting their ability to effectively support student learning. This, in turn, affects their mental health. This finding aligns with Collie et al. (2015), who identified teachers' dissatisfaction with working conditions, including facilities and classroom resources. It also resonates with Adeniyi et al. (2010), who found that the perceived causes of job stress among special educators include a lack of assistance with instructional materials from the government, leading to stress. Inclusive teachers require adequate physical resources for an effective learning environment. Therefore, the research supports Brackenreed (2011), who argues that with the right support in place, inclusion is not seen as a source of stress.

Economic challenges and budget constraints within Lebanon's education sector often limit schools' capacity to invest in updated equipment. Administrators may face difficult choices in allocating funds, potentially prioritizing educational needs over physical resources. Moreover, aging infrastructure and inadequate maintenance further compound the problem.

12. Human Resources Support

The researchers found that inclusive teachers often rely on support from the school community; a lack of this support can negatively affect their mental health. This finding aligns with Naghieh et al. (2015), who highlighted that primary stressors for teachers include relationships with colleagues and management. It also resonates with Carlotto and Câmara (2015), who cite low social support as a contributor to teachers' anxiety and depression. Similarly, Santiago et al. (2023) state that disruptions in social relationships can lead to high levels of generalized anxiety disorder, burnout syndrome, and depression.

Receiving support from classroom assistants helps inclusive teachers provide individualized attention. Specialists are also needed to diagnose issues and provide teachers with adequate strategies. The lack of professional support can stem from various factors. In some cases, educational institutions may face resource limitations that restrict their ability to hire additional personnel or provide specialized training. Cultural or social factors within the school community or among parents may also influence the involvement and support for IE initiatives.

Coping Strategies Employed by Inclusive Teachers Post-COVID-19 Reopening

Research Question 2: What strategies did inclusive teachers at private schools in South Lebanon employ for coping with the mental health challenges they experienced after reopening schools for the 2021–2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic?

1.   Time for Relaxation and Self-care

The researchers found that individuals rely on personal coping mechanisms to address mental health challenges. The choice of coping mechanisms typically reflects personal preferences. The finding also aligns with Kebbi and Al-Hroub (2018), who found that special education teachers often take naps to step back from the demands of teaching and reduce stress.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Arellano et al. (2022) noted that teachers resorted to solo activities they had not previously engaged in, such as watching television and finding solace in cleaning their homes. These findings highlight a diverse range of personal coping mechanisms employed by teachers to maintain their mental health. The choice of coping mechanisms can be attributed to teachers' need to exert control over their stress levels in demanding educational environments. Time for relaxation and self-care might provide essential breaks and avenues for rejuvenation, crucial for promoting resilience.

2.   Engaging in Hobbies and Activities

The researchers also found that teachers resort to other personal coping mechanisms, that promote personal well-being. This finding is consistent with Brackenreed (2011), who noted that teachers found physical activities to be particularly useful for coping. Additionally, it resonates with Hidalgo-Andrade et al. (2021), who found that the second most frequently mentioned coping mechanism involved activities aimed at enhancing participants' physical health. This finding can be attributed to teachers' proactive efforts to promote their well-being. These pursuits allow inclusive teachers to detach from work-related pressures. Prioritizing self-care through hobbies and activities enables teachers to better manage their mental health, leading to improved effectiveness in their professional roles.

3.   Social Support

The researchers found that inclusive teachers relied on their social network to manage emotional challenges, including seeking emotional advice from friends and family and participating in group activities or therapy sessions. This finding is supported by Klapproth, Federkeil, Heinschke, and Jungmann (2020), whose study showed that most teachers used functional coping strategies such as seeking support. Similarly, Hidalgo-Andrade et al. (2021) found that social support was the most frequently utilized strategy, involving engagement with family and friends for emotional support.

Teachers may resort to social support because it offers emotional reassurance, practical advice, and a sense of belonging. Sharing experiences within trusted circles may validate their feelings, reduce isolation, and boost morale and motivation, helping teachers cope with the demands of their profession.

4.   Professional Support

The researchers found that some teachers utilize professional support within their workplace to maintain their well-being, which aligns with Brackenreed (2011), who states that discussing the situation with colleagues and principals was considered highly valuable. Professional supports can provide strategies tailored to the inclusive teachers' specific roles. This support can enhance confidence in handling professional responsibilities. Moreover, seeking assistance from colleagues and administrators can promote collaboration and mutual understanding.

Recommendations for Policymakers and Practitioners

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations for policymakers and practitioners can be proposed to better support the mental health of inclusive teachers:

For policymakers:
1. Invest in comprehensive training programs to improve teachers' understanding of IE.
2. Develop policies that promote a healthy work-life balance for teachers.
3. Create a culture where teachers feel comfortable sharing emotional challenges, breaking barriers to accessing psychological support, especially in regions where it may not be common.
4. Implement policies that address optimal class sizes and adequate support for diverse SEND categories within classrooms.
5. Ensure clear and consistent communication channels between administration and teachers, particularly regarding students with SEND.
6. Allocate resources to ensure schools are equipped with up-to-date technology, specialized equipment, and sufficient classroom materials to support inclusive teaching practices.
7. Review and adjust teacher compensation to reflect the demanding nature of IE.

For practitioners:
1. Take advantage of available training opportunities to enhance understanding of IE practices.
2. Encourage open discussions about mental health to foster a supportive school environment. Challenge stigmas and myths surrounding mental health issues, emphasizing the importance of seeking support when needed.
3. Prioritize personal well-being through regular self-care activities.
4. Seek support from colleagues, mentors, and community resources to address classroom challenges and personal stressors.
5. Make use of educational resources and technological tools to adapt teaching methods and accommodate diverse student needs.
6. Engage in collaborative efforts with fellow teachers to share experiences for improving IE practices.

Limitations of the Study
Identifying the limitations reveals potential weaknesses of the study, which can impact the study's findings on the mental health of inclusive teachers teaching students with SEND within mainstream classrooms in South Lebanon after reopening schools for the 2021–2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic.
1. The findings might not fully represent the experiences of all inclusive teachers as the participants were chosen based on their easy availability.
2. The restricted size of the research sample may not be representative of the entire group of inclusive teachers which could impact the validity and generalizability of the findings.
3. The research focuses on private schools in South Lebanon, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions, diverse school types, or varying educational systems.
4. The study's regional focus on South Lebanon introduces contextual limitations, where specific cultural, economic, and political factors can influence the teachers' responses.
5. The instrument used had to be translated into Arabic. This translation process may have implications for the validity of the findings, as nuances in meaning could be altered, potentially affecting the accuracy of the responses.

Directions for Future Research
The study highlights several directions for future research that can be proposed to enhance our understanding of the mental health of inclusive teachers in diverse contexts.

Firstly, expanding the research to include public schools in South Lebanon would provide a broader perspective on the mental health challenges allowing for comparisons between private and public educational settings. Moreover, conducting similar studies in other regions of Lebanon would be valuable to capture the diversity of contexts under which inclusive teachers work. Regional variations

in cultural, economic, and educational factors can influence the teachers' mental health and understanding these differences can lead to more effective interventions. Finally, longitudinal studies would be beneficial to track the mental health of inclusive teachers over time. This approach would help in understanding the long-term effects of teaching in inclusive settings and the impact of ongoing support on teachers' well-being.

Conclusion
Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lebanese inclusive teachers faced a range of complex challenges. The shift to emergency remote or hybrid learning models, combined with new work-related responsibilities due to COVID-19 not only increased their workload but also exacerbated their mental health.

The factors contributing to mental health challenges after reopening schools for the 2021–2022 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic can be categorized into two groups: internal and external factors. Internal factors pertain to teachers' personal conditions while external factors include the impact of COVID-19 on students.

To manage these challenges, teachers employed various coping strategies, which can be categorized into emotion-focused and problem-focused approaches, as defined by the transactional theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Emotion-focused strategies included self-care activities while problem-focused strategies involve seeking support from the social network to address specific issues.

Ongoing efforts to address the factors contributing to mental health challenges and to enhance coping strategies are crucial for improving inclusive teachers' well-being in the long term. Further research is recommended to explore these dynamics in different contexts and to develop targeted interventions that support teachers' mental health globally.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest
All ethical rules were observed at each stage of the research. The authors declare that he acted in accordance with ethical rules in all processes of the research. The authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest with other persons, institutions or organizations.

REFERENCES
Acquah, E., Tandon, M., & Lempinen, S. (2016). Teacher diversity awareness in the context of changing demographics. *European Educational Research Journal*, *15*(2), 218-235. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904115611676

Adeniyi, S. O., Olufemi, F., & Adeyinka, T. (2010). Perceived causes of job stress among special educators in selected special and integrated schools in Nigeria. *New Horizons in Education*, *58*(2), 73-82. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ966651

Agyapong, B., Obuobi-Donkor, G., Burback, L., & Wei, Y. (2022). Stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression among teachers: A scoping review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(17), Article 10706. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191710706

Ahmed, G. H. A. (2023). Special education teachers' mental health after reopening schools during Covid-19. *PLoS ONE*, *18*(5), Article e0284870. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0284870

Alberta Education. (2013). *Indicators of inclusive schools: Continuing the conversation.* Retrieved from https://education.alberta.ca/media/482253/indicators_of_inclusive_schools.pdf

Arellano, E., Vergaray, J., Franco, Y., Garro-Aburto, L., Meléndez, L., & Navarro, E. (2022). Inclusive education and COVID-19: A phenomenological study. *Revista Cubana de Investigaciones Biomédicas*, *41*(1), 1-22. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359278342_Inclusive_Education_and_COVID-19_a_phenomenological_study_Educacion_inclusiva_y_COVID-19_un_estudio_fenomenologico

Asia Society. (2018). *New challenges and opportunities facing the teaching profession in public education: The 2018 international summit on the teaching profession, Lisbon, Portugal*. Retrieved from https://asiasociety.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2018-international-summit-on-theteaching-profession-edu-istp.pdf

Atchan, T. (2022). *Lebanese teachers' perceptions of their subjective well-being in times of crisis: A case study* (Master's thesis), Lebanese American University, Lebanon. Retrieved from https://laur.lau.edu.lb:8443/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10725/13946/Tala_Atchan%20_Thesis_Redacted.pdf?sequence=3

Bakker, A., & Demerouti, E. (2014). Job demands-resources theory. In P. Y. Chen, & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Work and wellbeing: Wellbeing: A complete reference guide* (Vol. 3, pp. 37-64). United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118539415.wbwell019

Bakker, A., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The job demands-resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *22*(3), 309-328. https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115

Baroud, T., El Masri, J., Shammaa, H., Saleh, M., Chanbour, H., & Salameh, P. (2022). The impact of COVID-19 pandemic, financial wellness, and online teaching on school teachers' mental health: A cross-sectional study in Lebanon. *International Journal of Clinical Research*, *3*(1), 150-161. https://doi.org/10.38179/ijcr.v3i1.169

Bizri, A. R., Khashfe, H., Fares, M., & Musharrafieh, U. (2020). Pandemic: An insult over injury for Lebanon. *Journal of Community Health*, *46*, 487-493. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-020-00884-y

Borrelli, I., Benevene, P., Fiorilli, C., D'Amelio, F., & Pozze, G. (2014). Working conditions and mental health in teachers: a preliminary study. *Occupational Medicine*, *64*(7), 530-532. https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqu108

Brackenreed, D. (2011). Inclusive education: Identifying teachers' strategies for coping with perceived stressors in inclusive classrooms. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, (122), 1-37. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ936704.pdf

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101. http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, *25*(8), 652–661. https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206

Carlotto, M. S., & Câmara, S. G. (2015). Prevalence and risk factors of common mental disorders among teachers. *Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *31*(3), 201-206. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.rpto.2015.04.003

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012) Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol. 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57-71). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/13620-004

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The Psychologist*, *26*(2), 120-123. Retrieved from https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/937596

Collie, R., Shapka, J., Perry, N. E., & Martin, A. (2015). Teacher well-being: Exploring its components and a practice-oriented scale. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, *3*(8), 744-756. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282915587990

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*(3), 499-512. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499

El Ahmad, A. H. (2023). Inclusion of students with special educational needs and disabilities in Lebanon: A scoping review. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, *19*(2), 1-36. Retrieved from http://www.wholeschooling.net/Journal_of_Whole_Schooling/articles/19-2%20El%20Ahmad.pdf

El Ahmad, A. H. (2024). Lebanese law 220/2000 and educational inclusion: A critical analysis. *Üniversitepark Bülten, 13*(1), 121-133. https://doi.org/10.22521/unibulletin.2024.131.8

El Ahmad, A. H., & Kawtharani, A. M. (2022). Inclusive education at UNRWA in Lebanon: A case study of a lower elementary school. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, *9*(1), 18-52. https://doi.org/10.23918/ijsses.v9i1p18

Engelbrecht, P., Swart, E., & Eloff, I. (2001). Stress and coping skills of teachers with a learner with Down's syndrome in inclusive classrooms. *South African Journal of Education*, *21*(4), 256-259. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306152642_Stress_and_coping_skills_of_teachers_with_a_learner_with_Down%27s_syndrome_in_inclusive_classrooms

Gagura, G. (2024). Brief review of phenomenological research design in education. *Ethiopian Journal of Education Studies*, *3*(1), 1-21. Retrieved from https://journals.hu.edu.et/hu-journals/index.php/ejes/article/view/1004

George, T. (2022, January 27). *Semi-structured interview | Definition, guide & examples*. Scribbr. Retrieved from https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/semi-structured-interview/

Golzar, J., & Tajik, O. (2022). Convenience sampling. *International Journal of Education and Language Studies*, *1*(2), 72-77. http://dx.doi.org/10.22034/ijels.2022.162981

Gray, C., Wilcox, G., & Nordstokke, D. (2017). Review: teacher mental health, school climate, inclusive education, and student learning: A review. *Canadian Psychology*, *58*(3), 203–210. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cap0000117

Hay, J., Smit, J., & Paulsen, M. (2001). Teacher preparedness for inclusive education. *South African Journal of Education*, *21*(4), 213-218. Retrieved from https://www.ajol.info/index.php/saje/article/download/24905/20517/0

Hidalgo-Andrade, P., Hermosa-Bosano, C., & Paz, C. (2021). Teachers' mental health and self-reported coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ecuador: A mixed-methods study. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, *14*, 933-944. https://doi.org/10.2147%2FPRBM.S314844

Jahnukainen, M. (2011). Different strategies, different outcomes? The history and trends of the inclusive and special education in Alberta (Canada) and in Finland. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, *55*(5), 489-502. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2010.537689

Kayal, H. (2014). *The challenges of the implementation of class modifications and accommodations for students with learning disabilities in a regular school system in Tripoli-Lebanon (cycle 2)* (Master's thesis), University of Balamand, Lebanon. Retrieved from https://scholarhub.balamand.edu.lb/handle/uob/4426

Kebbi, M., & Al-Hroub, A. (2018). Stress and coping strategies used by special education and general classroom teachers. *International Journal of Special Education*, *33*(1), 34-61. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1184086.pdf

Khochen, M., & Radford, J. (2012). Attitudes of teachers and headteachers towards inclusion in Lebanon. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *16*(2), 139-153. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603111003671665

Klapproth, F., Federkeil, L., Heinschke, F., & Jungmann, T. (2020). Teachers' experiences of stress and their coping strategies during COVID-19 induced distance teaching. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, *4*(4), 444-452. http://dx.doi.org/10.33902/JPR.2020062805

KnowFife. (2018). *Semi-structured interviews*. Retrieved from https://know.fife.scot/__data/assets/pdf_file/0028/177607/KnowHow-Semistructured-interviews.pdf

Kobrossy, Y. (2019). The inclusion of visually impaired students in a Lebanese private school: A case study. *International Journal of Learning and Change*, *11*(2), 190-206. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJLC.2019.101677

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/37418588/_Richard_S_Lazarus_PhD_Susan_Folkman_PhD_Stress_BookFi_

Lee, E. (2021, October 7). *What is inclusive practice?*. CPD Online College. Retrieved from https://cpdonline.co.uk/knowledge-base/safeguarding/inclusive-practice/

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. United States: Sage Publications.

Lowe, N. K. (2019). What is a pilot study? *Journal of Obstetric Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*, *48*(2), 117-118. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jogn.2019.01.005

MacIntyre, P., Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (2020). Language teachers' coping strategies during the Covid-19 conversion to online teaching: Correlations with stress, wellbeing and negative emotions. *System*, *94*, 102352-102364. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102352

Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *AISHE-J*, *9*(3), Article 3351. Retrieved from http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/335

McCarthy, C. J., Lineback, S., Fitchett, P. G., Lambert, R. G., Eyal, M., & Boyle, L. H. (2017). The role of culture and other contextual factors in educator stress. In T. M. McIntyre, S. E. McIntyre, & D. J. Francis (Eds.), *Educator stress: An occupational health perspective* (pp. 157-177). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-53053-6_7

Naghieh, A., Montgomery, P., Bonell, C. P., Thompson, M., & Aber, J. L. (2015). Organisational interventions for improving wellbeing and reducing work-related stress in teachers. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, (4), Article CD010306. https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.cd010306.pub2

Turkish International Journal of Special Education and Guidance & Counseling   2025, volume 14, issue 1

Olafsen, A., Niemiec, C., Halvari, H., Deci, E., & Williams, G. (2017). On the dark side of work: A longitudinal analysis using self-determination theory. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *26*(2), 275–285. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2016.1257611

Rajesh, C., Ashok, L., Rao, C., Kamath, V., Kamath, A., Sekaran, V., Devaramane, V., & Swamy, V. (2022). Psychological well-being and coping strategies among secondary school teachers: A cross-sectional study. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, *11*(1), 152-158. https://doi.org/10.4103/jehp.jehp_1248_21

Robu, V., & Sandovici, A. (2023). Personality and stress: A correlational study among teachers working in primary education. *Anuarul Universităţii "Petre Andrei" din IaşiFascicula:Asistenţă Socială, Sociologie, Psihologie*, *29*, 318-351. https://doi.org/10.18662/upasw/29/82

Ruslin, Mashuri, S., Abdul Rasak, M., Alhabsyi, F., & Syam, H. (2022). Semi-structured interview: A methodological reflection on the development of a qualitative research instrument in educational studies. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *12*(1), 22-29. http://dx.doi.org/10.9790/7388-1201052229

Salinas-Falquez, S., Roman-Lorente, C., Buzica, M., Álvarez, J., Gutiérrez, N., & Trigueros, R. (2022). Teachers' mental health and their involvement in educational inclusion. *Behavioral Sciences*, *12*(8), 261-273. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs12080261

Santiago, I., Santos, E., Silva, J., Cavalcante, Y., Júnior, J., Costa, A., & Cândido, E. (2023). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of teachers and its possible risk factors: A systematic review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *20*(3), Article 1747. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20031747

Thabane, L., Ma, J., Chu, R., Cheng, J., Ismaila, A., Rios, L. P., Robson, R., Thabane, M., Giangregorio, L., & Goldsmith, C. H. (2010). A tutorial on pilot studies: The what, why and how. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *10*(1), Article 1. http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-10-1

Viac, C., & Fraser, P. (2020). *Teachers' well-being: a framework for data collection and analysis*. OECD Education Working Papers No. 213. Paris: OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/19939019

Wipulanusat, W., Panuwatwanich, K., Stewart, R., & Sunkpho, J. (2020). Applying mixed methods sequential explanatory design to innovation management. In K. Panuwatwanich, & C.-H. Ko (Eds.), *The 10th International Conference on Engineering, Project, and Production Management* (pp. 485-495). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-1910-9_40

World Health Organization- WHO. (2022, September 28). *Mental health at work*. Wikipedia. Retrieved from https://www.who.int//news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-at-work/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwnv-vBhBdEiwABCYQA4i4mgRoNgwgDASedW5Zk8nJHdcut7WikiQnsOGc4E--6wmHD7AKlBoCQq8QAvD_BwE

World Health Organization- WHO. (2022, June 17). *Mental health*. Wikipedia. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwkuqvBhAQEiwA65XxQNzggKfOGqqpb2H9c0T6MQBOvjIKzd_nuHDxAKcXXbcfK6z4hExSDhoCj_UQAvD_BwE

Yusoff, M. Z., Shafi, M. A., & Ismail, N. F. (2023). The relationship between state of mental health and factors affecting mental health on academic performance. *Journal of Academia*, *11*(2), 77-86. Retrieved from https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/joa/article/view/23448

Zhang, L., Chen, J., Li, X., & Zhan, Y. (2024). A scope review of the teacher well-being research between 1968 and 2021. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, *33*, 171–186. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-023-00717-1