

5-2015

# PARENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES INTO THE GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

Maitha Khalifa Ali Al Neyadi

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.uaeu.ac.ae/all\\_theses](https://scholarworks.uaeu.ac.ae/all_theses)

Part of the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Al Neyadi, Maitha Khalifa Ali, "PARENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES INTO THE GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS" (2015). *Theses*. 61.

[https://scholarworks.uaeu.ac.ae/all\\_theses/61](https://scholarworks.uaeu.ac.ae/all_theses/61)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at Scholarworks@UAEU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarworks@UAEU. For more information, please contact [fadl.musa@uaeu.ac.ae](mailto:fadl.musa@uaeu.ac.ae).

United Arab Emirates University

College of Education

Department of Special Education

PARENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH  
DISABILITIES INTO THE GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

Maitha Khalifa Ali Al Neyadi

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education (Special Education)

Under the Supervision of Dr. Hala Elhoweris

May 2015

## Declaration of Original Work

I, Maitha Al Neyadi, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this thesis entitled "*Parents Attitude Toward Inclusion Students With Disabilities into the General Education Classrooms*", hereby, solemnly declare that this thesis is an original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Dr. Hala Elhoweris, in the College of Education at UAEU. This work has not been previously formed as the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. The materials borrowed from other sources and included in my thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Copyright © 2015 Maitha Al Neyadi  
All Rights Reserved

## Approval of the Master Thesis

This Master Thesis is approved by the following Examining Committee Members:

- 1) Advisor (Committee Chair): Hala El Howeris

Title: Associate Professor

Department of Special Education

College of Education

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- 2) Member: Abdulaziz Al Saratawi

Title: Professor

Department of Special Education

College of Education

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) Member: Mohammed Al Zyoudi

Title: Associate Professor

Department of Special Education

College of Education

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

This Master Thesis is accepted by:

- 1) Dean, College of Education: Dr Jamal Al Nuaimi

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- 2) Dean, College of the Graduate Studies: Professor Nagi T. Wakim

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Copy \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

## Abstract

This study aims at examining parents' attitude toward including students with disabilities into the general education classrooms. The objectives of this study are threefold as follows: a) investigating parents' attitudes towards including children with disabilities in the general education classrooms, b) examining whether there is a difference in attitude between parents of children with and without disabilities, and c) examining the influence of the child's severity level on parents' attitudes toward inclusion. Participants were 100 parents ( 50 parents of children with disabilities from a rehabilitation centers, and 50 parents of children without disabilities). The research employed a quantitative analysis to answer the research questions. The results of this study indicated that overall parents' attitude toward inclusion is positive. Additionally, there were some differences in the attitudes between parents of children with and without disabilities. And finally, the results of this indicated that the child's disability type affect parents' attitudes toward inclusion. This study has some recommendations for inclusion practices in the school and future studies and research. As for research, the current study can be replicated with a focus on the attitudes of teachers, students, and administration toward inclusion in ADEC schools.

**Keywords:** inclusion, parents' attitudes, children with disabilities, disability severity level, UAE.

## Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

### اتجاهات أولياء الأمور نحو دمج طلاب ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في صفوف التعليم العام

#### الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة بشكل عام على معرفة اتجاهات أولياء الأمور نحو دمج الطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في صفوف التعليم العام. أهداف هذه الدراسة على النحو التالي: أ) معرفة اتجاهات أولياء الأمور نحو دمج الطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في صفوف التعليم العام، ب) فحص ما إذا كان هناك اختلاف في الاتجاهات ما بين آباء الأطفال المعاقين وغير المعاقين، و ج) فحص أثر مستوى شدة الإعاقة على مواقف الآباء تجاه الدمج. عينة الدراسة هي 100 ولي أمر، 50 منهم لأطفال من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة و50 ولي أمر لطلاب عاديين في المدارس التعليم العام. استخدم الباحث التحليل الكمي للإجابة على أسئلة البحث. أشارت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن اتجاهات أولياء الأمور إيجابية نحو دمج الطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في صفوف التعليم العام بالإضافة إلى ذلك أشارت نتائج هذه الدراسة إلى أن هناك بعض الاختلافات في الاتجاهات ما بين آباء الأطفال المعاقين وغير المعاقين نحو الدمج. كما بينت نتائج الدراسة أن شدة الإعاقة كان لها أثر على اتجاهات الوالدين نحو الدمج. لهذه الدراسة بعض التوصيات يمكن إدراجها في المدرسة والدراسات المستقبلية و البحوث. بالنسبة للأبحاث، يمكن تكرار هذه الدراسة الحالية مع التركيز على اتجاهات المعلمين والطلاب والإدارة نحو برامج الدمج في مدارس مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الدمج، اتجاهات اولياء الأمور، التربية الخاصة، الطلاب ذوي الاحتياجات

الخاصة، درجة الإعاقة، الإمارات العربية المتحدة.



## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Allah first and forever. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Hala Elhoweris for her endless directions and continuous encouragement from the beginning to the end. I wish also to express my sincere appreciation to my committee members Dr Mohammed Al Zyoudi and Dr Abdulaziz Al Saratawi.

Special thanks are due to Abu Dhabi Education Counsel (ADEC) for the approval letter of the survey that enabled me to distribute and collect data from schools. In specifically the Special Need Department and the specialists in special education and teachers. In addition, I wish to thank all participants who completed the survey. Without their assistance, the thesis would not have been completed.

A warm thank you is extended to Zayed Higher Organization Centre for their support throughout the process to complete the study and the worthless information that they provide me with to make this valuable study. My thanks are extended to Ahmed Taha (Research Specialist) at the Library Research Support Desk for providing the relevant literature and assisted in proofreading and guidelines. I would like to thank all my colleagues in the Master degree programme in the Collage of Education for making this phase of my life a memorial stage, which I will never forget.

Finally, I would thank my family. My sister and brothers for always treating me as special sister with their encouragement to have and achieve the special goals of my graduate study. My mother who makes me blessed with her non-stopped prayer. To my special family and husband for their kind and emotional support to finish such hard and long phase of this thesis. Without all of you, this thesis would not be completed.

## Dedication

*For my beloved Mariam,*

*A sample of challenge, joy, bravery, and great expectations.*

*For Father,*

*A soul that surrounded me with kindness and wisdom*

*For Mother,*

*A figure of morality, idealism, and treasure of sympathy*

*For Brothers and Sisters,*

*A bone of strength, I shared my precious childhood memories and dreams with them.*

*For my Teachers,*

*An endless care and love to make me the best person I could ever be.*

*For the Generous People,*

*For sharing me the love of our country the United Arab Emirates.*

*For the Future,*

*Which I create its bath, and which I am and ready take first step toward it.*

## Table of Contents

Title .....	i
Declaration of Original Work .....	ii
Copyright .....	iii
Approval of the Master Thesis.....	iv
Abstract.....	vi
Title and Abstract (in Arabic) .....	vii
Acknowledgements.....	viii
Dedication .....	ix
Table of Contents.....	x
List of Tables .....	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
1.1. An Overview .....	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem .....	9
1.3. Purpose of the Study .....	10
1.4. Research Questions .....	11
1.5. Significance of the study:.....	11
1.6. Definition of Terms and Acronyms .....	12
1.7. Organization of the study .....	14
1.8. Limitation of the Study .....	15
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	16
2.1. Introduction .....	16
2.2. Theoretical Framework .....	16
2.3. Parents' Attitudes Towards Inclusion .....	19
2.3.1. Attitude of Parents of children with and without Disabilities .....	19
2.3.2. Attitude of Parents of Children with Disabilities.....	19
2.3.3. Attitude of Parents of Children without Disabilities.....	21
2.3.4. The Impact of the Severity of the Disability on Parents' Attitudes.....	24
2.4. Summary .....	28
Chapter 3: Methodology .....	29
3.1. Introduction .....	29
3.2. Research Design.....	29
3.3. The Participant and the Sampling Technique .....	30
3.3.1. Procedures.....	30
3.3.2. The Sample Demographic Features .....	31
3.3.3. Survey Instrument.....	33
3.4. Validity.....	36
3.5. Reliability.....	36
3.6. Ethical consideration .....	37
3.7. Limitations and Delimitations .....	37
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings .....	38

4.1. Introduction .....	38
4.2. First Research Question .....	38
4.3. The Second Research Question.....	41
4.4. The Third Research Question.....	44
Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations.....	47
5.1. Introduction .....	47
5.2. Discussion .....	47
5.3. Recommendations .....	53
5.3.1. Recommendation for Practices .....	53
5.3.2. Recommendation for Future Studies .....	53
Bibliography .....	55
Appendix A: Letters of Consent .....	59
A.1. ADEC Consent Form .....	59
A.2. Parent Consent Form.....	60
Appendix B: Questionnaire Survey .....	61

## List of Tables

Table 1: Participants' demographic information .....	32
Table 2: Types of disabilities of the participants' children.....	32
Table 3: Participants' response ranked based on the mean value.....	41
Table 4: Cumulative mean of responses .....	42
Table 5: Participants' response for the survey items .....	44
Table 6: Percentages of the disabilities parents responses.....	45
Table 7: Percentages of parents without disabilities responses .....	46

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1. An Overview

According to the constitution of the United Arab Emirates in 1971 (article 17), “*Education is a fundamental factor for the progress of the society. Education is mandatory in its primary stage and is free of charge at all stages in the UAE. The law lays down the necessary plans for disseminating and spreading everywhere all levels of education and for eradicating illiteracy*”. In addition, in 2006 HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE President, issued the Federal Law No. (29) 2006 that aims to protect the rights of people with special needs. This Law intent to provide equal care, rights and opportunities for people with special needs in education, health care, training and rehabilitation. The law aims to ensure the right of individuals with special needs in receiving all appropriate services within the limits of their abilities and capabilities (Ministry of Social Affairs Website, 2012).

Although several countries around the world including the US, Canada, and UK make it illegal to discriminate against individual with disabilities, several countries in the Arab World are still lagging behind. Most of the Arab world countries do not passed laws to protect the right of children with disabilities. Before 1971, students with special needs do not receive any kind of education services in the UAE. Moreover, since the establishment of the United Arab Emirates there were no federal laws that have been passed to ensure the right of students with the special needs.

Education in the Middle East has captured the interest of many educational professionals and policy makers during the last three decades. During the 1980s, the United Arab Emirates has witnessed significant changes and reforms in the field of

education. Gaad (2004) indicated that the field of special education in the UAE has experienced dramatic changes especially with regard to the inclusion movement that calls on educating students with special needs in the general education classroom. In the UAE the Ministry of Education (MOE) is involved with the education of children with special needs, through public and private schooling system (Gaad, 2004).

The services that are offered to students with disabilities in the UAE are many and varied, such as special classrooms in public schools, rehabilitation, and welfare centres for children with disabilities. These bundles of disabled-oriented services are furnished by the Ministry of Social Affairs, private special schools, day care centres, and non-profit and voluntary non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In 2008, the MOE has adopted the following definition of inclusion, which states that inclusion is “*The education of students with special needs with the non-disabled students in a regular classroom, either in part or whole*” (Ministry of Education Strategic Objectives, 2008).

Since that time, the MOE encourages all educational organization and institution in the UAE to include children with the special needs in the regular education classroom. Although the students with the special needs have received basic services in general education classrooms, the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities was parietal. During the 21st century, the field of education in the UAE has witnessed a revolution in the area of special education by establishing Zayed Higher Organization for Humanitarian Care (ZHO) and Abu Dhabi Educational Council (ADEC).

In 2004, the establishment of Zayed Higher organization for Humanitarian Care (ZHO) gives children with disabilities an opportunity to receive different type of special education services. In 2006, ADEC (Abu Dhabi Educational Council) in

Abu Dhabi made significant changes in the field of education in Abu Dhabi region. Specifically by including several children with special needs in the general education classrooms. In 2008, ADEC and Zayed Higher Organization for Humanitarian Care signed an agreement of integrating children with special needs into the general education classrooms.

Since then, ADEC and ZHO make a commitment to working in partnership with each other to support young people with disabilities to achieve their educational goals. According to this agreement, forty students must be transferred from Zayed Higher organization to ADEC schools during academic year 2008-2009. Moreover, both Zayed Higher Organization (ZHO) and ADEC have agreed to ensure that every opportunity is given to students with disabilities to access a quality education. Through this agreement, ADEC spends more money and time and made significant efforts to make the experience of including children with special needs in the general education classrooms a successful and an outstanding experience.

Cross- cultural research has been extended to encompass the Arab world according to the UNESCO report (2011). Some of the Arab countries, such as Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates have signed an UN agreement in 1991 to adopt the basic principles of special education for children with special needs. Furthermore, to protect the rights of individual with disabilities by contributing to the policies, legislation, administration and organization, to provide equal educational opportunities for individual with disabilities. It was meant to recapitulate what was more of baby step towards special education in the 1960 and 1970. The Arab states started developing programs in 1991, which included methods to ensure the training



of educators, making them well equipped in the field of special education El-Zein (2009).

In 1975, the US congress has passed the law “Education for All Handicapped Children Act” (Public Law 94-142) which makes vital changes in the field of special education in the United States. The law has been amended several times from 1975 to 2004. The most recent amendments renamed the law as the Individual with disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Individual with disabilities Education Act requires that students with disabilities to be educated in the general education classrooms. The remarkable provision in IDEA is that all children between 3 and 21 years old regardless of the type and severity of the disability must receive free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

The main six principles of IDEA include zero rejection which requires that all children with the disabilities to be included in the general education classrooms; non-discriminatory testing which requires that all testing to be free from any kind of race, ethnicity, or cultural bias; least restrictive environment. Free appropriate education for all children with disabilities; IEP, due process and parent’s participation.

The least restrictive environment principle emphasized that children with disabilities should receive their education with their nondisabled peers to the greatest extent possible. The provision of the law also gives parents an opportunity to be involved in their children education by having the right to challenge the school decision (Margo & Thomas, 2010). The term “inclusion” as identified as a philosophy that brings diverse students, families, educators, and community members together to create school and other social institutions based on acceptance, belonging, and community (Bloom, Perlmutter, & Burell, 1999).

According to Salend (2005), there are four main principles for the successful inclusion as the following:

- 1) The first principle is that, all learners and equal access Salend (2005) defines this principle by "placing all the learners together in general education classrooms regardless of their learning and ability, economic status, gender, learning style, ethnicity, cultural and religious background, religion, family structure, and sexual orientation".
- 2) The second principle is *individual strength, needs and diversity*. According to Salend, educators have to work hard to reach the effective inclusion by accepting the blend of students that they have in their classroom and to take in their consideration the factors that shape those students, such as the disability, race, linguistic background, gender and economic status. "In inclusive classrooms all students are valued as individuals capable of learning and contributing to society. They are taught to appreciate diversity and to value and learn from each other's similarities and differences" Salend (2005).
- 3) The third principle is reflective practices and differentiated instruction. Effective inclusion requires reflective educators to examine their attitudes and beliefs. Additionally, to have effective inclusive educators are expected to differentiate their assessment, teaching methods and techniques, classroom management practices to meet each student individual needs and strengths. The inclusive classroom must be led by a flexible, knowledgeable, thoughtful teacher who adjusts her/his teaching instruction and resource and even the assessment to meet all learners needs and strengths. The Third principle is based on teacher practice, which is driven by their attitude toward their students with special needs.

In the UAE, several studies were conducted to investigate teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Gaad, 2004; Bradshaw, Tennant & Lydiatt, 2004; Lewis, Chard and Scott, 1994). Results of these studies indicated that teachers are threatened by having children with special need in the regular classrooms (Gaad, 2004). Although several countries around the world such as the USA and U.K. have taken a positive approach toward inclusion, teachers in the UAE still lagging behind as they show fewer acceptances towards inclusion (Bradshaw, Tennant, & Lydiatt, 2004).

- 4) The fourth principle is community and collaboration. The successful inclusion involves the educators and other professionals, families, students, and community agencies all work together (Salend, 2005). All these parties should share their thoughts, ideas, decisions, skills and experiences to provide all learners with the best quality of learning. Research has also shown that parent's attitudes are an important factor that affects the success of inclusion (Lewis, Chard and Scott, 1994). Indeed, the fourth principal which has been discussed by Salend (2008) emphasized the role of parent's involvement and participation in having a successful inclusion. Indeed, parents represent the strongest chain in the community. Throughout the years in the U.S, parents play a key role in the field of special education. Indeed, American parents work together in groups to bring about changes in the lives of their children with disabilities Salend (2008).

Parent attitude plays a vital role in the process or the decision making regarding integrating children with the special need in the general classrooms. The role of the parents in the history of U.S.A had been positive toward including their children into the general classrooms and in making a

difference in the lives of their children with disabilities. In addition, parents significantly contributed to the establishment and changes of a number of legislations in the USA (Salend, 2008). Parents' attitude is critical and essential when it comes to the inclusion practices. It plays an important role in the process of inclusion in the school (Prado 2002).

Many researchers in the field have reported that parents' attitudes differ when the inclusion of their own children is in question. For example, Hilbert (2014) found that parents of children with and without disabilities agree, in general, that inclusion is a positive educational practice for children with and without disabilities. Also, Positive attitudes toward inclusion for parents of children with more severe disabilities seem to be the norm as reported by Turnbull et al. (2002). For example, several studies of parents of students with severe disabilities in integrated programs from preschool to high school supported their child's placement and expressed satisfaction with the educational outcomes, in particular the social benefits (Gallagher et al., 2000; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; McDonnell, 1987; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1998; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, & Morrison, 1995).

Moreover, Leyser and Kirk (2004) surveyed parents of children with disabilities regarding their attitudes toward inclusion. The results of this study indicated that while some parents supported inclusion or mainstreaming for their children with disabilities, other parents feared possible isolation socially because their children are different from the general education students. On the other hand, several studies (e.g., Gallagher et al., 2013, Hilbert., 2014) have indicated that there

is a difference between parents of children with and without disabilities attitudes toward including their children into the general education classroom Hilbert (2014).

Although many researchers have reported that parents of children with disabilities hold positive attitudes toward inclusion, some researchers have reported that some parents had doubts about inclusion. For instance, the findings of Bennett and Gallagher's study (2013) on parents of students with disabilities are concerned with the availability of the qualified staff, services and resources. In addition, Gallagher (2013) the parents also worried that their children would not receive as much instruction in the general education classroom as they would with more individualized instruction in a special education classroom.

Many studies have indicated that parents' attitude toward inclusion is influenced by many variables such as the nature of their children disability, severity of the disability, parent's educational level. In fact, Stoiber, Gettinger, and Goetz (1998) found that socioeconomic status, education level, marital status and number of children were associated with beliefs about inclusion. More positive beliefs were found for parents with college education compared to high school education, parents with one or two children compared to those with four or more children, and married parents compared to single parents (Hilbert, 2014).

Regarding the severity level of the disability, several studies have examined the impact of the child's severity level on parents' attitudes. Results of these studies have indicated that the child's severity level is an important factor that affects parents' attitudes toward inclusion. Some studies have reported that parents of children sever disabilities have positive attitude toward inclusion. (e.g., Gallagher et al., 2000; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; McDonnell, 1987; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1998; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, & Morrison, 1995). A few

investigators, however, suggested that some parents of children with severe disabilities do not favour inclusion (Palmer, Fuller, Arora, & Nelson, 2001).

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Examining parents' attitudes toward inclusion is critical to have a successful inclusion program (Salend, 2008). Although there are several studies around the world examining parents' attitude toward inclusion (e.g., Lewis, Chard and Scott, 1994; Palmer, Fuller, Arora, & Nelson, 2001; Gallagher et al., 2000; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; McDonnell, 1987; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1998; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, & Morrison, 1995 Bradshaw, Tennant & Lydiatt, 2004, AlAhbabi, 2006, Jung, 2007, Gaad 2007, ElZein, 2009, Usman, 2011).

A few studies have investigated parents' attitudes toward inclusion in the Arab World. For instance, ElZein (2009) conducted a study on 15 parents in to examine their attitude toward mainstreaming children with special needs into the regular private elementary schools in Sidon-Lebanon. The Respondents showed a positive attitude towards the various aspects of inclusion, types and levels of inclusion.

In the UAE, studies that focused on parents of children with disabilities examined different issues including parental stress and psychological distress among parents of children with mental retardation in the UAE by (Khamis, 2006). Moreover, Crabtree in 2006 examined family responses to the social inclusion of their children with developmental disabilities in the UAE. Although several research studies have examined UAE principals and teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (e.g. AlAhbabi, 2006, Jung, 2007, Gaad 2007, ElZein, 2009, Usman, 2011, Al Zyoudi, 2006) studies have been found in the UAE that have investigated parents' attitudes

toward including their children with disabilities into the general education classrooms.

The results that generated from the previous studies on parents' attitude were inconsistent. More specifically, finding of some studies have showed that parents' hold positive attitude (Bradshaw, Tennant, & Lydiatt, 2004; Salend, 2008; ElZein, 2009; Gallagher et al., 2000; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; McDonnell, 1987; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1998; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, & Morrison, 1995), whereas some findings reveals that some parents showed negative attitude toward (Palmer, Fuller, Arora, & Nelson, 2001).

Nevertheless, the objectives of this study were threefold as follows **i)** investigating parents' attitudes towards including children with disabilities in the general education classrooms, **ii)** examining whether there is a difference in attitude between parents of children with and without disabilities, and **iii)** examining the influence of the child's severity level on parents' attitudes toward inclusion.

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

Previous research (Lewis, Chard, & Scott, 1994) has shown that parent's attitudes are an important factor that affects the success of inclusion. Although there are several research studies that have examined principals and teachers' attitudes toward inclusion in the UAE (e.g., AlAhbabi, 2006; Jung, 2007; Gaad 2007; ElZein, 2009, Usman, 2011; Al Zyoudi, 2006; Elhoeris & Alsheikh, 2006). No studies have been found investigating parents' attitudes toward inclusion the child with disabilities in normal classroom.

The objectives of this study were threefold as follows: **i)** investigating parents' attitudes towards including children with disabilities in the general education classrooms, **ii)** examining whether there is a difference in attitude between parents of

children with and without disabilities, and **iii**) examining the influence of the child's severity level on parents' attitudes toward inclusion.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

To investigate parents' attitude toward inclusion and the influence of the child's severity of disability level on parents' attitude toward inclusion the research questions of this study were as follows:

- 1) What are UAE parents' attitudes toward inclusion?
- 2) Is there any significant difference between parents' attitudes of children with and without disabilities toward inclusion?
- 3) Does the child's disabilities severity level affect UAE parents' attitude toward inclusion?

#### **1.5. Significance of the study:**

Since the inclusion agreement in 2007 between Zayed Higher Organization and Abu Dhabi Educational Council, the number of individuals with special needs is increasing in the general education general classrooms year after year. Although the Federal Law No. (29) Of 2006 in the UAE has mandated that all students with disabilities should be educated with their non-disabled peers in the general education classroom. Several factors have delayed the implementation of successful inclusion in the UAE public schools (Gaad, 2004).

These factors include cultural values and beliefs, funding, teacher qualifications, and both parents' and teachers' attitude towards inclusion. Indeed, previous research has shown that parent's attitudes affect the success of inclusion and their involvement in their children education (Salend, 2008). As the implementation of inclusive practices continues in ADEC schools, so does the need



to ensure its effectiveness. Examining parents' attitudes toward inclusion is critical to have a successful inclusion program. Therefore, it is important to examine the attitude of parents toward including their children into the general education classrooms.

Although several previous studies have been conducted around the world to examine parents' attitudes toward inclusion, there are very little research that have been carried out to investigate parents' attitudes towards inclusion in the Arab world. For instance, El-Zein (2009) conducted a study on 15 parents in to examine their attitude toward mainstreaming children with special needs into two regular private elementary schools in Sidon-Lebanon. The respondents showed a positive attitude towards the various aspects of inclusion, types and levels of inclusion. And the researcher suggested having a study to investigate parents' attitudes towards Inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools. In addition, several studies have examined parents' attitudes toward inclusion. The results of these studies were still inconsistent. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine parents' attitude toward inclusion and the influence of the child's severity level on the UAE parents' attitude toward inclusion.

## **1.6. Definition of Terms and Acronyms**

- i. *Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC)* - This Council was established in accordance with law No. 24 of 2005, issued by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the UAE President, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi. The Council seeks to develop education and educational institutions in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, implement innovative educational policies, plans and programs that aim to

improve education, and support educational institutions and staff to achieve the objectives of national development in accordance with the highest international standards (ADEC official website, 2014).

- ii. *Attitude*: A mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's responses, which are related to own objects and situations (Allport, 1935).
- iii. *Disabilities*: Impairment, any loss, or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function. A disability is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. Whereas, a handicap is a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from impairment or a disability, that prevents the fulfilment of a role that is considered normal (depending on age, sex and social and cultural factors) for that individual. (Al Ahababi, 2006).
- iv. *Person with Disability*: Any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment (Henley, 2002).
- v. *Inclusion*: The education of students with special needs with the non-disabled students in a regular classroom, either in part or whole. (Ministry of Education Strategic Objectives, 2008).
- vi. *Federal Law No. (29) 2006*: The Law that issued by HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE President, to concern with the protection of the rights of people with special needs.

- vii. *Zayed Higher Organization for Humanitarian Care (ZHO)*: This non-profit organization established in 2004 by H.H Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan to ensure that the children with disabilities in United Arab Emirates will have the opportunity to receive appropriate special education services.

## **1.7. Organization of the study**

This study consists of five chapters. The Chapter One presents the history of disable inclusion into general classrooms. It discusses also the importance of examining parents' attitude towards such inclusion. The essential elements for a successful inclusion are discussed. The problem statement, research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study, and definitions of the terms of the study are covered.

Chapter Two contains four sub-sections. The first section starts by discussing the theoretical framework that attempts to explain attitudes and its impact on human behavior. The second section focuses on the attitude of parents of children with and without disabilities toward inclusion. The third section examines the effect of the severity of the disability on parents' attitude toward including their children with disabilities into the general education classrooms. And Finally, the last section summarizes the literature review.

Chapter Three includes the sub-sections that deal with research design, questionnaire instrument, questionnaire validity and reliability, data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations, and limitation and delimitation of the study. Chapter Four presents the findings of the study and provides an analysis of those findings. Chapter Five includes the following sections: summary of the

research study, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for policy and practice.

### **1.8. Limitation of the Study**

The study was also limited to cycle one school (elementary schools). So the findings may not be generalized to cycles 2 and 3. A self-administered, paper and pencil questionnaire was used. This may indicate that some respondents might not have taken the survey seriously to fill out the questionnaire properly or that they did not give the actual image of the participant child's school because the questionnaire was distributed and collected by school administration. Finally, the questionnaire as a self-reported instrument, it can be affected by the perceptions, feelings, personal judgments, and biases of the respondents or the immediate situations they were in.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1. Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to review studies that tackled educational issues related to the inclusion of special needs students into the general education classroom. In fact, including students with disabilities into the general education classroom is a controversial and hotly debated issue all over the world.

This Chapter is divided into four main sections.

- 1) The first section starts by discussing the theoretical framework that attempts to explain attitudes and its impact on human behavior.
- 2) The second section focus on the attitude of parents of children with and without disabilities toward inclusion.
- 3) The third section examines the effect of the severity of the disability on parents' attitude toward including their children with disabilities into the general education classrooms.
- 4) And Finally, the last section summarizes the literature review.

### 2.2. Theoretical Framework

The term '*attitude*' has been identified and discussed in several studies. Attitude is a concept that is commonly used in our daily lives (Albarracin, Zanna, Johnson, & Kumkale, 2005). According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993, p.155), the term attitude can be defined as "*A psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour*". It is extremely difficult to define attitude due to its complex nature. Allport (1935, p.810) stated that attitude is "*A mental and neural state of readiness, organized through*

*experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related*".

These definitions indicate that *attitude* is a response to something and is formed through life experiences. So, from the behavioural perspective '*attitude*' is defined as "A response to stimulus that can be formed through interaction". In addition to that, the term "*attitude*' according to the psychologist Cherry (2014), can be defined as the learned tendency of an individual to evaluate or analyze the thing in a certain manner. According to research, attitude is primarily composed of three different components including emotional component, cognitive component, and behavioral component Cherry (2014).

Experiences play a very important role in formatting attitudes. According to Edward Thorndike's theory, Connectionism, learning is a formation of a connection between stimulus and response (Mergel, 2008). Mergel also indicated that based on the "law of effect" when a connection between a stimulus and response is positively rewarded it will be strengthened and when it is negatively rewarded it will be weakened. Also, Ajzen (1999) proposes that the development of attitudes is closely linked to a person's beliefs. He added that attitudes are a function of beliefs but both concepts are defined differently. Ajzen also claimed that attitude refers to a person's favourable or unfavourable evaluation of a certain object while beliefs represent the information a person has about the object.

Since attitudes are a function of beliefs, meaning that beliefs about an attribute of an object contribute to the attitude held towards that object. Therefore, beliefs about inclusion may directly affect this attitude. For example, if parents believe that inclusion is inappropriate or has negative effects on their children learning, their attitude is more likely to be negative as a result of this belief. In

contrast, if parents believe that inclusion has several advantages, their attitude is more likely to be positive as a result of that belief. As people accrue beliefs about inclusion, they form an attitude toward it.

In addition, several theories discussed the attitudes and its effect on human behaviors. For instance, Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) found that there is high and positive relationship between the attitude toward any variable and our behavior toward it. As they have shown in their reasearch that,all behavior involves a choice, be it a choice between performing or not performing a given action or a choice among several qualitatively or quantitatively different action alternatives.

According to the attitude behavior- theory, the attitude of the individuals are more likely to drive their behavior. According to this theory, the behavioral intentions are highly influenced by the attitude towards the outcome that would be caused due to certain behavior or the evaluation of risk and benefits that the outcome would bring. In simple words, we can say that, there exist a positive relationship between the attitude and human's behavior(Busph,2013).

Also, Cherry ( 2014) indicated that attitdues combined with social norms and rules highly govern human's behavior. In the area of inclusion, there are several studies that have investigated the relationship between parents' involmnet and attitude toward inclusion. Research has shown that parent's attitudes affect the success of inclusion and their involmnet in their children education (Salend, 2008).Ferthermore, Salend emphasized the role of parent's involvement and participation in having a successful inclusion.

Indeed, the parents represent the strongest chain in the community to play an important role in changing the educational policies set for special needs children. In Spain, parents were involved in the normalization project that was started in October

1991 (Marchesi, 1994). Throughout the years in the USA, parents play a key role in the field of special education. Indeed, American parents work together in groups to bring about changes in the lives of their children with disabilities Salend (2008). Since parent's attitudes is one of the most important variables that impact successful inclusion. This study, therefore, is examining parents' attitudes toward inclusion.

### **2.3. Parents' Attitudes Towards Inclusion**

#### **2.3.1. Attitude of Parents of children with and without Disabilities**

Focusing on the parents views about the inclusion is very important because parents are playing a significant role in the inclusion movement. Many research studies have investigated the impact of parents of children with and without disabilities on the inclusion. Although Hilbert (2014) found that parents of children with and without disabilities agree, in general, that inclusion is a positive educational practice for children with and without disabilities, several studies have indicated that there is a difference between parents of children with and without disabilities attitudes toward including their children into the general education classroom Hilbert (2014). In the following section, parents of children with disabilities and parent of children without disabilities attitudes toward inclusion will be discussed in separate paragraphs.

#### **2.3.2. Attitude of Parents of Children with Disabilities**

Previous research studies indicated that parents are typically quite supportive of including their children with disabilities into general education classrooms (Green and Shinn, 1994). For instance, Mylnek (1982) found that parents endorsed positive general statements about including students from pullout programs to general education classroom (Green and Shinn, 1995). Similarly, Abramson (1982) found



that 72% of their sample agreed that educating children with special needs and children without disabilities together would improve their academic performance. However, some parents were more reluctant to include their own children into the regular classroom (Green et al., 1995). Only 14% believed their own children's academic performance could be improved in inclusive classrooms (Green et al., 1995).

In addition to that, Bennett and Gallagher (2013) collected data from seven urban high schools in Ontario to investigate parents' of children with disabilities, teachers, and peers' attitudes toward the inclusion of high school students with intellectual disabilities (ID) in the general school and workplace. The survey was completed by a number of parents of students with intellectual disabilities, teachers, educational assistants, and other school professional . This research study does not only focus on the inclusion of students with ID in school/workplace but also it focuses on the participants' confidence/comfort level in teaching and working with individuals with disabilities.

Finding of this study showed that the participants including students with intellectual disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, teachers, educational assistants, job coaches, peers and community employers share similar positive values related to inclusion and the rights of students to appropriate educational program delivery. Generally, job coaches and parents hold the most positive attitudes and beliefs toward inclusion. In another study, Downing and Peckham-Hardain et. al.(2007) interviewed a number of parents of students with moderate to severe disabilities to examine their attitudes toward inclusion. Results of this study indicated that parents of children with disabilities indicated that students with

moderate to severe disabilities need to have general education students as role models for social and academic behaviors.

Although many researchers have reported that parents of children with disabilities hold positive attitudes toward inclusion, some researchers have reported that some parents had doubts about inclusion. For instance, findings of Bennett and Gallagher's study (2013) argue that parents of students with disabilities are concerned with the availability of the qualified staff, services and resources. Moreover, Leyser and Kirk (2004) surveyed parents of children with disabilities regarding their attitudes toward inclusion. The results of this study indicated that while some parents supported inclusion or mainstreaming for their children with disabilities, other parents feared possible isolation socially because their children are different from the general education students.

The parents also worried that their children would not receive as much instruction in the general education classroom as they would with more individualized instruction in a special education classroom. Also, some parents believed that general education teachers are unable to make adequate accommodations in the general education curriculum for their children. In addition to that, many parents feared stigmatization from general education teachers and parents of general education students. Ultimately, some groups of parents supported partial inclusion where disabled students receive special education for part of the school day and general education for the rest day.

### **2.3.3. Attitude of Parents of Children without Disabilities**

Throughout the years several studies have investigated parents' of children without disabilities attitudes toward inclusions. Results of these studies were

inconsistent. For instance, Peck, Staub, Gallucci, and Schwartz (2004) conducted a study consisting of 389 participating parents of non-disabled students in six elementary schools (including fourth through sixth grades) representing four districts in the Pacific Northwest of the USA.

These researchers found that the majority of parents (87% of respondents) were supportive of a classroom environment in which disabled children were included in general education classrooms with their children. In addition, Downing and Peckham-Hardin (2007, p.21) interviewed parents of students with moderate to severe disabilities to find out their children views about inclusion. The parents claimed that their students were "happier, more independent, and more motivated to go to school [and] participate in class" when included in the general education classroom.

On the other hand, several parents of children without disabilities reported that they have some concerns about inclusion and its impact on their children. For instance, Peck, et. al. (2004) conducted a study, which consisting of 389 participating parents of non-disabled to examine parent attitude toward inclusion of the child with disabilities in normal classroom environment. Results of this study indicated that parents who were not supportive have some expressed concerns about inclusion in two areas **i)** the perception that the teacher focused more on the children with disabilities than on the children without disabilities, and **ii)** behavioral disruptions by the children with disabilities.

Peck, Staub, Gallucci, and Schwartz (2004) conducted a study and the results of the study concerning the impact of inclusion on the nondisabled child revealed that 78% of parents believed that being in an inclusive classroom had no effect of their children's academic progress a twenty two percent of parents indicated there

will be a decrease on individual time with the classroom teacher. Parent's perception of the impact of inclusion on their child's social emotional development was generally positive. Sixty seven percent of parents reported an increase of acceptance of differences among people and 65% reported an increase of acceptance of differences among people in terms of behavior and appearance; 29% reported increase on self-esteem; and 87% of parents reported a positive impact in relationships with peers with severe disabilities.

Reported responses on the impact of inclusion on the classroom were either positive or neutral. Sixty four percent of the responses on the general attitudes towards inclusion were positive; 26% were neutral; and 10% were negative. Seventy three percent of parents indicated that they would enroll in an inclusive classroom if given the opportunity; 18% did not know; and 9% responded that they would not. Sixty percent of the responding parents included narrative comments.

The themes reflected on parent's responses were that parents described a social benefit on their own child. Negative parents views of inclusion reflected a strong concern about behavioral disruption. These narratives made evident that many parents did not see academic and social learning to be closely connected. Also, some parents believed that scarce resources were unfairly allocated to children with disabilities.

According to Yona Leysera; Rea Kirk,(2004)there were different variables that affected parents' views about inclusion. For example, the type of disability, children age, parents type (e.g., parents of children receiving special education services for only a few years, parents who did not know their child's placement, and parents of students who were not in an integrated setting). Parents of students who

were not in an integrated setting expressed more supportive views regarding inclusion.

In addition, parents' educational level influenced their attitudes. Parents with college education believed more on the benefits of inclusion and parents with higher educational level negatively evaluated the mainstreaming teacher skills and their support to inclusion was negative. Moreover, some parents perceived special education teachers to be more skilled to instruct students with special needs and therefore, showed support for placement in special education or mainstream classrooms over inclusion.

#### **2.3.4. The Impact of the Severity of the Disability on Parents' Attitudes**

Palmer and Nelson (2001) see that parents have a vital role when it's come to any educational decisions in general, as well as, for the parents of students with severe disabilities toward inclusion movement. As it has been reported earlier, previous researchers have reported that the severity of the disability has an impact on parent's attitudes toward inclusion.

For instance, the study of Palmer and Nelson shows that there are three classifications among the parents of children whose disabilities are severe, as follows **1)** The first group have children who place a high value on socialization as an educational goal; **2)** The second group of parents have children who display relatively higher cognitive skills, fewer behaviour problems and fewer characteristics requiring specialized services; and **3)** The third group composed of parents whose children have spent more time in general education class environment. This study explored the views of parents of children with severe disabilities who were being educated in traditional special day class settings. Results of this study indicated that

the third group of parents whose children have spent more time in general education class environment are more likely to have positive perceptions of inclusion.

In another study by Slone and Shoshanna (2007) parents of students with disabilities showed positive attitude towards inclusion. they believe that enhancing their children affectively, socially, emotionally and academically. In addition, they believe that, their children are granted opportunities to interact with their peers, increase confidence and accommodate with the society. Although, Hilbert et. al., (2014), found that parents of children with and without disabilities agree, in general, that inclusion is a positive educational practice for children with and without disabilities. Parental optimism decreases when children with challenging behaviors are placed in an inclusive environment. More specifically, parents of children with and without disabilities are not as supportive of inclusion placements formore moderate-to-severe disabilities, emotional impairments and cognitive impairments.

Positive attitudes of parents of children with severe disabilities toward inclusion seem to be the norm as reported by Turnbull et al. (2002). For example, several parents of students with severe disabilities in integrated programs from preschool to high school supported their child's placement and expressed satisfaction with the educational outcomes and the social benefits (Gallagher et al., 2000; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; McDonnell, 1987; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1998; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, & Morrison, 1995). On the other hand, some investigatorshave suggested that some parents of children with severe disabilities do not favour inclusion (Palmer, Fuller, Arora, & Nelson, 2001).

The evidence presented suggests that many parents were in favour of inclusive education. Additionally, Hanline and Halvorsen (1989) identified six areas of pre-transition concerns for parents including safety; attitudes of other students;

staff and program quality; transportation; district commitment; and potential for failure. Other concerns mentioned by parents of children in special programs included worries about possible verbal and physical abuse by peers, social isolation, and loss or reduction of services and of the quality of instruction (McDonnell, 1987). Also, Palmer et al. (2001) reported that parents were concerned that the severity of the child's disability may preclude benefits from inclusion and that inclusion would overburden general education teachers or students and that many children were too behaviorally disruptive and could hurt others.

Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994 found that parents of children with and without disabilities agree, in general, that inclusion is a positive educational practice for children with and without disabilities. However, parents of children with and without disabilities are not as supportive of inclusion placements for more moderate-to-severe disabilities, emotional impairments and cognitive impairments. This relationship is critical because one would assume that a parent of a child with disability that supports inclusion for their children would be supportive of the inclusion of other children with disabilities, but this may not be the case. Previous researchers cautioned against the use of "one-size-fits-all" approach regarding inclusion (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994) because of different outcomes for different children.

Regarding the impact of the disabilities category or the type of disabilities on parents attitudes, parents were found to hold different attitudes toward inclusion according to their children type of disabilities. Generally speaking, several previous studies have indicated that families of children with and without disabilities enrolled in inclusive settings have positive attitudes toward inclusion (Guralink, 1994; Peck et al., 2004; Palmer, 2001; Leyser, Yona, & Kirk, Rea, 2004; Hilbert, 2014). Other

researchers have found that parents' attitudes differed when the inclusion of their own children is in question (Green et al,1995).

For instance, Kasari, Freeman, Bauminger, and Alkin (1999) reported that parent perspectives were influenced by diagnosis, age, and current placement of their children. They have found that parents of children with Down syndrome were more likely to support inclusion (full time placement), whereas parents of children with autism were more likely to endorse mainstreaming (part-time placement). Whereas parents of younger children, and parents of children in inclusive settings were more positive toward inclusion than were parents of older children or parents of children currently in self-contained special education. Also, previously Jenkinson (1998), however, reported a significant association between current school placement and parent preferences.

Parents whose children were in mainstream settings preferred mainstreaming, while parents whose children were in special schools preferred this setting. Stoiber, Gettinger, and Goetz (1998) also found that socioeconomic status (education level), marital status and number of children were associated with beliefs about inclusion. More positive beliefs were found for parents with college education compared to high school education, parents with one or two children compared to those with four or more children, and married parents compared to single parents. As the implementation of inclusive practices continues, so does the need to ensure its effectiveness. Examining parents' attitudes toward inclusion is critical to have a successful inclusion program .



## 2.4. Summary

It is apparent from the review of the previous literature that parents' attitudes toward inclusion is an important factor to investigate. Also, findings of previous research studies that investigated parents' attitudes toward inclusion were inconsistent. For example, findings of some studies have showed that parents' hold positive attitude (Bradshaw, Tennant & Lydiatt, 2004; Salend, 2008; ElZein, 2009; Gallagher et al., 2000; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; McDonnell, 1987; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1998; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, & Morrison, 1995), whereas some findings reveals that some parents showed negative attitude toward (Palmer, Fuller, Arora, & Nelson, 2001). Regarding the severity level, several studies have examined the impact of the child's severity level on parents' attitudes. Results of these studies have indicated that the child's severity level is an important factor that affects parents' attitudes toward inclusion.

Moreover, Positive attitudes toward inclusion for parents of children with more severe disabilities seem to be the norm as reported by Turnbull et al. (2002). For example, several studies of parents of students with severe disabilities in integrated programs from preschool to high school supported their child's placement and expressed satisfaction with the educational outcomes, in particular the social benefits (Gallagher et al., 2000; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; McDonnell, 1987; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1998; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, & Morrison, 1995). A few investigators, however, suggested that some parents of children with severe disabilities do not favour inclusion (Palmer, Fuller, Arora, & Nelson, 2001). Therefore, this study focused on parent attitude toward inclusion by examining the impact of the severity level on parent attitude toward inclusion.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this research was to investigate parents' attitude toward including children with special needs in the general education classrooms, and b) to examine the influence of child's severity level on the parents attitudes' toward inclusion. More specifically the proposed researcher questions are:

- 1) What are the attitudes of the Emirati parents towards the inclusion disabled children into the general classrooms?
- 2) Is there any significant difference between parents' attitudes of children with, and without disabilities towards the inclusion?
- 3) Does the child's severity level affect the attitude of the Emirati parents towards the inclusion?

This chapter includes the research design, instruments, validity and reliability, data collection procedures, data analysis, population and sample, and ethical considerations.

### **3.2. Research Design**

This Study was conducted using quantitative research methods. Quantitative research is collection and analysis of numerical data to describe, explain, predict, or control phenomena (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). This was considered the best approach to collect information regarding parents' attitude toward inclusion the child with disabilities in general education classrooms. Therefore, the researcher developed a questionnaire of 23 items to collect data from parents.

### **3.3. The Participant and the Sampling Technique**

#### **3.3.1. Procedures**

The survey Ethical approval was granted from ADEC (Abu Dhabi Educational Council) to be able to conduct the study. To get the ethical approval the researcher completed and submitted an application through ADEC website. Also, an official letter from the United Arab Emirates University was sent to ADEC via email clarifying the purpose of the study and including few items of the research instrument.

After emailing the application via ADEC website, the researcher received a call to clarify some points prior to agreeing to publish the result of the study on ADEC website. After receiving ADEC approval by email, the researcher communicate with ADEC parties (special need specialists who work in ADEC) to find out the schools that matches the characteristics that have been specifically identified by researcher to conduct the study. More specifically, the major characteristic of the school to be included in this study it should be an inclusive school, which include students with special need in the general education classrooms.

After identifying the schools in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain, an envelope contained a letter of ADEC approval of conducting the research (Appendix A), a letter of describing the purpose of the study and a consent form (Appendix B) and the survey questionnaire (Appendix C) was sent to the selected schools administration office. The researcher tried to find the suitable time to send the surveys out to the targeted school. The surveys were delivered to the school administration in Fall 2014 to be given to the parents on the time that they come to school to register or to pick up their children yearly report so they can guarantee that

the surveys will be completed and returned to the school administration at the same time. So, the surveys will not be neglected by both the school administration and the parents.

Seventy one percent of the distributed surveys or questionnaires were collected by the school administration and given to the researcher. One hundred parents of children with and without disabilities from the emirate of Abu Dhabi were included in this study. More specifically, the sample includes 50 parents of children with disabilities and 50 parents of children without disabilities but they may have children with disabilities in their classroom.

All children with disabilities were enrolled in the rehabilitation centres while all children without disabilities were enrolled in the government schools. More specifically, parents of children without disabilities whose children were included in inclusive schools that include various types of disabilities including (learning disability, hearing or visually impaired, behaviour disability, physical disability, mild or moderate mental retardation, severe mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or autism).

### **3.3.2. The Sample Demographic Features**

Identification of participants followed the guidelines of random sampling. The number of participants of this study is one hundred parents of children with and without disabilities. 100 participants were involved in the survey; gender-wise, the sample consisted of 28 males and 72 females. The age of the participants ranging from 25 to 49 years. The educational level of 47 of the all-participating parents is high school diploma, 48 participants obtained the Bachelor degree, and five holding graduate degrees (either Master or PhD). Regarding the parents' children, 51% of the

participants are parents whose children are disabled, and 49% are parents whose children without disabilities as shown in Table 1.

Category	Type of parent		Nationality		Gender		Age			Highest degree		
	Parent of child with disabilities	Parent of child without disabilities	UAE	others	male	female	20-29	30-39	40-49	Diploma	Bachelor	M or PDH
Participant	50	50	78	22	28	72	17	54	29	47	48	5
total	100		100		100		100			100		

Table 1: Participants' demographic information

	Hearing impairment	Physical impairment	Visual impairment	Autism	Learning Disabilities	Speech difficulty	Behavioural problems	Missing	Total
Frequency	18	13	5	2	0	0	0	51	100
Valid Percent (%)	36.0	26.0	10.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	100

Table 2: Types of disabilities of the participants' children

It is evident from Table 2 that the majority of children with disabilities of the participating parents have hearing impairment with (36%) out of the whole sample. Physical impairment came next with (26%). The third disability type was visual

impairment with (10%). The Table also reveals that *Autism* had the lowest percentage of the whole population (4%).

### 3.3.3. Survey Instrument

A 23 items questionnaire (see Appendix C) was developed to examine parents' attitude toward including children with disabilities into the general education classroom. The *Survey of Parents' Attitude towards Inclusion* (SPATI) was developed after a careful review of several previous studies and various attitudinal surveys (Prado, 2002). The general attitudes of the parents towards the inclusion regarding the child well-being generated the following responses

- *“My child overall well-being would be affected by having a child with disabilities in his/her class”*
- *“Students with disabilities have the right to be educated in the same classroom as normal students”,*
- *“Being in an inclusive classroom will help children with disabilities to feel better about them”.*

Ten questions examined the attitude of parents towards the inclusion with respect to the academic effect of inclusion on the performance of children with and without disabilities. The feedback generated these statements:

- *“A child with a disability can benefit socially from being integrated into a general education classroom”*
- *“My child could benefit socially from having a child with disabilities in his/her class”.*
- *“I would invite a child with a disability to the family gathering in the weekend or for my child's birthday party”.*

- *“I will encourage my child to go to a child with a disability’s birthday party or spend the weekend with him/her”.*
- *“I will be hesitant to have my child associate with a child with a disability”.*
- *“Having a student with a disability in my child’s class would impact my decision to allow my child to be enrolled in this class”.*
- *“Having a child with a disability in my child’s school would impact my decision to allow my child to be enrolled in this school”.*
- *“It is important to me to be aware about the disability of my child classmates”.*
- *“It is important to my child to be educated about disability of his/her classmates”.*
- *“The inclusion setting will help normal student to accept and respect students with disabilities”*

A set of ten questions examined parents’ attitude toward inclusion with regard to the social effect of inclusion on children with and without disabilities; the parents’ feedback generated the following statements:

- *“A child with a disability can benefit academically from being integrated into a general education classroom”.*
- *“My child’s education would be affected by having a child with disability in his/her class”.*
- *“My child’s education would be affected by having a child with a physical disability in his/her class”*
- *“My child’s education would be affected by having a child with a learning disability in his/her class”*

- *“My child’s education would be affected by having a child with a behavioural disorder in his/her class.”*
- *“My child’s education would be affected by having a child with mild or moderate mental retardation in his/her class “*
- *“My child’s education would be affected by having a child with a severe disability (i.e. severe mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or autism) in his/her class”*
- *“Inclusion is not a desirable practice for educating most typically normal students.”*
- *“Children with disabilities will develop academic skills more rapidly in special or separate classrooms than in the integrated classroom settings”.*

Five-point Likert Scale was employed in examining the parents’ attitude towards inclusion. It ranges from *Strongly Agree* (=5) to *Strongly Disagree* (=1). Demographic information, such as nationality, hometown, age, gender, highest degree obtained. To examine the effect of the child’s severity level on parents’ attitudes toward inclusion. Parents were asked to answer the six items of the questionnaire from (question 4-9).

These questions were focused on parents’ attitudes toward inclusion based on the child’s disability category. The seven questions present the different kind of disabilities that ranges from mild to severe. More specifically, the types of the disabilities that included in the survey are hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical impairment, autism, learning disability, speech and language disorder, and behavioural problems.



### 3.4. Validity

To establish the content validity of the instrument, the researcher try to modified some of the items from Prado 2002 study to suit the cultural aspect. For example the following item” *I would invite a child with disabilities to my child’s birthday party*” and “ *I would encourage my child to go to a child with disabilities birthday party*” from Prado 2002 survey “*I would invite a child with a disability to the family gathering in the weekend or for my child’s birthday party.*” For the former and “*I will encourage my child to go to a child with a disability’s birthday party or spend the weekend with him/her.*” For the later. In addition, to establish the content validity of the instrument, an initial version of the survey was given to three university professors in the field of special education.

These experts were asked to judge the content of the survey and provide feedback to the researcher. The three experts made comments on few items and suggested merging some items to avoid overlap between the items. In addition to that, for more clarity purposes some items were revised. All the suggested changes were taken into consideration when the final version of the survey was prepared. Such as, replacing the words “compromised” in to “affected” in the following items ( 1- 3- 4- 6- 7- 8- 9- 10 ).

### 3.5. Reliability

To examine the stability of the questionnaire the researcher administered the survey instrument two times for ten participants within 10 days. More specifically, to measure the test and retest reliability of the questionnaire the ten participants were asked to participate again in the study after 10 days. Then the correlation coefficeint

was determined for each item by using Spearman's rho. The correlation coefficients of all items was high ( $r_s=1$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) which indicate high stability.

### **3.6. Ethical consideration**

Ethical approval was taken from ADEC (Abu Dhabi Educational Council) to be able to conduct the study. To get the ethical approval the researcher completed and submitted an application through ADEC website. Also, an official letter from the United Arab Emirates University was sent to ADEC via email clarifying the purpose of the study and including few items of the research instrument. After emailing the application via ADEC website, the researcher received a call to clarify some points and had agreed to publish the result of the study on ADEC website.

After reserving ADEC approval by email, the researcher communicate with ADEC parties (special need specialists who work in ADEC) to find out the schools that matches the characteristics that have been specifically by researcher to conduct the study. Moreover, the participants were asked to participate voluntarily and the participants completed the consent form.

### **3.7. Limitations and Delimitations**

The study was also limited to cycle one school (elementary schools). So the findings may not be generalized to cycles 2 and 3. A self-administered, paper and pencil questionnaire was used. This may indicate that some respondents might not have taken the survey seriously to fill out the questionnaire properly or that they did not give the actual image of the participant child's school because the questionnaire was distributed and collected by school administration. Finally, the questionnaire as a self-reported instrument, it can be affected by the perceptions, feelings, personal judgments, and biases of the respondents or the immediate situations they were in.

## Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and it reports the research findings. The objectives of this study are threefold as follows: a) investigating parents' attitudes towards including children with disabilities in the general education classrooms, b) examining whether there is a difference in attitude between parents of children with and without disabilities, and c) examining the influence of the child's severity level on parents' attitudes toward inclusion. More specifically, the research questions are as follows:

1. What are UAE parents' attitudes toward inclusion?
2. Is there any significant difference between parents' attitudes of children with and without disabilities toward inclusion?
3. Does the child's severity level affect UAE parents' attitude toward inclusion?

The data analysis of each research question will be discussed separately in the following section.

### 4.2. First Research Question

*What are UAE parents' attitudes toward inclusion?*

To answer the first question parents were asked to complete the *Survey of Parents' Attitudes towards Inclusion* (SPATI) (See Appendix C). The participants' responses to the items in the questionnaire used to answer this research questions. The variable, parent attitude towards inclusion, was determined by a total score attained on the rating scale SPATI. This scale consisted of three categories including general attitudes toward inclusion regarding the child with disabilities well-being,

educational impact of inclusion, social impact of inclusion. A numerical value for the SPATI ranged from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating a more positive attitude towards inclusion.

Mean and standard deviation for each item were reported in Table 3. Then the items were ranked based on the mean value from highest to lowest for each category presenting the attitudes of parents (See Table 3). Several items received almost the same rating by the participants of this study. For example, items 12, 13, 14, 17, and 18 were all rated high by the participant of this study which indicated that the participants hold positive attitude toward the “social impact of inclusion” category. Additionally, the other items that rated the least by all participants were related to the “academic impact of inclusion” category. These items were 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 10. This finding indicated that the participants hold some concerns regarding the impact of inclusion on their children academic achievement.

For the purpose of find out the parents’ attitude toward inclusion the child with disabilities in ADEC general education classrooms, a five-scale Likert ranking scale questionnaire was used. It is represented by a range of responses indicating the degree of attitude toward inclusion the child with disabilities in ADEC general education classrooms is present where very high is (5.00-4.2), high (4.19-3.4), uncertain (3.39-2.6), low (2.59-1.8), and very low (1.79-1). Table 6 shows all the items ranked from the highest to the lowest based on the mean. As it has been in shown in Table 3 below the results of this study indicated that the majority of parents in the study have positive attitudes toward inclusion ( $m=3.21$ ).

---

N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	My child's education would be affected by having a child with a learning disability in his/her class.	5.0000	.00000
2	I would invite a child with disabilities to the family gathering in the weekend or my child birthday party.	5.0000	.00000
3	I will encourage my child to go to a child with disabilities birthday party or spend the weekend with hem/her.	5.0000	.00000
4	I would hesitate to have my child become friend with a child with disabilities.	5.0000	.00000
5	Having a child with disabilities in my child's class would impact my decision to have my child placed in that class.	5.0000	.00000
6	Having a child with disabilities in my child's class would impact my decision to have my child placed in that school.	5.0000	.00000
7	It is important to me to be educated about my child's classmate's disability.	5.0000	.00000
8	It is important to my child to be educated about his/her classmate's disability.	5.0000	.00000
9	Students with disabilities have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically developing students.	5.0000	.00000
10	The inclusion will help the typically student to accept the special need students.	5.0000	.00000
11	A child with a disability can benefit socially from being integrated in to a general education classroom.	3.6600	1.17125
12	The inclusion gives disable children a chance to feel better about them.	3.4082	1.07855
13	My child benefit socially from having a child with disabilities in his/her class.	3.3958	1.16216
14	My child's education would be affected by having a child with a physical disability in his/her class.	3.0800	1.19249
15	My child's education would be affected by having a child with a sensory impairment (i.e. hearing or visually impaired) in his/her class.	2.9600	1.32419

---

16	Inclusion is not a desirable practice for educating most typically developing students.	2.9592	1.15396
17	My child's education would be affected by having a child with a behaviour disability in his/her class.	2.9000	1.35902
18	A child with a disability can benefit academically from being integrated in to a general education classroom.	2.8600	1.34027
19	My child's education would be affected by having a child with disability in his/her class.	2.8200	1.13731
20	My child's education would be affected by having a child with mild or moderate mental retardation in his/her class.	2.8200	1.17265
21	Children with special need will properly develop academic skills more rapidly in a special, separate classroom that the integrated classroom.	2.7551	1.12788
22	My child overall well-being would be affected by having a child with disabilities in his/her class.	2.5800	1.16216
23	Total		3.21375 1.10443

Table 3: Participants' response ranked based on the mean value

### 4.3. The Second Research Question

*Is there any significant difference between parents' attitudes of children with and without disabilities toward inclusion?*

To find if there are any significant differences in attitudes of both groups of parents of children with and without disabilities, Mann-Whitney test was used. The test results indicated that there are significant differences where  $P < 0.05$  between the two parents' groups. As it shown in Table 4 parents of children with disabilities show more positive attitudes toward inclusion ( $m=3.81$ ) than parents of the children without disabilities ( $m=3.33$ ).

Parent group	Cumulative mean of responses	Std. Deviation
parent of children with disabilities	3.8174	.09506
Parent of children without disabilities	3.3385	.64524

Table 4: Cumulative mean of responses

As it shown in Table 5, the participants' responses in all items were higher for parents of children with disabilities, except on the following items:

- Item 4 which is "*My child's education would be affected by having a child with a physical disability in his/her class*",
- Item 6 which is "*My child's education would be affected by having a child with a behaviour disability in his/her class.*" And
- Item 10 which is "*My child overall well-being would be affected by having a child with disabilities in his/her class*".

N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	A child with a disability can benefit academically from being integrated into a general education classroom.	2.8600	1.34027
2	A child with a disability can benefit socially from being integrated into a general education classroom.	3.6600	1.17125
3	My child's education would be affected by having a child with disability in his/her class.	2.8200	1.13731
4	My child's education would be affected by having a child with a physical disability in his/her class.	3.0800	1.19249
5	My child's education would be affected by having a child with a learning disability in his/her class.	2.7800	1.20017

N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
6	My child's education would be affected by having a child with a behavioural disorder in his/her class.	2.9000	1.35902
7	My child's education would be affected by having a child with a sensory impairment (i.e. hearing or visually impaired) in his/her class.	2.9600	1.32419
8	My child's education would be affected by having a child with mild or moderate mental retardation in his/her class.	2.8200	1.17265
9	My child's education would be affected by having a child with a severe disability (i.e. severe mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or autism) in his/her class.	2.4898	1.27675
10	My child overall well-being would be affected by having a child with disabilities in his/her class.	2.5800	1.16216
11	My child could benefit socially from having a child with disabilities in his/her class.	3.3958	1.16216
12	I would invite a child with a disability to the family gathering in the weekend or for my child's birthday party.	4.0800	.80407
13	I will encourage my child to go to a child with a disability's birthday party or spend the weekend with him/her.	4.2000	.80812
14	I will be hesitant to have my child associate with a child with a disability.	4.0600	.99816
15	Having a student with a disability in my child's class would impact my decision to allow my child to be enrolled in this class.	3.8000	1.06904
16	Having a child with a disability in my child's school would impact my decision to allow my child to be enrolled in this school.	3.8163	1.09304
17	It is important to me to be educated about the disability of my child's classmate.	4.1042	.95069
18	It is important to my child to be educated about his/her classmate's disability.	4.4286	.67700
19	Students with disabilities have the right to be educated in the same classroom as normal students.	3.9592	1.04002
20	Inclusion is not a desirable practice for educating	2.9592	1.15396



N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
	most typically normal students.		
21	Children with disabilities will develop academic skills more rapidly in special or separate classrooms than in the integrated classroom settings.	2.7551	1.12788
22	Being in an inclusive classroom will help children with disabilities to feel better about the mselves.	3.4082	1.07855
23	The inclusion setting will help normal student to accept and respect students with disabilities.	3.6939	1.10310
Total		3.2137	1.10443

Table 5: Participants' response for the survey items

#### 4.4. The Third Research Question

Does the child's severity level affect UAE parents' attitude toward inclusion? To find the answer of this questions the percentages of the responses of both groups of parents was calculated for six items from (4-9) as it shown in tables 6 and 7. In tables 6 and 7 for item number 4 parents of children with disabilities reported that having a child with physical disabilities will not affect their children education. Whereas parents of children without disabilities reported that, the presence of the child with physical disabilities may affect their children education.

The participants also reported different responses for item number 6, which focused on children with behavioural disorder. Parents of children with disabilities reported that having a child with behavioural disorder may affect their children education, whereas, parents of children without disabilities reported that the presence of the child with behavioural disorder will not affect their children education. On the other hand, the participants reported the same responses to items 8 and 9, which

focused on children with mild, moderate mental retardation and severe disability (i.e. severe mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or autism).

Both groups of parents reported that having a child with mild, moderate mental retardation and severe disability (i.e. severe mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or autism) will not affect their children education. Additionally, the participants reported the same responses for item numbers 7 and 5, which focused on children with learning disability and hearing and/or visual impairments. In other words, parents of children with disabilities reported that having a child with learning disability and hearing and visual impairments would not affect their children education.

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q4	0%	0%	74%	26%	0%
Q5	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Q6	0%	0%	84%	12%	4%
Q7	42.6%	46.8%	10.6%	0%	0%
Q8	0%	0%	10%	4%	86%
Q9	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Table 6: Percentages of the disabilities parents responses

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q4	12%	28%	26%	24%	10%
Q5	8%	24%	20%	34%	14%
Q6	18%	16%	20%	30%	16%
Q7	14%	26%	18%	26%	16%
Q8	10%	20%	22%	38%	10%
Q9	12.2%	8.2%	18.4%	38.8%	22.4%

Table 7: Percentages of parents without disabilities responses

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the discussion of the study findings based on the quantitative analysis conducted. Implications and results of the findings along with recommendations for future researchers were discussed in this chapter. The objectives of this study were threefold as follows: **i)** investigating parents' attitudes towards including children with disabilities in the general education classrooms, **ii)** examining whether there is a difference in attitude between parents of children with and without disabilities, and **iii)** examining the influence of the child's severity level on parents' attitudes toward inclusion.

### **5.2. Discussion**

With regard to the first objective, overall the results of this study indicated that parents attitudes' toward inclusion is positive. This finding of this study is consistent with several studies (e.g., Lewis, Chard and Scott, 1994, Palmer, Fuller, Arora, & Nelson, 2001 Gallagher et al., 2000; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; McDonnell, 1987; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1998; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, & Morrison, 1995, AlAhbabi,2006, Jung, 2007, ElZein,2009, Usman, 2011, Bradshaw, Tennant & Lydiatt, 2004).

The findings of this study indicated that parents of children with and without disabilities agree, in general, that inclusion is a positive educational practice for children with and without disabilities. For instance, the results of this study were consistent with El-Zein (2009)'s study who found that parents showed positive attitude towards the various aspects of inclusion.

The results of this study indicated that the majority of UAE parents in this study have positive attitudes toward inclusion. This finding of this study indicated that, the UAE parents who participate in this study believe in the child with disabilities have the right to be educated in the same classroom as typically normal students (m=5.00). The result of this study show that the UAE parents who participate in this study strongly agree that the direct interaction between children with disabilities and those without disabilities will help normal student to accept the special need students (m=5.00).

Additionally, the items were ranked based on the mean value from highest to lowest for each category presenting the attitudes of UAE parents who participate in this study (See Table 3). Several items received almost the same rating by the UAE parents that participated in this study. For example, items (*The inclusion gives disable children a chance to feel better about themselves*), (*My child benefit socially from having a child with disabilities in his/her class.*), (*My child's education would be affected by having a child with a physical disability in his/her class.*), (*My child's education would be affected by having a child with a behaviour disability in his/her class.*), and (*A child with a disability can benefit academically from being integrated in to a general education classroom.*) were all rated high by the UAE parents that participated in this study which indicated that the UAE parents hold positive attitude toward the “social impact of inclusion” category.

On the other hand, the other items that rated the least by the UAE parents that participated in this study were related to the “academic impact of inclusion” category. These items were (*My child's education would be affected by having a child with a learning disability in his/her class.*), (*I would hesitate to have my child become friend with a child with disabilities.*), (*Having a child with disabilities in my child's class would impact my decision to have my child placed in that school.*), (*It is important to my child to be educated about his/her classmate's disability.*), (*Students with disabilities have the right to be educated in*

*the same classroom as typically developing students.*), and *(The inclusion will help the typically student to accept the special need students.)*. This finding indicated that the UAE parents hold some concerns regarding the impact of inclusion on their children academic achievement. Additionally, UAE parents have some concerns about inclusion because of children with behavioural problems.

Overall, UAE parents support inclusion because the social effects of inclusion and have concerns for the academic impact of inclusion. Results of these studies have indicated that the child's severity level is an important factor that affects parents' attitudes toward inclusion. Some studies have reported that parents of children sever disabilities have positive attitude toward inclusion. (e.g., Gallagher et al., 2000; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; McDonnell, 1987; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1998; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, & Morrison, 1995). A few investigators, however, suggested that some parents of children with severe disabilities do not favour inclusion (Palmer, Fuller, Arora, & Nelson, 2003).

The results of this study also indicated that there were some differences in parents' attitudes between parents of children with and without disabilities. More specifically, parents of children with disabilities show more positive attitudes toward inclusion ( $m=3.81$ ) than parents of the children without disabilities ( $m=3.33$ ). This finding is consistent with the findings of previous studies. For example, Leyser and Kirk (2004) found that while some parents supported inclusion or mainstreaming for their children with disabilities. In addition, Hilbert (2014) found that several studies have indicated that there is a difference between parents of children with and without disabilities attitudes toward including their children into the general education classroom. (e.g., Gallagher et al., 2000; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; McDonnell,

1987; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1998; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, & Morrison, 1995, Slone & Shoshanna, 2007; Hilbert, 2014; Peck et al., 2004; Peck,)

The study finding showed that there are some differences in UAE parents' attitudes between UAE parents of children with and without disabilities that the UAE parents who have children with disabilities strongly support the inclusion. This could be explained by the fact that parents of children with disabilities who participated in this study their children are all enrolled in a rehabilitation center for students with disabilities. So, they didn't really experience the inclusive setting and probably they have also seen the negative impact of having their children in a segregating setting and therefore, they prefer the inclusive setting to help their children to become more prepared for the real world and to learn from their normal peers and become more independent.

Regarding the influence of the child's disability type on parents' attitudes toward inclusion. The results of this study indicated that the UAE parents hold different attitudes toward the different types of disabilities. The UAE parents response in tables 6 and 7 for item number 4 parents of children with disabilities reported that having a child with physical disabilities will not affect their children education. Whereas parents of children without disabilities reported that the presence of the child with physical disabilities may affect their children education.

The participants also reported different responses for item number 6 which focused on children with behavioural disorder. Parents of children with disabilities reported that having a child with behavioural disorder may affect their children education, whereas, parents of children without disabilities reported that the presence of the child with behavioural disorder will not affect their children education. On the other hand, the participants reported the same responses to items 8 and 9, which

focused on children with mild, moderate mental retardation and severe disability (i.e. severe mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or autism)

Both groups of parents reported that having a child with mild, moderate mental retardation and severe disability (i.e. severe mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or autism) will not affect their children education. Additionally, the participants reported the same responses for item numbers 7 and 5 which focused on children with learning disability and hearing and/or visual impairments. In other words, parents of children with disabilities reported that having a child with learning disability and hearing and visual impairments will not affect their children education.

Fuchs and Fuchs (1994)'s findings who found that parents aware that their child curriculum will be affected and they also agree with integrating the child with special need in normal classrooms. In addition, several studies have examined the impact of the child's severity level on parents' attitudes. Results of this study have indicated that the child's severity level is an important factor that affects parents' attitudes toward inclusion. Some studies have reported that parents of children severe disabilities have positive attitude toward inclusion (e.g., Gallagher et al., 2000; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; McDonnell, 1987; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1998; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, & Morrison, 1995).

A few investigators, however, suggested that some parents of children with severe disabilities do not favour inclusion (Palmer, Fuller, Arora, & Nelson, 2003). Not all parents of children with and without disabilities were supportive to the inclusion placements for students with moderate-to-severe disabilities, emotional impairments and cognitive impairments. This relationship is critical because one would assume that parent of children with disabilities who support inclusion for their



children would be supportive of the inclusion model for other children with disabilities, but this may not be the case.

In this study the UAE parents reported that they would be more positive to inclusion when their children are included in the inclusive schools that include children with mild or sensory disabilities. On the other hand, the UAE parents were less supportive to include their children in inclusive schools where children with severe disability (i.e. severe mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or autism) are included in these schools. So, parental optimism decreases when children with challenging behaviours are placed in an inclusive environment. The UAE parents also were aware that their children curriculum could be affected.

The results of this study indicated that UAE parents hold different attitudes toward the different types of disabilities. In addition, understanding the perception of inclusive placements concerning children with more severe disabilities such as behaviour/emotional disorders and autism is especially important. As the number of children with autism and other developmental disabilities continue to rise, it is vital that we are prepared to provide positive, effective inclusive educational opportunities for these children (Hilbert, 2014). ADEC schools have to consider these concerns as a main goal for the schools development plans by focusing on how to reduce the achievement gap between children with and without disabilities. For example, ADEC schools may need to focus on improving the quality of education programs in the inclusive schools.

Finally, the results of this study indicated that UAE parents of children with and without disabilities raised some concerns regarding the academic impact of inclusion on their children. In this study the findings indicated that UAE parents support inclusion because the social affect and have concerns for the academic

effect, therefore, it is important that ADEC schools focus on the availability of the qualified staff, services and resources to overcome this concern. In addition to that, Gallagher (2013) indicated that parents were worried that their children would not receive as much instruction in the general education classroom as they would with more individualized instruction in a special education classroom. Therefore, more specialized instruction should be provided for students with disabilities in the inclusive classrooms to meet their educational needs.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

#### **5.3.1. Recommendation for Practices**

There is no doubt that the involvement of the parents is vital when it comes to inclusion practices. The study finding indicated that the UAE parents of children without disabilities show less support to inclusion of the children with disabilities in General education classroom. To have a successful inclusion parents of children without disabilities may need to visit schools and meet with school staff to educate them more about children with disabilities.

All the school parties must ensure families get enough information about disabilities and take time to explain information when it is not understood by the families. Moreover, ADEC school must focus on the availability of the qualified staff, services and resources to make sure that the school are equipped and well prepared to include all children with disabilities.

#### **5.3.2. Recommendation for Future Studies**

Researchers and school districts need to continue to examine parents' views and perspectives on inclusion. Future researchers can conduct further research using an in-depth qualitative methods to examine how parents' attitude toward inclusion

can be changed overtime. The current study can be replicated with a focus on the attitudes of parents of the children with and with out disabilities in ADEC new model schools. The current study can be replicated with a focus on the attitudes of teachers, students, and administration toward inclusion in ADEC schools.

Additionally, the current study can be replicated in ADEC schools with a focus on views of the EMT (English Mideum Teacher) foreigner teachers and staff who do not speak Arabic to know their attitudes' toward inclusion in ADEC schools. This can provide other aspects that were not covered by the current study. Looking for EMT's attitude toward inclusion the chilren with disabilities in ADEC new model school will help the succssfull of the inclousion practice in ADEC cycle 1 schools, because ADEC policy focusing on having the EMTs as classroom teachers, so the ferther research in this area will help in the sussfull of the inclosion practice to succsed. Finally, the current study can be replicated in other emirates in order to enable the generalization of the results of this study.

## Bibliography

- Abu Dhabi Educational Council (ADEC). (2014). *Annual Report*. Retrieved from: <https://www.adec.ac.ae/en/AboutADEC/Pages/default.aspx>
- Alahbabi, A. (2006, Jan 30): K-12 Special and General Education Teachers' Attitudes toward the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs in General Education Classes in the United Arab Emirates.
- Albarracin, D., Zanna, M., Johnson, B., & Kumkale, G. (2005). Attitudes: Introduction and scope. In D. Albarracin, B. Johnson, & M. Zanna (Eds.): *The handbook of attitudes* (3-20). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Allen, K. E.; Schwartz, I. (2000). *The Exceptional Child: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education* (4 ed.). Delmar Cengage Learning. ISBN 0-7668-0249-3.
- Allport, G. (1935). Attitudes. In C. Murchison (Ed.), *The handbook of social psychology* (2) 798-844. Worcester, MA: Clark University Press.
- Alsheikh, N., & Elhoweris, H. (2006). Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. *Journal of Special Education*, 21(2), 115-118.
- Al-Zyoudi, M. (2006). Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education in Jordanian. *International Journal of Special Education*, 21(2), 55-62.
- Anke de Boer , Sip Jan Pijl & Alexander Minnaert (2010) Attitudes of parents towards inclusive education: a review of the literature, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 25:2, 165-181, DOI: 10.1080/08856251003658694  
To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08856251003658694>
- Bashir Abu-Hamour & Mohammad Muhaidat (2013): Parents' attitudes towards inclusion of students with autism in Jordan, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, DOI:10.1080/13603116.2013.802026 To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2013.802026>
- Barrell, R. (2009). *Creating a Connective Pedagogy for Special Educational Needs: An Investigation of the Development of Inclusive Practice in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Education System*. UAE: Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET).
- Bennett, S. & Gallagher, T. L. (2013). High school students with intellectual disabilities in the school and workplace: Multiple perspectives on inclusion. *Canadian Journal of Education*. 36(4), 96-124.

- Bradshaw, K., Tennant, L., & Lydiatt, S., (2004). Special education in United Arab Emirates: Anxieties, and aspirations. *International Journal of Special Education*, 19(1).
- BUSPH. (2013, January 22). *The Theory of Planned Behavior*. Retrieved December 12, 2014, from Boston University School of Public Health:  
<http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/MPH-Modules/SB/SB721-Models/SB721-Models3.html>
- CHERRY, K. (2014). *ATTITUDE*. Retrieved DECEMBER 16, 2014, from ABOUT EDUCATION:  
<http://psychology.about.com/od/socialpsychology/a/attitudes.htm>
- Eagly, A., & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The psychology of attitudes*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- ElZein, H. L. (2009). Attitudes toward inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools (A case study from parents' perspective). *Educational Research and Review Vol. 4*, 164-172.
- Foote, C. (2010). Inclusion classrooms and teachers: a survey of current practices. *International Journal of Special Education*, 3 (25), 43-56.
- Fuchs, D. (1994). *what's special about special education? A field of siege*.
- Gaad, E. (2004). Pre-service teachers' attitudes towards a career in special education in the United Arab Emirates. *College Student Journal*, 38(4), 619-632.
- Gallagher, P. A., Floyd J. H., Stafford A. M., Taber T. A., Brozovic S. A., & Alberto, P. A. (2000). Inclusion of students with moderate or severe disabilities in education and community settings: Perspectives from parents and siblings. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 35, 135±147.
- Green, S. (1994). parents attitudes about special education and reintegration: what's the role of student outcome. *exceptional children* (61) International Bureau of Education:  
[http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Policy\\_Dialogue/48th\\_ICE/Presentations/IBE\\_ICE\\_Workshop\\_3B\\_Presentation\\_EN\\_Hanif\\_Hassan\\_No\\_v08.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Policy_Dialogue/48th_ICE/Presentations/IBE_ICE_Workshop_3B_Presentation_EN_Hanif_Hassan_No_v08.pdf)
- Hilbert, D. (2014). Perceptions of Parents of Young Children with and without Disabilities Attending Inclusive Preschool Programs. *Journal of Education*

and Learning; Canadian Center of Science and Education Vol. 3, No. 4; ISSN 1927-5250 E-ISSN 1927-5269

- Hanline, M. F., & Halvorsen, A. (1989). Parent perceptions of the integration transition process: Overcoming artificial barriers. *Exceptional Children*, 55, 487±492.
- Hassan, H. (2008, November). *Inclusion in the UAE*. Retrieved December 13, 2014, from International Bureau of Education:  
[http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Policy\\_Dialogue/48th\\_ICE/Presentations/IBE\\_ICE\\_Workshop\\_3B\\_Presentation\\_EN\\_Hanif\\_Hassan\\_No\\_v08.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Policy_Dialogue/48th_ICE/Presentations/IBE_ICE_Workshop_3B_Presentation_EN_Hanif_Hassan_No_v08.pdf)
- Jenkinson J (1998). *Mainstream or Special –educating students with disabilities*. Routledge, UK.
- Khamis, V. (2013) Psychological distress among parents of children with mental retardation in the United Arab Emirates. *Social Science & Medicine*, Volume 64, Issue 4, Pages 850-857.
- Lewis, C. D. (2006). *Attitudes and Perceptions Toward Inclusion Among Secondary Special and General Education Teachers Working in North Alabama Schools*. (Doctoral dissertation, Tennessee State University). Available from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses database. (UMI No, 3347368)
- Leyser, Y., & Kirk, R. (2004). Evaluating inclusion: An examination of parent views and factors influencing their perspectives. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 51, 271-285.
- Marchesi A (1994). The Normalization in Spain. In Salah, Y. (Ed.), *l'education Nouvelle, Educating individuals with special needs: Education for All- Includes Children with Special Needs*, 54 (Special issue)
- McDonnell, J. (1987). The integration of students with severe handicaps in regular public schools: An analysis of parent perceptions of potential outcomes. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation*, 22, 98±111.
- Mergel, B. (2008). *Learning Theories of Instructional Design*. Educational Communications and Technology. Retrieved on March 1st 2014 from [http://members.iinet.net.au/~aamcarthur/11\\_March\\_2008\\_files/Learning\\_Theories\\_of\\_Instructional\\_Design.pdf](http://members.iinet.net.au/~aamcarthur/11_March_2008_files/Learning_Theories_of_Instructional_Design.pdf)
- MOE. (2008, February 24). *Ministry of Education Strategic Objectives*. Retrieved December 13, 2014, from Ministry of Education:  
<https://www.moe.gov.ae/English/Pages/StrategicObjectives.aspx>

- Palmer, D. S., Fuller, K., Arora, T., & Nelson, M. (2001). Taking sides: Parents' views on inclusion for their children with severe disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 67(4), 467–484
- Palmer, D. (2002). Factors contributing to attitude exchange amongst preservice elementary teachers. *Science Education*.
- Palmer, D. S., Fuller, K., Arora, T., & Nelson, M. (2003). Taking sides: Parent views on inclusion for their children with severe disabilities. *Exceptional children*
- Green, S. K., & Shinn, M. R. (1994). Parent attitudes about special education and reintegration :What is the role of student outcomes? *Exceptional Children*, 61, 269-281.
- Peck, C. A., Staub, D., Gallucci, C., & Schwartz, I. (2004). Parent perceptions of the impacts of inclusion on their nondisabled child. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 29(2), 135-143. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2511/rpsd.29.2.135>
- Prado. (2002). Parental attitudes towards inclusion of students with disabilities in a private school setting. Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.
- Ryndak, D. L., Downing J. E., Jacqueline L. R., & Morrison, A. P. (1995). Parents' perceptions after inclusion of their children with moderate or severe disabilities. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 20, 147±15
- Salend, S.J (2005) *Creating inclusive classrooms: effective and reflective practices* (5th edition). Prentice Hall.
- Stoiber, K.C., M. Gettinger, and D. Goetz. 1998. Exploring factors influencing parents and early childhood practitioners' beliefs about inclusion. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 13, no. 1: 107–24.
- Turnbull, R., Turnbull, A., Shank, M., Smith, S., & Leal, D. (2002). *Exceptional lives: Special education in today's schools*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Usman, F. (2011, December). *Principals Attitudes Toward Inclusion in Dubai Public Schools: Where Do They Stand?* Retrieved December 12, 2014, from eCOMMONS:

## Appendix A: Letters of Consent

### A.1. ADEC Consent Form



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم  
Abu Dhabi Education Council  
Education First المجلس التعليم الأول

Date: 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2014	التاريخ: 14 مايو 2014
Ref:	الرقم:
To: Public Schools Principals,	السادة / مديري المدارس الحكومية
Subject: Letter of Permission	الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة باحثين
Dear Principals,	تحية طيبة وبعد،،،
The Abu Dhabi Education Council would like to express its gratitude for your generous efforts & sincere cooperation in serving our dear students.	يطيبُ لمجلس أبوظبي للتعليم أن يتوجه لكم بخالص الشكر والتقدير لجهودكم الكريمة والتعاون الصادق لخدمة أبنائنا الطلبة.
You are kindly requested to allow the researcher/Maitha Khalifa Aly Sultan Al Neyadi, to complete her research on:  <b>Parents Attitude Towards Including a Child With special Need In General Education Classroom</b>	ونود إعلامكم بموافقة مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم على موضوع الدراسة التي ستجريها الباحثة/مينة خليفة علي سلطان النبادي ، بعنوان:  <b>Parents Attitude Towards Including a Child With special Need In General Education Classroom</b>
Please indicate your approval of this permission by facilitating her meetings with the sample groups at your respected schools.	لذا، يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحث ومساعدته على إجراء الدراسة المشار إليها.
For further information: please contact Mr Helmy Seada on 02/6150140	للاستفسار: يرجى الاتصال بالسيد/ حلمي سعده على الهاتف 02/6150140
Thank you for your cooperation.	شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم
Sincerely yours,	وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام والتقدير،،،
 <b>محمد تشالم محمد الطاهري</b> <b>المدير التنفيذي لقطاع العمليات المدرسية</b>	



## A.2. Parent Consent Form

كلية التربية

برنامج الماجستير

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الأستاذة الفاضلة..... /

تقوم الباحثة بإجراء دراسة ميدانية بعنوان:

وذلك استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في التربية "تخصص التربية الخاصة"، وتهدف هذه الدراسة لمعرفة رأي أولياء الأمور في تطبيق عملية الدمج في النموذج المدرسي الجديد، وتحقيقاً لهذا الهدف تم بناء وتطوير هذه الاستبانة المكونة من 20 بنداً مدرجة ضمن 3 محاور أساسية، والتي تم استقاؤها اعتماداً على الأدبيات التي تناولت أهم المتغيرات التي قد تشكل رأي أولياء الأمور من دمج الطلبة من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في الصفوف الدراسية العادية. ورغبة في الاستفادة من خبراتكم، نرجو الباحثة منكم الإجابة على بنود الاستبيان المرفق بكل دقة وموضوعية، من أجل إثراء موضوع الدراسة والوصول إلى النتائج المرجوة منها، علماً بأن مشاركتكم تعتبر طوعية و إجاباتكم وبياناتكم سوف تكون سرية ولا تستخدم إلا لأغراض البحث العلمي فقط.

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم وتفضلوا بقبول وافر الشكر والتقدير

الباحثة : ميثا خليفة علي النيادي

جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

للتواصل : maitha.alanyadi@adec.ac.ae

## Appendix B: Questionnaire Survey

### الجزء الأول : البيانات العامة

يرجى التأكد من ملء البيانات قبل البدء في الإجابة عن بنود الاستبانة:

المنطقة التعليمية: 1- ( ) أبوظبي 2- ( ) العين - ( ) المنطقة الغربية

الجنسية: 1- ( ) الإمارات 2- ( ) غير ذلك

الجنس: 1- ( ) ذكر 2- ( ) انثى

العمر: 1- ( ) 20-29 2- ( ) 30-39 3- ( ) 40-49 4- ( ) 50 فما فوق

المؤهل العلمي: 1- ( ) دبلوم ما قبل الجامعة 2- ( ) بكالوريوس 3- ( ) دراسات عليا

هل لديك طفل من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة ؟ ( ) نعم ( ) لا

إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، ماهي تشخيص الإعاقة:

1- ( ) إعاقة عقلية 2- ( ) إعاقة حركية 3- ( ) إعاقة سمعية 4- ( ) إعاقة بصرية 5-

( ) التوحد 6- ( ) صعوبات تعلم 7- ( ) مشاكل لغوية 8- ( ) مشاكل سلوكية 9- ( ) -

ADHD 10- ( ) أخرى \_\_\_\_\_

هل صدف وتواجد طفل من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في صف ابنك؟ ( ) نعم ( ) لا

إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، في أي صف دراسي؟ 1- ( ) الأول 2- ( ) الثاني 3- ( ) الثالث

4- ( ) الرابع 5- ( ) الخامس

وماهو نوع الإعاقة؟ 1- ( ) إعاقة عقلية 2- ( ) إعاقة حركية 3- ( ) إعاقة سمعية

4- ( ) إعاقة بصرية 5- ( ) التوحد 6- ( ) صعوبات تعلم 7- ( ) مشاكل لغوية

8- ( ) مشاكل سلوكية 9- ( ) ADHD 10- ( ) أخرى \_\_\_\_\_

## الجزء الثاني : بنود الاستبانة

الرجاء التعبير عن رأيك فيما يخص العبارات أدناه من خلال اختيار واحد من خمس خيارات .

م	العبارة	بشدة موافق	موافق	متأكد	موافق	بشدة موافق
1	يستفيد الطفل ذو الإعاقة من الناحية الأكاديمية من دمج في الصف الدراسي العادي.					
2	يستفيد الطفل ذو الإعاقة من الناحية الاجتماعية من دمج في الصف الدراسي العادي.					
3	سيتأثر المستوى الأكاديمي بشكل ايجابي في حال تواجد الطفل من ذوي الإعاقة في الفصل الدراسي لابني/ابنتي.					
4	سيتأثر المستوى الأكاديمي بشكل ايجابي في حال تواجد الطفل من ذو إعاقة حركية في الفصل الدراسي لابني/ابنتي.					
5	سيتأثر المستوى الأكاديمي بشكل ايجابي في حال تواجد الطفل يعاني من صعوبات تعلم في الفصل الدراسي لابني/ابنتي.					
6	سيتأثر المستوى الأكاديمي بشكل ايجابي في حال تواجد الطفل يعاني من مشكلات سلوكية في الفصل الدراسي لابني/ابنتي.					
7	سيتأثر المستوى الأكاديمي بشكل ايجابي في حال تواجد الطفل من اعاقات حسية( بصرية وسمعية) في الفصل الدراسي لابني/ابنتي.					
8	سيتأثر المستوى الأكاديمي بشكل ايجابي في حال تواجد الطفل بإعاقة عقلية بسيطة أو متوسطة في الفصل الدراسي لابني/ابنتي.					
9	سيتأثر المستوى الأكاديمي بشكل ايجابي في حال تواجد الطفل يعاني من اعاقة شديدة(اعاقة عقلية شديدة، اضطرابات نفسية، التوحد)في الفصل الدراسي لابني / ابنتي.					
10	يستفيد ابني من الناحية الأكاديمية من وجود الطالب من ذوي الإعاقة في صفه.					
11	يستفيد ابني اجتماعيا من وجود الطالب من ذوي الإعاقة في صفه.					
12	سأدعو صديق ابني من ذوي الإعاقة من حضور التجمع العائلي في عطلة نهاية الأسبوع أو حفل ميلاد ابني.					

					13	سأشجع ابني على حضور حفل ميلاد صديقه أو قضاء عطلة نهاية الاسبوع مع صديقه من ذوي الإعاقة.
					14	اشعر بالراحة التامة في ان يتخذ ابني/ابنتي الطفل من ذوي الإعاقة صديقا له.
					15	لن يؤثر وجود طفل من ذوي الإعاقة في فصل دراسي معين من قراري بأن ينضم ابني لنفس الفصل الدراسي .
					16	لن يؤثر وجود طفل من ذوي الإعاقة في مدرسة معينة من قراري بأن ينضم ابني لنفس المدرسة.
					17	من المهم أن اتقف نفسي بنوعية الاعاقة لزميل ابني في الفصل.
					18	من المهم أن يتوقف ابني بنوع إعاقة صديقا له في الفصل.
					19	من حق الطالب من ذوي الإعاقة أن يتعلم مع أقرانه العاديين في صف دراسي.
					20	لا يعتبر الدمج الخيار الأمثل لتعليم الطلبة العاديين.
					21	سيتطور الطلبة من ذوي الإعاقة نم الناحية الأكاديمية بشكل أسرع في الصفوف الدراسية العادية أكثر من تطورهم في الصفوف المخصصة لهم.
					22	وجود الطلبة من ذوي الإعاقة في الصفوف العادية سيني لديهم مفهوم الذات
					23	وجود الطلبة من ذوي الإعاقة في الصفوف العادية سيساعد الطلبة العاديين على تقبل الآخر.

إذا كان لديك ملاحظات أخرى:

---



---



---



---



---