Faculty Attitudes Toward Teaching Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities in Higher Education[1]

Atitudes do Corpo Docente em Relação ao Ensino de Alunos com Deficiência Intelectual Leve no Ensino Superior

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to examine the relations between faculty members' attitudes in Higher Education Saudi universities and demographic factors (i.e., academic rank, gender, years of experience, and type of college) by using the Interaction with Disabled Persons (IDP) Scale and multiple regression analysis. Results indicate that gender was associated with one dimension: vulnerability. The ranks of assistant professor and full professor were related to two dimensions: discomfort in social interactions and a coping-succumbing framework. Also, the college education variable was related to three dimensions: discomfort in social interactions, perceived level of information, and vulnerability. Results show that faculty members had lower negative attitudes toward students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education. Based on study results, the researcher recommends more faculty training in how to support the Higher Education of students with disabilities as well as accessible support centers for individuals with disabilities to help staff as well as students. Also, universities should be made accessible to people with all types of disabilities who have a right to Higher Education.

KEYWORDS: Faculty. Attitude. Teaching. Readiness. Students with mild intellectual disabilities. Higher Education. Special Education. Saudi Arabia.

RESUMO: O objetivo deste estudo foi examinar as relações entre as atitudes dos membros do corpo docente no Ensino Superior de universidades sauditas e os fatores demográficos (ou seja, classificação acadêmica, gênero, anos de experiência e tipo de faculdade) usando a Escala de Interação com Pessoas com Deficiência (IPD) e a análise de regressão múltipla. Os resultados indicam que o gênero estava associado a uma dimensão: vulnerabilidade. As posições de professor assistente e professor titular estavam relacionadas a duas dimensões: desconforto nas interações sociais e uma estrutura de enfrentar-sucumbir. Além disso, a variável educação universitária estava relacionada a três dimensões: desconforto nas interações sociais, nível percebido de informação e vulnerabilidade. Os resultados mostram que os membros do corpo docente tiveram atitudes negativas mais baixas em relação aos estudantes com deficiências intelectuais leves no Ensino Superior. Com base nos resultados do estudo, o pesquisador recomenda mais treinamento do corpo docente sobre como apoiar os estudantes com deficiência no Ensino Superior bem como centros de suporte acessíveis para indivíduos com deficiência para ajudar a equipe e os alunos. Ademais, as universidades devem ser acessíveis a pessoas com todos os tipos de deficiência que têm direito ao Ensino Superior.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Corpo docente. Atitude. Ensino. Disponibilidade. Alunos com deficiências intelectuais leves. Ensino Superior. Educação Especial. Arábia Saudita.

1 Introduction

Education is important in the development of any country, and it is important for citizens to be educated whether they have disabilities or not. Higher Education began in Saudi Arabia after the kingdom established a few universities that educated only people without disabilities. Higher Education in Saudi Arabia expanded after it was established in the country for typically developing students. The first university was King Saud University established in 1957; after that period, other universities were established such as King Fahad University,

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Umm Al-Qura University, King Khalid University, and other universities (Alamri, 2011). These public universities did not open their doors to students with mild intellectual disabilities as they did to these students' peers without disabilities. Thus, universities in Saudi Arabia needed to take a step forward to include students with mild intellectual disabilities as they already included students with visual and hearing impairments, providing some accommodations for them. The focus of the current study was measuring Saudi Higher Education faculty members' attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities. In 1972, the Ministry of Education at the school level officially established a department that oversaw the education of students with disabilities from elementary to high school in three categories: visual impairment, hearing impairment, and intellectual disability (Afeafe, 2000). The Ministry of Education opened Special Education schools for students with intellectual disabilities only from elementary to high school. After they graduated from high school, these students faced challenges to their inclusion in Higher Education and this left them with limited choices compared to their typically developing peers or even compared to individuals with other categories of disabilities such as visual and hearing impairments.

The issue of Higher Education for students with mild intellectual disabilities needs to be addressed in private colleges and public universities, and there are non-universities supports mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education in Saudi Arabia. Abed and Shackelford (2020) contended that students with learning disabilities need more support in Saudi universities to ensure a high level of education for them. Thus, Higher Education needs to include students with disabilities, especially students with mild intellectual disabilities, providing them with as much access to Higher Education as their peers. According to The Authority of People with Disability (2021), there are approximately 1,445,723 people with all types and levels of disabilities in Saudi Arabia out of 32 million. Therefore, about 7.1% of the people in the country have some kind of disability, including people with intellectual disabilities. This statistic highlights the need to provide opportunities for people with mild intellectual disabilities to be educated in Higher Education with their peers without disabilities. According to the Rights of People with Disabilities, the Ministry of Education seeks to provide the best Higher Education programs for students with disabilities in Saudi universities with support services such as assessed adaptation, an adaptive environment, and a comprehensive access program (Saudi National Portal for Government Services, 2021).

Also, Prince Salman Center for Disability Research (2004) developed a "disability code" that supported and guaranteed individuals with disabilities access to education, health, psychological, rehabilitation, and social support provided by government services. This code gives people with disabilities and their parents' rights and access to these services based on their needs and on types and levels of disabilities. Additionally, the Saudi government issued in 2000 the "Disability Welfare Law" that supports the rights of people with disabilities. This law requires public institutions to support services for person with disabilities in training and rehabilitation, education, health care, social, sports, culture, and media (Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers, 2000). These laws and policies support all categories of disabilities included intellectual disabilities in all levels of education, and private colleges and public universities need more encouragement and support to include students with mild intellectual disabilities, respecting their basic rights to experience university life and be educated.

1.1 Faculty attitude and readiness to teach students with disabilities in Higher Education

Higher Education for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia is lacking, especially for students with mild intellectual disabilities and other disabilities, and there is a lack of readiness of the environment to support the idea of teaching students with disabilities in inclusive Higher Education. Kozlov et al. (2021) studied the readiness of Higher Education institutions and found a significant number of Higher Education faculty members unable to teach students with disabilities in inclusive settings due to their lack of knowledge about students with disabilities and their unfamiliarity with disabilities in general. Myronova et al. (2021) also studied the readiness of Higher Education and found an inadequate level of faculty readiness because of the lack of implementation of inclusive practices, lack of awareness of disability needs, prejudice against people with disabilities within the inclusion process, and low self-efficacy in practicing inclusion. Results of these two studies emphasized the importance of preparing university environments to include students with disabilities based on their needs and abilities. Thus, universities need to be more aware of including students with mild intellectual disabilities, gaining knowledge about this category of disability, and adjusting their budgets to accept these students at higher educational costs.

In addition, researchers have found insufficient Higher Education faculty training on disabilities law and policy as that training does not fit into faculty schedules (Guilbaud et al., 2021). Results also showed that faculty members who taught online with more than 6 years of experience demonstrated better inclusive practices than those who had 2 or fewer years of experience. In addition, faculty members who had professional development training in online learning showed better practice and knowledge than those who had not had any training (Guilbaud et al., 2021). Given these results, the researchers recommended providing support to faculty members teaching online by creating a comprehensive strategy to ensure assistance and support to all students, including accommodations for students with disabilities (Guilbaud et al., 2021). Faculty members with more training and experience can assist their colleagues in understanding disabilities and how to support all students. Thus, colleges and universities should provide more training for faculty members to assist students with disabilities by providing accommodations in their lectures and assessments. Saudi universities still lack these types of supports.

Furthermore, in their study of beliefs, knowledge, and reasonable adjustment, Sandoval et al. (2021) found that faculty members offered different kinds of reasonable adjustment in their lectures if they had positive attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities in Higher Education. They also showed a lack of knowledge about the needs of students with disabilities (Kozlov et al., 2021; Sandoval et al., 2021). However, Lipka et al. (2020) found no differences between male and female faculty members in terms of their attitudes and knowledge of and attitudes toward teaching students with learning disabilities. They also found that more than 70% of faculty members had little or no support from professional support teams to educate students with learning disabilities, and most of these faculty members were not even aware of the definition of learning disabilities. Most of the faculty in Lipka et al.'s study reported they had not had any training related to learning disabilities. On the other hand, Radlińska et al. (2021) studied the attitudes of medical health sciences students and found that women

had more positive attitudes than men toward people with physical disabilities in the cognitive and behavioral domains. Both genders' attitudes were more negative toward people with disabilities in the emotional domain. These results imply that both male and female professionals need more training to support the needs of students with disabilities. Other researchers have emphasized the need for training Higher Education faculty members to support students with disabilities (e.g., Aguirre et al., 2021; Guilbaud et al., 2021; Lipka et al., 2020).

In other studies on supporting student with disabilities in Higher Education, researchers found that faculty members needed to improve by accessing more training about disabilities and more support for students with learning disabilities and other disabilities (Aguirre et al., 2021; Lipka et al., 2020). Additionally, Lopez-Gavira et al. (2021) studied challenges faced by students with disabilities in Higher Education, and found that key factors in faculty members' inclusion of students with disabilities were faculty members' attitudes toward disabilities, reasonable adjustment during their teaching, and technology to support their students' learning. Other studies on the difficulties and challenges of teaching students with disabilities in inclusive Higher Education classrooms showed that most of the faculty participants mentioned their concerns about practicing inclusive education, lack of knowledge and resources about disabilities, and their need for more faculty training to support the learning of students with disabilities (Bunbury, 2020; Collins et al., 2019; Myronova et al., 2021). These results provide essential evidence that faculty members need more training, resources, and knowledge about disabilities, and that they need more support in their lectures to be able to include students with disabilities, especially students with mild intellectual disabilities.

1.2 Students with disabilities in Higher Education

Students with disabilities have a right to study with their peers, to have more academic and social experience as college students. Vinoski (2020) reported that the opportunity of students with intellectual disabilities to attend college allows them to explore college life without their parents for the first time and to explore friendships with their peers while practicing their problem-solving and communication skills in the context of academic experiences that enhance their college experiences. Raynor et al. (2016) highlighted a 3-year community college program that facilitated and expanded its services for students with intellectual disabilities, allowing them to acquire the skills they needed for employment. The researchers explained that 44% of the students with intellectual disabilities in the third year of the community college program had 154 work experiences including paid work, unpaid internships, and volunteer work. However, Carter and McCabe (2021) examined 30 research studies and found that at least 769 of the participating peers had some formal supports, and about 14 studies mentioned that some peers had informal interactions or experiences with students with intellectual disabilities at the college level. Also, most of the participating peers were white female; only seven studies mentioned the location of the study and none of these studies mentioned the types of disabilities of the peers. Carter and McCabe (2021) also mentioned that 26 of the studies revealed formal supports of peers in their inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) as 70% of the studies mentioned that one or more of the peers had participated in academic supports, 56.7% of the studies mentioned social interaction, and 40% of the studies mentioned in-class support. Also, the majority of the studies of Higher Education were 4-year public university

program, and only two studies focused on 2-year community college programs (Carter & McCabe, 2021). Results of these studies show that including students with intellectual disabilities in Higher Education gives them not only access to academics but opportunities to practice the social skills they need as adults interacting with their typically developing peers. The current study aims to measure Higher Education faculty members' attitudes toward including students with mild intellectual disabilities as they access the academic and social facets of Higher Education with their typically developing peers.

Björnsdóttir (2017) studied the diploma program offered by the University of Iceland as it adjusted the curriculum to meet the needs of students with intellectual disabilities. University staff members were flexible in terms of using teaching methods with cooperation between the program coordinator and faculty members in spite of limited university resources. Mentoring students was helpful in the diploma program both academically and socially to enhance the work skills that students with intellectual disabilities needed in their future jobs.

Grigal et al. (2012) studied 244 Postsecondary Education Programs and found that 34% of the programs focused on independent living and life skills, 32% focused on employment, and 18% focused on academic aspects. Thus, these programs are different for typically developing peers because, for them, colleges will focus primarily on academic skills; the focus for college students with disabilities will be on life skills and employment rather than academics. Butler et al. (2016) mentioned that students with intellectual disabilities who attended college were found to have positive effects in finding work, higher incomes once they started working after they had completed college, better quality of life, and more engagement in their communities. Lee et al. (2021) also found a positive impact of college on students with intellectual disabilities. They found a positive impact on first-year students with intellectual disabilities in in the areas of adaptive behavior, communication, self-determination, and socialization. There was no improvement or additional skills noted in these students' second year of studying but they maintained the skills they had previously attained and developed. However, Qian et al. (2018) studied the use of coaching as a model to support the academic and social interactions of students with intellectual disabilities in Higher Education and found that most students engaged in discussions about academic support, seeking ways to participate in social events with their typical peers, and goals related to their future careers. The study showed that 80% of the students with intellectual disabilities discussed academic and social support in their meetings with their coaches, and their coaches encouraged them to participate more in organized social events on campus and to invite their typical peers (Qian et al., 2018). These earlier studies found that supporting students with intellectual disabilities to study in Higher Education can improve their learning, their social skills, and the skills they need for future jobs as they interact with students without disabilities within the university environment.

Employment skills are key to future job retention for students with intellectual disabilities. Björnsdóttir (2017) and Raynor et al. (2016) indicated that community college and diploma programs are essential to the preparation of students with intellectual disabilities for their future jobs as these programs enhance students' work, academic, and social experiences. Qian et al. (2018) studied the use of coaching as a model to support the academic and social interactions of students with intellectual disabilities in Higher Education and found that most students engaged in discussions about academic support, seeking ways to participate in social

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Cai and Richdale (2016) aimed to understand the experience of students with autism in Higher Education; they reported that 63% of their sample felt their education needs were met and that they were well prepared; some of the students (27%) felt their social needs were met. The researchers also reported that 68% of the students were not interested in university education because of subject areas, workload, difficulty of content, lack of energy and depression, and feeling overwhelmed.

Students with autism have reported a lack of social support while they studied in Higher Education (Cai & Richdale, 2016; Sarrett, 2018). Tucker et al. (2020) identified the benefits of student with intellectual disabilities' walking in the campus community with their

nondisabled peers, creating new experiences, and socially interacting with their typical peers, and building new relationships with each other. Furthermore, Alawajee (2022) recommended including deaf undergraduate students not only for their social and academic learning, but also to allow preservice Special Education teachers to practice sign language before teaching in the field. These studies show the importance of teaching students with disabilities in Higher Education to benefit not only students with disabilities but also typically developing students as they learn and communicate with their peers with disabilities.

Hees et al. (2015) discussed the challenges students with autism faced in Higher Education such as difficulties in meeting both social and academic demands in terms of time management, sensory overload, and processing of information. The researchers also mentioned that students with autism were stressed and anxious because they needed to balance their studies, daily life, and student life. They also indicated that students with autism did not disclose their autism spectrum disorder when they interacted with their peers or university staff because of the negative feedback they had previously faced (Hees et al., 2015). Students with disabilities need more support in Higher Education to choose academic majors based on their abilities and interests and the type of accommodations and supports they need to assist them in accomplishing their goals without stress or anxiety. The current study focused on faculty members' attitudes about helping students with disabilities within inclusive Higher Education.

Based on results of previous studies on the challenges college students with autism and other disabilities might face such as difficulty of workloads and stress over not being able to handle college life, researchers have recommended more support for these students (Cai & Richdale, 2016; Hees et al., 2015).

1.3 Higher Education for students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia

The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia supports the right of students with disabilities to be educated at all levels of education. Almutairi et al. (2021) found that half of their sample of university faculty members and administrators showed some willingness to support students with intellectual disabilities to allow them to earn certification in Higher Education programs which required essential changes in university admission, registration system, policies, and substructure. The researchers found that administrators were more positive than faculty members in terms of including students with intellectual disabilities. They also indicated that most of the faculty members and administrators mentioned the benefits of including students with intellectual disabilities as not only their preparation for work and life, but as enhancing the lives of students without disabilities in terms of how to communicate with diverse fellow students. However, the participants also reported that the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms might negatively impact students' concertation (Almutairi et al., 2021).

Alqarni (2021) also studied Higher Education for students with disabilities, specifically faculty members' familiarity with inclusive practices in Higher Education for students with learning disabilities. The researcher indicated that faculty members were inadequately familiar with inclusive practices, and that three types of inclusive practices (i.e., instructional, classroom assignment, and examination practices) for students with learning disabilities in Saudi universities, academic rank, and years of experience did not statistically significantly

impact these faculty members' familiarity with students with disabilities in Higher Education (Alqarni, 2021).

However, Alhossein (2016) conducted a study about the willingness of faculty members in Saudi Arabia to accommodate students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in Higher Education and found that the participants were generally willing to accommodate those students in terms of instruction and assessment, and that gender, having a family relative with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, professional development, and academic rank and discipline were not statistically significant factors in faculty willingness. Alhossein (2016) found that Saudi faculty members were more willing to provide accommodation compared to non-Saudi faculty members, and faculty members without teaching experience were more willing to accommodate students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder than faculty member who had teaching experience. These studies indicate faculty members' willingness and readiness to help students with different types of disabilities; some faculty members have positive attitudes and others are unwilling to help perhaps because of less experience with students with disabilities or because of a lack of support and resources in their colleges to assist them to effectively include students with disabilities in Higher Education.

Other researchers (e.g., Alhossein, 2016; Almutairi et al., 2021) have reported similar findings of faculty members in Saudi universities showing willingness to support student with disabilities in Higher Education programs. Al-bakri (2016) discussed levels of Saudi university faculty members' knowledge in terms of environmental facilities and problems in environmental accommodations for students with disabilities as he found that faculty members' levels of knowledge about environmental facilities and problems were high. Al-bakri (2016) also found statistically significant differences in the knowledge of the faculty members about environmental facilities in the academic major of humanities while there were statistically significant differences in faculty members' knowledge levels of environmental problems in the science major. These studies show that faculty members' attitudes were more positive when their universities were ready to include students with disabilities in Higher Education with adequate supports and resources guaranteed by universities' policies.

In summary, previous researchers who studied the knowledge and attitudes of Saudi university faculty members about teaching students with disabilities in Higher Education while providing accommodations and facilities for these students agreed that improvements are needed in Higher Education environments to provide better education to students with disabilities (Al-bakri, 2016; Alhossein, 2016; Almutairi et al., 2021; Alqarni, 2021).

1.4 Interaction with Disabled Persons Scale

Other researchers who used the Interaction with Disabled Persons (IDP) Scale indicated that this survey measures attitudes of people toward people with disabilities in education settings and other fields. Stachura and Garven (2007) found that students specializing in occupational therapy had more positive attitudes toward people with disabilities than physiotherapy students. Thomas et al. (2014) also used the IDP scale and found that men had high relationship between socially desirable responding and IDP scale. Using the IDP scale, Carlson and Witschey (2018) found that undergraduate students had more positive attitudes toward

people with disabilities as their levels of comfort and interaction increased; they gave 10 hours of service with a local nonprofit organization for people with disabilities during the course of the study. These studies emphasize the inclusion of people with disabilities in education and in other fields to benefit not only them but also nondisabled people in the whole community. They also emphasize the importance of community support for people with disabilities through positive attitudes about interpersonal interactions.

2 Method

This study used a quantitative approach to identify the links between the independent variables and the dependent variable of work factors as predictors of faculty attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi universities. This section includes a discussion of the statement of the problem and the research design and methodology, and an explanation of the instrumentation, pilot study, and selection of the sample.

2.1 Statement of the problem

The purpose of this study was to examine the relations between Saudi Higher Education faculty members' attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities and demographic factors (i.e., academic rank, gender, years of teaching experience, and type of college) by using the IDP Scale. It is important to support students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education to help them improve their academic and social skills, leading to greater independence in their lives (Björnsdóttir, 2017; Raynor et al., 2016; Vinoski, 2020). Previous studies discussed in the literature review have shown the challenges and difficulties students with disabilities, especially students with mild intellectual disabilities, face in Higher Education and recommended ways to help these students have the chance to access Higher Education as their peers do (Bunbury, 2020; Collins et al., 2019; Lopez-Gavira et al., 2021; Myronova et al., 2021). These studies demonstrate the need to improve Higher Education to make it more inclusive of students with disabilities, especially students with mild intellectual disabilities. Saudi universities still need to open their doors to allow all students to exercise their right to Higher Education to acquire more academic and social skills in the same environment as their typical peers. The current study examined faculty attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi universities.

2.2 Research Question

One research question guided this study: *What work factors are associated with faculty attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabian universities?*

2.3 Research Design

The study design was chosen based on the purpose of the study which was to examine relations between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The independent variables were the demographic variables of academic rank, gender, years of teaching experience, and type of college. The dependent variable was faculty attitudes toward teaching students with

mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi universities. I conducted multiple regression analysis to determine possible correlations among these variables and to predict the strong correlations of independent variables that impacted the dependent variable (Mertler & Reinhart, 2017). In this study, I conducted four models of multiple regressions for each dimension of the IDP scale using the demographic factors.

2.4 Instrumentation

The instruments used to collect data from the participants in Saudi universities were a researcher-developed demographic questionnaire and the IDP Scale (Gething, 1991). I obtained the author's permission to use the IDP Scale in this study. The first survey was used to collect data on the participants' demographic factors (i.e., academic rank, gender, years of teaching experience, and type of college) and the second survey (the IDP Scale) assessed faculty willingness to interact with and teach students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education. The IDP Scale's 20 items measure attitudes toward students with disabilities on four dimensions: (a) discomfort in social interactions, (b) coping-succumbing framework, (c) perceived level of information, and (d) vulnerability. The coping-succumbing framework addresses the observer reaction that a person does not have a certain type of disability and/or the observer's lack of awareness of it. The IDP Scale uses a six-point Likert scale: *I disagree very much, I disagree somewhat, I disagree a little, I agree a little, I agree somewhat,* and *I agree very much* (see Appendix A). Gething (1991) reported that the IDP Scale's reliability was high as it ranged from .72 to .81. After obtaining the author's permission to use the survey, I secured the approval of my university's ethical committee to conduct the study. I then recruited participants via email and an informed consent letter regarding their voluntary agreement to allow me to collect data from them. I collected the survey data over a 2-week period from all Saudi universities.

2.5 Pilot Study

As mentioned previously, I obtained the permission from Gething (1991) to translate the IDP Scale into Arabic and administer it. The pilot study conducted for this research had two phases. First, I translated the survey into Arabic and gave it to another researcher who holds a PhD degree in Special Education to translate it back from Arabic to English to ensure accurate translation. Next, I sent it to 10 experts faculty members who hold PhD degrees in different majors to answer the survey and provide feedback and comments to ensure the ability of the survey to collect accurate data from the sample. Then, I conducted 20 sample surveys of faculty members both female and male to measure the reliability. This small sample was chosen randomly by sending the survey to two universities to collect data for the pilot study. The study used Cronbach's coefficient alpha to measure reliability; Cronbach's alpha for the survey was high and reliable as .79.

2.6 Study population and sample selection

Faculty members in Saudi universities made up the study sample. Many factors impact a researcher's investigation into a group of people, and use of a survey to engage this sample to share their opinions and views was considered suitable for this study (Creswell, 2014). Thus,

this target population of faculty members in Saudi universities could assist policymakers in these universities in opening and improving Saudi Higher Education for students with intellectual disabilities. I selected the sample randomly by sending the survey's link through Saudi universities, and the study participants had to have at least 1 year of university teaching experience. I sent the survey link by each university's email system to reach the sample The target sample was 300 faculty members in four universities and the response rate was approximately 40% of the sample.

3 Results

This section is organized according to descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis results regarding faculty members' attitudes toward interacting with and teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Saudi universities.

3.1 Demographic characteristics of the sample

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of this study's sample: gender, academic rank, type of college, and years of teaching experience.

Table 1
Demographics of the study participants

Variables	Frequency (N = 86)	Percentage
Gender		
Male	36	40.4
Female	50	56.2
Years of Teaching Experience		
1 – 5	34	38.2
6 – 10	25	28.1
11 –16	10	11.2
17 – 20	10	11.2
More than 20	7	7.9
Type of College		
College of Business	5	5.6
College of Science	19	21.3
College of Arts	17	19.1
College of Education	26	29.2
Other Colleges	19	21.3
Academic Rank		
Teaching Assistant	20	22.5
Lecturer	33	37.1
Assistant Professor	26	29.2
Associate Professor	5	5.6
Full Professor	2	2.2

3.2 Multiple linear regression results

I conducted multiple linear regression analysis to predict Saudi university faculty members' attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education in Saudi Arabia. The independent variables used to predict faculty members' attitudes were academic rank, gender, years of teaching experience, and type of college. Linear regression results include a model summary of coefficients tables for each dimension of interaction with persons with disabilities (i.e., discomfort in social interactions, coping-succumbing framework, perceived level of information, and vulnerability). An alpha level of .05 was used in this analysis. The independent variables and the four dimensions of interaction with people with disabilities are presented in Tables 2-5.

3.3 Discomfort in social interactions

The multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict Saudi faculty members' attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education in Saudi Arabia based on the subscale of discomfort in social interactions for four independent variables (i.e., academic rank, gender, years of teaching experience, and type of college). Two independent variables in the model, Assistant Professor and College of Education ($p < .05$), were statistically significant. The coefficient of the Assistant Professor variable was -3.69, indicating that these Assistant Professors reported lower levels of discomfort in social interactions, by 3.69 points. Also, the coefficient of the College of Education variable was -4.95, indicating that faculty in the College of Education had lower levels of discomfort in social interactions, by 4.95 points. See Table 2 for a summary of the model.

Table 2

Regression analysis of discomfort in social interactions ($N = 86$)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	sig.
	B	Std. Error			
Lecturer	-1.635	1.745	-.128	-.937	.352
Assistant Professor	-3.691	1.861	-.272	-1.984	.051
Associate Professor	-4.587	3.194	-.172	-1.436	.155
Full Professor	-.648	4.817	-.016	-.135	.893
College of Education	-4.954	1.830	-.365	-2.707	.008
College of Arts	-1.849	2.086	-.118	-.886	.378
College of Business	3.559	3.192	.134	1.115	.268

College of Science	-1.286	2.033	-.086	-.633	.529
Gender	-2.606	1.413	-.206	-1.844	.069
Years of Experience	.540	.582	.112	.927	.357

Note. Adjusted R Square = .109. Reference group for Academic Rank is Teaching Assistant, Reference group for Type of College is Other Colleges. The gender coding is male = 1 and female = 2.

3.4 Coping-succumbing framework

The multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict Saudi faculty members' attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education in Saudi Arabia as measured by the subscale on the coping-succumbing framework for four independents (i.e., academic rank, gender, years of teaching experience, and type of college). Only one independent variable in the model, Full Professor ($p < .05$), was statistically significant. The coefficient of the Full Professor variable was -3.02, indicating that these full professors had lower levels of coping-succumbing framework, by 3.02 points. See Table 3 for a summary of the model.

Table 3

Regression analysis of the coping-succumbing framework (N = 86)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	sig.
	B	Std. Error			
Lecture	-.487	.497	-.138	-.979	.331
Assistant Professor	-.196	.530	-.053	-.370	.712
Associate Professor	-.796	.910	-.109	-.875	.385
Full Professor	-3.027	1.373	-.267	-2.205	.031
College of Education	-.277	.522	-.074	-.531	.597
College of Arts	.264	.595	.061	.444	.659
College of Business	-.764	.910	-.104	-.840	.404
College of Science	-.587	.579	-.142	-1.012	.315
Gender	.235	.403	.068	.583	.562
Years of Experience	.195	.166	.147	1.176	.243

Note. Adjusted R Square = .040. Reference group for Academic ranking is Teaching assistant, Reference group for type of college is other colleges. The gender coding is male = 1 and female = 2.

3.5 Perceived level of information

The multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict Saudi university faculty members' attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education in Saudi Arabia as measured by the subscale of perceived level of information for four independent variables (i.e., academic rank, gender, years of teaching experience, and type of college). One independent variable in the model, College of Education ($p < .05$), was statistically significant. The coefficient of the College of Education variable was -3.51, indicating that faculty members' attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in the College of Education showed lower levels on the perceived level of information dimension, by 3.51 points. See Table 4 for a summary of the model.

Table 4

Regression analysis of perceived level of information (N = 86)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	sig.
	B	Std. Error			
Lecturer	.074	.924	.011	.080	.936
Assistant Professor	-1.084	.985	-.145	-1.100	.275
Associate Professor	2.956	1.691	.202	1.748	.085
Full Professor	-1.624	2.550	-.071	-.637	.526
College of Education	-3.511	.969	-.470	-3.623	.001
College of Arts	-2.029	1.105	-.235	-1.837	.070
College of Business	.575	1.690	.039	.340	.735
College of Science	-.433	1.076	-.052	-.403	.688
Gender	-.986	.748	-.142	-1.317	.192
Years of Experience	.471	.308	.177	1.527	.131

Note. Adjusted R Square = .175. Reference group for Academic Rank is Teaching Assistant, Reference group for Type of College is Other Colleges. The gender coding is male = 1 and female = 2.

3.6 Vulnerability

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict Saudi university faculty members' attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education

in Saudi Arabia as measured by the subscale of vulnerability for four independent variables (i.e., academic rank, gender, years of teaching experience, and type of college). Two independent variables in the model, Gender and College of Education ($p < .05$), were statistically significant. The coefficient of the Gender variable was -2.01, indicating that female faculty attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities showed lower levels of vulnerability than male faculty, by 2.01 points. Also, the coefficient of the College of Education variable was -2.42, indicating that these faculty members' attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities showed lower levels of vulnerability, by 2.42 points. See Table 5 for a summary of the model.

Table 5
Regression analysis of vulnerability (N = 86)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	sig.
	B	Std. Error			
Lecturer	-.617	1.169	-.076	-.527	.600
Assistant Professor	-.601	1.247	-.070	-.482	.631
Associate Professor	-1.484	2.140	-.088	-.694	.490
Full Professor	-2.959	3.227	-.113	-.917	.362
College of Education	-2.426	1.226	-.282	-1.979	.052
College of Arts	-.894	1.398	-.090	-.640	.524
College of Business	1.666	2.139	.099	.779	.438
College of Science	-.904	1.362	-.095	-.664	.509
Gender	-2.013	.947	-.251	-2.126	.037
Years of Experience	.496	.390	.162	1.272	.207

Note. Adjusted R Square = .006. Reference group for Academic Rank is Teaching Assistant, Reference group for Type of College is Other Colleges. The gender coding is male = 1 and female = 2.

4 Discussion

This study focused on determining associations among a group of independent variables and Saudi university faculty members' attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education in Saudi Arabia. Results show a significant relation between gender, the rank of Assistant Professor, the rank of Full Professor, and College of Education among the dimensions of discomfort in social interactions, coping-succumbing framework, perceived level of information, and vulnerability.

The gender variable was significant, associated with the dimension of vulnerability as measured by the IDP Scale in reference to Saudi university faculty members' attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education. Results of the current study differ from Lipka et al. (2020) finding that there were no gender differences in terms of faculty members' attitudes and knowledge as they taught students with disabilities. Alhossein's (2016) study also yielded conflicting results as he found that gender was not related to faculty attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

In the current study, Saudi faculty attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education were significant, associated with two dimensions: discomfort in social interactions and a coping-succumbing framework for two rank variables (i.e., Assistant Professor and Full Professor) which means faculty members in these ranks showed lower levels of negative attitudes. This result of the current study is supported by Sandoval et al. (2021) who found faculty members had more positive attitudes toward teaching and supporting students with disabilities in Higher Education by making adjustments in their lectures. Another study that supports the result of the current study about faculty members' attitudes is one conducted by Almutairi et al. (2021) who found that half of the faculty and administrators they studied were willing to support students with intellectual disabilities to obtain certification in Higher Education.

The College of Education was the only college among the studied Saudi universities that showed more positive attitude levels in significant relation to three dimensions of interaction: discomfort in social interactions, perceived level of information, and vulnerability. It is possible that College of Education faculty are more comfortable and engaging with individuals with disabilities because of previous experience which may increase familiarity of College of Education faculty members with individuals with disabilities; and they may have more information about disabilities than faculty members in other colleges that are further removed from the field of education. The current study's result is similar to what Lipka et al. (2020) found: that more than 70% of faculty members perceived a lack of support in their colleges, lacked information about disabilities, and did not know how to support students with disabilities in Higher Education. The current study's significant finding regarding College of Education faculty members' more positive attitudes may be affected by these faculty members' higher levels of knowledge about disabilities. Also, the current study yielded findings similar to those of Kozlov et al. (2021) who found that faculty members could not teach students with disabilities in inclusive settings because they lacked knowledge about disabilities. This finding aligns with results of the current study showing that College of Education faculty members who were more familiar with disabilities were more willing to support the Higher Education of students with disabilities as they had a better understanding of the needs of students with disabilities.

Teaching students with disabilities in Higher Education requires high levels of staff preparation, and the faculty's attitude is vital to working with and including the perspectives of students with disabilities in their lectures. The current study found College of Education faculty members were more willing to teach students with mild intellectual disabilities. This result is supported by Almutairi et al. (2021) who mentioned that half of their faculty and administrator participants were willing to help and support students with intellectual disabilities to earn certification in Higher Education programs. In the current study, some variables in the four dimensions of interaction (i.e., discomfort in social interactions, coping-succumbing

framework, perceived level of information, and vulnerability) were not significant perhaps because of the lack of information and knowledge about disabilities in general and, specifically, about mild intellectual disabilities. The current study's result is supported by Kozlov et al. (2021) who found that most of the faculty and staff working with students with disabilities lacked information and knowledge about disabilities.

5 Conclusion

Students with disabilities have the right to Higher Education and to earn certification as do their typical peers. This study aimed to measure faculty members' attitudes about inclusion and teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education in Saudi universities. The study found relations among the variables of gender, the rank of Assistant Professor, the rank of Full Professor, and College of Education, and the variable of faculty willingness to interact with and teach students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education as measured by the IDP Scale. The current study found that gender was associated with one dimension of interaction, vulnerability, as female faculty showed lower levels of vulnerability than male faculty as female faculty showed lower levels of negative attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education. Also, the study found that the ranks of Assistant Professor and Full Professor related to two dimensions: discomfort in social interactions and a coping-succumbing framework which means faculty members at these ranks showed lower levels of negative attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education. The variable of the Lecturer rank was not significant on all four dimensions. This might be because most lecturers hold Master's degrees but may have less knowledge about disabilities than faculty members in other positions who hold PhD degrees. Also, the current study found colleges such as the College of Education were related with three dimensions: discomfort in social interactions, perceived level of information, and vulnerability which means faculty members in the College of Education had lower levels of negative attitudes toward teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education. Thus, faculty members in the College of Education might have more knowledge about disabilities as they show lower levels of negative attitudes toward disabilities than faculty members in other colleges in this study such as the College of Business or the College of Science.

One limitation that might be found in this study is that the sample size was rather small due to faculty members' busy schedules with their teaching and other related works, limiting their contribution to this study.

The researcher recommends that Saudi Arabian universities open their doors to students with all types of disabilities so they can be educated with their typical developing peers, considering the needs of students with disabilities and faculty training on how to provide accommodations for these students. One way to accomplish this is to establish a support center for individuals with disabilities where experts train faculty and staff members to support the learning of students with disabilities in Higher Education. Various researchers have mentioned that university faculty members need more training to support the Higher Education of students with disabilities (e.g., Aguirre et al., 2021; Guilbaud et al., 2021; Lipka et al., 2020). These claims support the current recommendations. Future researchers can also study different

variables that were not examined in this study. For examples, researchers might study the type of accommodations faculty members can provide to support students with mild intellectual disabilities in Higher Education in Saudi universities, examining the training that is provided to faculty members, examining disability support plans, or years of experience supporting individuals with disabilities, and studying student engagement across courses and classes.

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Appendix A – Interaction with Disabled Persons (IDP)

Please place ONE tick next to the question under the column that describes how you feel.

I disagree very much	I disagree somewhat	I disagree a little				I agree a little	I agree somewhat	I agree very much
			1	It is rewarding when I am able to help	1			
			2	It hurts me when they want to do something andcan't	2			
			3	I feel frustrated because I don't know how to help	3			
			4	Contact with a person with a disability reminds meof my own vulnerability	4			
			5	I wonder how I would feel if I had this disability	5			
			6	I feel ignorant about people with disabilities	6			
			7	I am grateful that I do not have such a burden	7			
			8	I try to act normally and ignore the disability	8			
			9	I feel uncomfortable and find it hard to relax	9			
			10	I am aware of the problems that people with disabilities face	10			
			11	I can't help staring at them	11			
			12	I feel unsure because I don't know how to behave	12			
			13	I admire their ability to cope	13			
			14	I don't pity them	14			
			15	After frequent contact, I find I just notice the person, not the disability	15			
			16	I feel overwhelmed with discomfort about my lack of disability	16			
			17	I am afraid to look at the person straight in theface	17			
			18	I tend to make contacts only brief and finish themas quickly as possible	18			
			19	I feel better with people with disabilities after Ihave discussed their disability with them	19			
			20	I dread the thought that I could eventually end uplike them	20			

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